

"The Volunteers"

A play by Charles Nusser

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A one-act play in four scenes,
written by Charles Nusser

Characters in order of appearance -

Captain Steve Haines

Sergeant Charlie

Siebern

Corporal Sam Levin

Big Mike

Slim

Soldiers of the Lincoln Battalion

Major Garrity

Private Goss

The Moor

An old woman Second old

woman A young woman

Five Fascist soldiers

The Falange leader

The Civil Guard commander

Captain Lopez

(Flamenco music is heard for a few minutes before the lights dim and go out. The music continues as the lights come up on three men, dressed in nondescript army uniforms. They are in front of the curtain. The music stops.)

Steve - I'm Steve Haines. Captain Steve Haines. Thirty-nine years old - when it happened.

Charlie - Sergeant Charlie Siebern - twenty-two years old at the time.

Sam - Corporal Sam Levin. I was only nineteen.

Charlie - Was it worth it, Steve? Was it all in vain?

Steve - I don't know. I don't know.

Sam - Six million Jews went into the ovens in spite of our sacrifice. Was it worth it?

Steve - I don't know.

Charlie - There have been a thousand Guernicas in Vietnam.

Sam - No one - Roosevelt, Churchill, Stalin, the Pope, no one lined a finger to save them.

Charlie - Was it all in vain? Was it, Steve?

Steve - I don't know. I just don't know.

(The lights dim and go out.)

(Flamenco music is heard again. The music continues for a short while with the theater in total darkness. It stops suddenly and a movie screen lights up showing news reels of the Spanish Civil War. German planes bomb Madrid. civilians run for shelter. Artillery thunders, tanks advance, soldiers fire from the trenches, rifle and machine gun fire is heard. Men fall in battle. BLACKOUT. The noise of war is overwhelming - filling the theater.)

Voice - Why did they go? They left their homes, their jobs, their loved ones. More than 3,000 of them. Why? It was not their country. It was not their battle. It was not their war. Or was it?

No draft board beckoned them. No law forced them. Each one answered a more compelling summons - the call of his own conscience. But why? What the Hell were they doing there? Fighting fascism? But that wasn't popular yet. Sure, they were right, but they were ahead of their time. They were pre-mature, that's what they were. Pre-mature anti-fascists.

But they did go. In this, the first life and death struggle against the most ferocious tyranny the world has ever known, when the roll of nations was called, for the United States of America, 3,000 Americans answered, "Salud!" And because they believed that government of the people, by the people and for the people should not perish from the earth, they called themselves the Lincolns—the Lincoln Battalion.

(When the voice is first heard, the stage is in total darkness. A pedestal with a bust of Lincoln sitting on it is to the right on the stage. A faint spotlight begins to illuminate it. The light grows progressively brighter until finally the bust is bathed in a warm, bright light as the voice concludes.)

(BLACKOUT and the curtain rises on scene 1, somewhere in Spain, the late 1930's. It is nine o'clock in the morning. Three men wearing dirty, non-descript uniforms are behind a dirt and rock barricade. One, a Captain, is manning a machine gun. A Sgt. and a Cpl. are firing rifles. They are firing as rapidly as possible. Occasionally, the Sgt. or the Cpl. tosses a grenade. A number of ammunition boxes are piled neatly behind them. Empty boxes are scattered about. A large knapsack and three canteens lie on the ground. A pair of binoculars rests on an ammo box. Bullets scream and crackle overhead. A few moments ago you were viewing war on the screen. Now you are seeing it in the flesh. After awhile the firing slackens, dies down fitfully and finally stops.)

Steve - That ought to hold the bastards for a while!

Charlie - Yeah, we are really pouring it into them. How many this time?

Steve - I don't know. It's hard to tell. Quite a few. (He throws his helmet down.)

Charlie - You know, I hate to say it - those bastards are brave men. The way they keep charging up here. That takes guts. (He takes off his helmet.)

Sam - Brave or stupid. Sometimes it's impossible to tell the difference.

When does courage leave off and stupidity begin? There's a question for you. (He takes off his helmet.) I guess a lot depends on where you sit. Now if it was our guys, there would be no question about it. It would be heroic - raw courage. Since it's the enemy I'll call it stupidity and let it go at that. (He drops his helmet.)

Steve - Well, brave or stupid, there's plenty more of them down there.

Sam - That's not what worries me. With enough ammunition we can hold a position like this for a long time. Against Franco's whole God-damned infantry. But they're not going to keep on charging up that hill like they've been doing all morning. What was that - the third attack since sunrise?

Charlie - Yeah, the third. And I ain't had breakfast yet.

Sam - Even the Moors aren't going to go for that much longer. They're going to haul up some artillery and maybe a few tanks. And when they do I want to be a thousand miles from here.

Steve - There's no retreat from here Sam. Not 'til after dark.

Sam - I know, but that doesn't stop me from wishing. (They laugh.)

Charlie - This was strictly volunteer, Sam. You didn't have to stay behind.

Sam - I know, I know. ...I guess I just forgot the first rule for every soldier: Do your mucking duty but never volunteer! (They laugh.)

Charlie - Seriously Steve, what's our chances of getting out of here - after we finish our job?

Steve - I can't say. You know as much as I do. They asked for volunteers. For a dangerous job. We're it. We are supposed to hold the fascists. The longer we can do it, the better chance the battalion has of getting back across the river.

Sam - And just how long do you think that will be?

Steve - Well, I figure we can hold out all day. We have plenty of ammunition. In any case, we can't move from here until dark. Tonight, we'll try to sneak through the fascist lines and swim the river. Of course, if they take your advice about tanks and artillery, that could upset our plans considerably.

Charlie - That's putting it mildly. Whose side are you on, anyhow, Sam? (He picks up the binoculars and looks toward the fascist lines.)

Steve - I'm hungry, fellows. (He reaches into the knapsack and takes out a loaf of bread and a can of marmalade. He opens the marmalade with a trench knife and pours it on a hunk of bread.) How about it?

Charlie - Sure, pass the caviar and turkey...Here Sam, have some.

Sam - (disgustedly) Caviar and turkey. Pan y marmalada. (He begins to fill a pipe.)

Steve - Well, we could only carry so much, and up here ammunition counts for more than food. No matter how things go we're not going to be here long enough to eat much.

Charlie - (singing) Ham and eggs we never see.

Fuck all sugar in the tea.

And we are gradually Fading away.

(They all sing.) Fading away.

Old soldiers never die, never die, never die. Old
soldiers never die, they merely fade away!
(laughter)

Sam - Don't get me wrong, fellows. I know this isn't Moscovitz-Lupowitz. All those bastards won't be lying at the bottom of the hill if we had been throwing matzoh balls at them. (He lights the pipe. Charlie lights a cigarette.)

Steve - It's really ironic, though. I remember the peace parades back home. We always had a slogan, 'Bread Not Bullets.' Yet the first chance I get to effectively influence a decision along those lines, what do I do? I choose bullets.

Charlie - I've always had my doubts about you, Steve. Now you've confirmed them. You are not a real Communist. You're one of those deviationists. A real Bolshevik would have said 'We Communists have always demanded bread instead of bullets!' You would have loaded us down with *pan* and left the ammo behind. And when the Moors attacked for the first time this morning, and it would have been the last time too, you would have maintained to the very end that your Marxist dogma was still correct. (He laughs.) Steve, I'm going to report you to the first Commissar we meet - if we get out of here alive. Yes sir, a dogmatic deviationist, that's what you are. For shame! Karl Marx, to say nothing of Lenin, must be spinning in his grave!

Steve - (laughing) A dogmatic deviationist - now I've been called everything. O.K., if it will make you happy, I'll gladly plead guilty to taking the ammo and leaving the edibles behind. (pause) But look here, my fine Catholic comrade, speaking of dogmas, aren't there just a few mixed up in your philosophical outlook?

Charlie - (fiercely) Sure there are. We Catholics admit them. Nay, glory in them. There are some things we accept on faith. They can't be explained scientifically. We believe them, that's all. There is no explanation, and none is necessary. But you God-damned red atheists spout your heads off about the scientific method, dialectics, etc., etc. And yet you're the worst dogmatists of them all. Why if the Pope was half as dogmatic as you guys, the College of Cardinals would option him out to the Baptist church league! (He stamps out the cigarette.)

Steve - O.K. comrade, O.K. Don't get your piss hot. Save it for our Moorish friends down there. (Pause) By the way, you know who brought them here, (Pause) to save Spain for Christianity? A noble Catholic gentleman named Francisco Franco.

Charlie - Don't call me comrade! I'm an anti-fascist volunteer! (They look at each other for a few moments and then burst out laughing.) Steve, I love you like a brother. You know you would make a real good Catholic. Nothing could shake your faith.

If this war lasts long enough, and we last with it, I'll convert you yet... but your crap about that *puta* Franco is as stupid as the rest of your Communist arguments. That bastard isn't a Catholic. For that matter he isn't even a Spaniard. Spaniards are a proud people. What true Spaniard would permit the Germans to come into his country and run things? What true Catholic would allow the Nazi bombing of Guernica? Do you know what distinguishes a real Catholic? A real Catholic is a man of compassion, of charity. Why,

Franco hasn't had an ounce of compassion or a charitable impulse since the Pope was an altar boy.

Steve - I'll sign a united front with you on those last remarks. (He grins.) And after the war is over, we'll discuss your joining the Party.

Charlie - (incredulously) Me -join the Party? Sure, sure. When you join the Society of Jesus.

Sam - Would you two philosophical combatants yield the floor for a few minutes to a mere corporal and permit Sam Levin to make a few last remarks for posterity? (He blows a cloud of smoke.) You're popping off about dogma, both of you. Well, we Jews are experts on dogma. After all, we've been victims of it for hundreds of years. Pharoahs and Popes, Czars and Commissars - they've all been pretty dogmatic about us Jews at one time or another. (He blows smoke into the air again.) To settle the argument, I say both you guys are right - about each other.

But I'm just a half-assed liberal, son of a Rabbi, and a mere corporal, to boot. So What should I know? Though come to think of it, I'm pretty important right now.

I'm holding up the fascist advance. And neither of you two philosophers can say more on that score.

Charlie - Oh Sam, you know we don't defend persecution of the Jews no matter who does it... That goes for any Popes who ever did you guys dirt.

Steve - And for my Commissars, too. (He looks over the parapet.)

Sam - I know you don't, I know you don't and I honor you for it. If I thought you did, I'd shoot you both. (They all laugh.) It's pretty quiet down there. I'd feel better if there was a little more activity. Not a whole lot more - just a little.

Charlie - Don't go stirring them up, Sam. If they want to take an early *siesta* you just let 'em do it. Personally, I'd like to put them all to sleep.

Sam - Yeah, permanently. (Silence for a few moments)

Charlie - Say Steve, what the hell is your rank now? You're a Captain, aren't you?

Steve - Yeah, why? Should be a Major but it hasn't come through yet.

Charlie- Oh nothing. I just wondered. You know I've never heard anyone call you Captain Haines. It's always just Steve.

Steve - Yeah, well we aren't the most disciplined army the world has ever seen, as far as minor details go. But that's not too important. Are we disciplined when we have to be, do we have it when it counts? That's the main thing. Spit and polish? Maybe not. Discipline - the real thing? Yes, absolutely!

Sam - You mean like right now? Like what's keeping us here?

Steve - That's right. No one forced us to take this assignment, and no one is forcing us to stay here. If we didn't have a real understanding of what's involved, and a strong sense of what our duty is, how could we discipline ourselves to endure a situation like this? Wouldn't it make sense to raise a white flag, to surrender? Maybe we'd get away with our lives. Spend some time in a fascist jail and then eventual repatriation. Or we could just pull out and fry to make it back across the river ourselves. We could rationalize it all out very nicely. We only want to stay alive to fight another day. We could justify it, and who would blame us?

Sam - Gee, I never thought of it like that. But what would happen to the guys back there - what's left of them?

Steve - Exactly. That's why we stay here. We're holding up the fascist advance. Our comrades have a better chance because of us. So when you guys call me Steve, instead of Captain Haines, I don't mark you down as undisciplined. Though in some armies you could be court martialed for less.

Charlie - Gee, I never realized I was such a disciplined son-of-a-bitch. When you explain things Steve, you make a guy feel real good even though he knows he's up the creek without a paddle. (Silence for a few moments. Sam drinks from a canteen, hands it to Charlie who drinks.) Steve, a little while ago you said when it gets dark we would fry to get through the fascist lines and swim the river. The enemy's in front of us. What did you mean by that? (He hands the canteen to Steve.)

Steve - By nightfall I figure we'll be just about surrounded. The whole area on this side of the river is pretty much in fascist hands right now. If our guys get across today, there won't be anything left over here but fascists and us. (He looks over the parapet again.) So you see fellows, it's real discipline, self-discipline, the only kind that really counts - born

of understanding - that's what keeps us here. We know what we've got to do. So we discipline ourselves to do it. (He corks the canteen and puts it down.) Even our understanding of duty comes into violent conflict with man's greatest urge: the desire to keep on living.

Sam - Steve, you don't think we're going to get out of here, do you?

Steve - (picks up the binoculars and looks through them) It is quiet down there. They're keeping their distance, all right. Christ, we really did get a bunch of them. This hill is covered with bodies.

Charlie - One of them just moved. He's trying to crawl... Now he's stopped - the poor bastard. I'll bet there's 300 dead fascists down there. Maybe 350...

Sam - Steve...

Steve - Well, we made them pay. Yes, we made them pay dearly, the bastards. (He puts the glasses down, slowly turns and faces Sam and Charlie who look questioningly at him. They stare at each other in silence as the scene ends.)

(Flamenco music is heard between the scenes.)

Scene 2. About noon

Sam - Not a movement down there. They sure are keeping their distance...Hey, fellows, maybe they've given up.

Charlie - Keep an eye peeled, Sam. Let us know when you see the white flag go up.

Sam - Wouldn't it be something now if we not only got back across the river, but took a couple of thousand prisoners with us? What a situation!

Charlie - Fully armed, Sam?

Sam - Sure, why not? Let's go the whole hog.

Steve - When you talk like that Sam, I can understand why the Jews survived all their persecutors. Companero, you are the supreme.

Sam - A Jew has to be an optimist. We've been getting it from all sides for so long we just naturally figure things can only get better. Look at our situation here. Unless Charlie can pray up a fill-fledged miracle, we're sunk. And even if he did, you wouldn't believe it seeing as how belief in miracles is against your Marxist principles. Me, personally, I've got my doubts but my mind is open. I'm willing to be shown. Anyhow, we've hit bottom here. We can't be any worse off. The result is I'm optimistic - even though I don't see any miracles on the immediate horizon. Any change that takes place can only be for the better. Of course, it's possible our situation won't change. But in that case, we will still be no worse off than we are now.

Charlie - Sam, there's a vital flaw in your argument somewhere, but you've confused it so thoroughly, I'm damned if I can see where. (He drinks from a canteen.) What I hate is this bloody waiting. (He begins to sing.)

"Waiting, waiting, waiting,

Always bloody well waiting."

(The others join in.)

"Waiting in the morning

Waiting in the night,

Waiting, waiting, waiting,
Always bloody well waiting,
God send the day when we'll
Bloody well wait no more."

Sam - That will be the day - when we bloody well wait no more.

Steve - Hey, that's an old Jarama song. I first heard the British sing it there. Only they sang "whiting, whmg, whiting."... Jarama... gee, it seems like a thousand years ago. We were sure we were going to smash fascism in those days. Madrid shall be the tomb of Fascism! We really believed it then. Even after February 27th.

Charlie - When I first arrived in Spain all I heard was February 27th, February 27th. Was it really as bad as all that?

Steve - Well catastrophes have a way of getting exaggerated in the retelling. But it was plenty bad enough... The worst thing about it was the shock of the whole business. Most of us had no idea what we were getting into. Very few of the Americans had any kind of military training at all. And we were naive as hell! The Fascist steel will bend like tin! Nopasaran! Rah, rah, rah, and boola, boola... Christ, what an awakening!

Sam - How many Americans were actually killed? I heard over 500.

Steve - I don't really know. It couldn't have been that many, though. We didn't have that many men on the front in February. I'd estimate maybe 300 killed and wounded. But the way it happened! That's what stands out in my mind. The group I was with reached the front on February 20, the day before the attack. We joined up with some Americans who had been in action for a week or more. We were given rifles and showed how to use them. A few lucky guys got to fire 2 rounds each. The next morning shortly before noon, we went over. It was a cold grey day and a light rain slicked the ground like glass. We were supposed to have plane and tank support plus artillery. But the planes and tanks never showed and the artillery barrage didn't bother the Fascists too much. Their machine gun fire was terrific. It was just awful. But the worst thing of all was the complete lack of understanding of what war was really like. Fellows, you won't believe this, but at one point a guy stood up out in no man's land between the trenches, with the Fascist machine

guns emitting death all around, he shouted at the enemy, "What are you trying to do? Kill somebody?"

Charlie - My first action was the Brunete campaign in the Guadaramas with the Washingtons. I still remember the Guadarama River - nothing but dry sand. You know we were warned about you Lincolns. By the comic-stars. "Don't pay any attention to those guys. They're a bunch of cynical bastards. They'll try to scare you with a lot of shit about Jarama. They're all demoralized!" After Brunete you couldn't have scared us with the Devil himself and we were just as cynical as the next one. In other words, we had become battle-scarred.

Sam - There's nothing like a war for creating cynics. Even those who don't have to fight, who just stay home and make money out of it, become cynical. But I guess they are the biggest cynics of all!

Charlie - And the fascists sure ruined our orders to avoid the Lincolns. Casualties were so heavy after a week's fighting, the Washingtons had to combine with the Lincolns. Even then we only had half a battalion.

Steve - It's funny, fellows, but do you what I remember most vividly about Jarama? The thing that sticks in my mind? The one thing I'll never forget? It's not February 27th, though I'll never forget that, or another attack we launched on April 9th, or the first 6 weeks of rain, or even the fact that we broke all records for the length of time any unit ever spent in the trenches without relief- 120 days. The one thing that stands out most was the me Slim Galen was court-martialled for disobeying an order. Every time I think of it, I have to laugh.

Charlie - I remember Slim. He was a good guy. He got it at Belchite.

Sam - Naw, Slim wasn't killed. He's back home now, the lucky bastard. But what was this court-martial business?

Steve - Well, after a while Jarama settled down to trench warfare. In fact that front hasn't been broken by either side right up to the present time. I doubt if it ever will be. We would put in a 4 hour of guard duty in the trenches and 8 hours off. The front was quiet, casualties at a minimum. Slim was in Big Mike's squad. Big Mike was a Ukrainian from Canada. Mike always demanded that his squad be relieved on time. So he was strict about relieving the squad on duty.

It was a warm sunny day in early June. We were sitting around by our dugouts 1520 yards behind the front line trench. Rifles were being cleaned, buttons sewed on, letters written to the folks back home. A few of the guys were snoozing and the others were just sitting around engaged in the favorite Jarama pasttime shooting the bull. Slim was sitting by his dugout, completely naked except for a pair of ropesoled sandals. He was engaged in a very important job - picking the lice out of his trousers. (He chuckles.)

Charlie - Slim was a funny guy. He was so tall and skinny! I remember him. About 6 feet 2, maybe 140 lbs., but no more. He was the only soldier I ever saw who would take cover behind his own rifle. A boyish face, straw-colored hair. A real funny guy. And he had a comic story for every occasion... He was a damned good soldier, though.

Steve - Yes, that was Slim. (The lights do down. When they come up the scene is the Jarama Front, June 1937. The front line trench runs across the rear of the stage. The heads of the soldiers on duty in the trench can be seen though the sandbags in front of them are above their heads.)

Big Mike - Time to go in a trench. Everybody get ready... Hey you, Slim, time to go in a trench.

Slim - O.K., Mike. I'll be ready in a minute. (He rises, fastens his ammo belt around his waist, slings the rifle over his shoulder and starts toward the trench with his pants over an arm.)

Mike - Time to go in a trench... Hey you, Slim, where you think you go?

Slim - Into the trench. I'm on guard duty now.

Mike - Whatsa matter with the pants? Why you no wear the pants?

Slim - Nothing, I'm picking the lice out of them and I'm not finished yet.

Mike - You can't go in a trench with no pants on.

Slim - Why not?

Mike - You put on a pants before you go in a trench.

Slim - Oh, no. I'm not finished yet.

Mike - You don't put on a pants, you don't go in a trench.

Slim - I ain't putting on these pants until I pick every god-damned louse out of them. They're biting the ass offa me.

Mike - You don't put on pants, you don't go in a trench, you don't go in a trench you disobey order. You disobey order you under arrest!

Slim - You're full of shit. I ain't disobeying no order.

Mike - You going in a trench? With the pants on? No?

Slim - I'm going on guard duty - yes! With no lousy pants on!

Mike - You under arrest!.. Hey there, Private Ross. You do gown to Battalion Headquarters. Tell Major Garrity Slim under arrest for disobeying order.

(Private Ross exits. Everyone is talking. Slim is explaining to a group gathered around him. Mike is doing the same. A few minutes later Major Garrity and Lieutenant Haines enter.)

Major - Quiet everybody! Now what the Hell is going on here? (Slim and Mike both begin to explain. Others chime in.)

Major- Wait a minute, wait a minute! Corporal Bednarik, what's this all about?

Mike - I give Slim order. He refuses to obey. American soldier no discipline.

Major- Private Galen, what's your version? And what are you doing? Starting a nudist colony? Why are you cavorting with no clothes on?

Slim - I was picking the lice out of my pants, Major. I did not refuse to obey an order. (Everyone starts talking again.)

Major - Quiet, God damn it! Corporal Bednarik, do you officially charge Private Galen with refusal to obey a lawfully given order?

Mike - Yes sir, Major. No discipline American soldier. No discipline!

Major - All right. We'll convene a court-martial right here and settle this business now. A couple of you men run down to Battalion Headquarters and bring up 3 chairs and a table. (3-4 men exit.) I'll appoint Lieutenant Haines and Private Goss to sit with me in judgment to decide whether or not regulations of the Spanish Republican army have been violated.

(The Major who was at first annoyed, is now obviously enjoying the humor of the situation. The chairs and a small table are brought. The 3 judges seat themselves.)

Major- I now declare this court-martial officially in session. Mike, will you present the prosecution's case?

Mike - Yes, Sir.

Major - Slim, do you wish counsel?

Slim - No, Sir. I'll defend myself. My cause is just.

Major- All right. The prosecution will proceed.

Mike - Who, me? Well, it's time to go in a trench. I round up my squad. I always relieve the other squad on time. Slim wants to go in a french with no pants on. I order him to put on a pants. He say no. He refuse. He disobey order. I say no pants, no trench. He say I full of shit. I place him under arrest for disobeying order. .. No discipline American soldier, no discipline. Very bad, very bad.

Major - Are you finished, Mike?

Mike - Yes, sir. Anti-fascist army must have discipline.

Major - Slim, present your defense. And Slim, would it violate any of your principles to put your frousters on now? After all, this is a court room. in a manner of speaking.

Slim - No sir, Major. A man should always wear his pants in a court room. He should be properly dressed even if they are foll of lice. But a tENCH is different. It doesn't matter there. (He quickly puts on his trousers.) Well Major, and Lieutenant Haines and Tommy, I mean your Honors. I was sitting here picking the lice out of my pants. They were biting the ass...they were eating me alive. Mike comes along to get his squad ready for guard duty. Mike is strict about relieving the squad on duty on time. I'll say that for him! So I got ready and started to go into the trench but Mike stops me. He prevented me from carrying out my duty as an anti-fascist soldier. Then he put me under arrest and sent a messenger down to Battalion Headquarters - taking you away from your important military duties and causing all this commotion and this court-martial. Why if we had more guys like Mike in command, Franco would be in Madrid in a week.

Major - Did you refuse to go into the trench for guard duty?

Slim - No sir, I did not!

Mike - But he refuse to put on a pants!

Major- I won't ask if anyone else wants to present evidence. I have a feeling that it would only confuse things even further if that's possible. The court will now discuss the evidence. We will render a verdict shortly. (The judges confer. After some discussion, the Major calls for order.)

Major- Silence, silence! Court is again in session. We have considered all the evidence and we have arrived unanimously at the following conclusion: Corporal Bednarik is reality gave two orders to Private Galen. One to go into the trench on guard duty. The other to put his trousers on. Private Slim was quite willing and indeed tried to obey the first order, but declined to obey the order to put on his pants on the grounds that they were lice-ridden. The order to go into the trench was obviously a reasonable and necessary one. The court is not willing to come to any conclusion, at this time, without delving into the matter much more deeply, at a future date, as to the reasonableness or necessity, or even the legality, of the second order - the one about the pants. However, military discipline cannot be suspended while intricate questions are in the process of being resolved. There's a war going and we therefore order that the following compromise be put into full force and effect immediately: Private Galen will obey the order of his superior, Corporal Bednarik, and go into the trench on guard duty - with his trousers on. However, if Private Galen so desires, he may bring charges, in against Corporal Bednarik's right to be a non-commissioned officer. That is the verdict of this court. Slim, are you satisfied with the verdict?

Slim - Yes, Sir. I'll go on guard duty right away and bring charges against Mike. Anyone who would order a man to wear pants full of lice isn't fit to be in command!

(He exits toward the trench.)

Major - Mike, are you satisfied with the verdict?

Mike - Yes, Sir. I'm satisfy. What would fascists think if they saw American soldier in a trench with no pants on?

Major - Court is adjourned! Bring the chairs and table. (The Major and Lieutenant exit. Two soldiers rush on stage.)

First Soldier - What's all the excitement? What's going on here?

Private Goss - What's all the excitement? Where have you been anyway? We just had a court martial that's what's all the excitement.

Second Soldier - A court-martial?

Private Goss - Yeah, a court-martial. Me and Major Garrity and Lieutenant Haines just court-martialled the Hell out of Slim.

Second Soldier No kidding? Are they gonna shoot him? Private Goss - Nah. But he has to wear his pants from now on.

First Soldier- We'll here's some news. Today's our 100th day in the front lines.

Third Soldier - Big news. I thought you were going to tell us side took Hill 657. Or that 7 fascists reported to our lines - fillly armed.

First Soldier- So we wrote a song about it. To the tune of the Red River Valley. Want to hear it?

Several - Sure. Let's hear it. Sing it. Sure, sure. Sing it!

First and Second Soldiers (singing)

There's a valley in Spain called Jarama, It's a
place that we all know too well.

'Twas there we wasted our young manhood, And
most of our old age as well.

From this valley they tell us we're leaving,

Do not hasten to bid me adieu.

Though we may take our departure, We'll be
back in an hour or two.

Oh, we are proud of our Lincoln Battalion,

And the marathon record it's made.

Please do us this little favor,

And take this last word to Brigade.

You will never be happy with strangers, They
would not understand you as we.

Remember the Jarama River Valley,

And the old men who wait patiently.

(The lights dim then come up on Steve, Charlie and Sam. The singing can still be heard very softly. They listen in silence.)

Sam - What a situation! They must have been great days.

Charlie - Yes, they must have been. I'm sorry I missed Jarama.

Steve - Yes, they were great days. For four solid months we held the lines. In cold and heat, in rain and drought. Untrained, undisciplined, naive. America's first fighting anti-fascists. But we learned. We fortified our positions. We dug in. Christ, how we dug! We mastered the rifle, the machine gun, the grenade. We tended our wounded and we buried our dead. Yes, we buried our dead - behind the lines, beneath the olive trees.. .and mourned them too. When finally we said goodbye, we left behind a single monument: a few stones piled around a fallen comrade's helmet and a heartfelt slogan chalked on a slab of wood - 'Our victory Shall be Your Vengeance!' (Pause) But the important thing - we stopped them! Yes, by God, we stopped the bastards! The life line to Madrid remained intact, was never cut. When we arrived in winter's cold 'They Shall Not Pass' was a hopeful slogan. But when we left in summer's heat, 'No Pasaran 'was a page in history! Yes, they were great days. The days of our pure and innocent youth. How young we were and how long ago it all seems now! Two years if you think of it like that, but ages and ages ago when you measure it by the blood of the men who died that Spain might live. Ages and ages ago when you think of all the opportunities the world has lost. Yes, those were great days!

(The lights go down as the scene ends.)

Scene 3 - About three hours later. (Sam fires a couple of bursts from the machine gun.)

Steve - What's up, Sam?

Sam - Nothing, nothing. Just letting them know we're still here.

Charlie - Well for Christ's sake, cut it out. You want to start a war or something? They know bloody well we're still here. (Steve looks through the binoculars.) Say, do you remember Brunete, Steve? That was my first action. I got shot through the shoulder the very first day in Villanueva de la Canada. Went right in and right out. No bones broken. But I laid out in that damned wheat field from 1 o'clock in the afternoon until about six. It must have been 120 degees in the July sun. Then I made a run for it. Were you ever chased by bullets? Christ, what a peculiar feeling! I used to do a good deal of hunting back home during the deer season. Now I know what a wounded animal feels when it's fleeing the hunter's gun. Once I stumbled and fell. I was running a zig-zag to make it tougher for them and I heard one of our guys about 100 yards away call out: "I think they got Charlie." I laid there for about five minutes or so, never moving a muscle, to get my breath and maybe convince the fascists they had killed me. Then I jumped up and made a run for it and got home free. God, was I happy when I tumbled behind that little rise, and was with friends again!

Sam - No matter how many you're with when you go into an attack, you're all alone out there once it begins.

Charlie - I thought I better have some iodine put on the two little holes the bullet made, but you know there was absolutely no medical supplies left. Nothing. Not a damned bandage even! At first I couldn't talk. It was funny. My mouth kept going but nothing came out. I had no saliva, my body was completely drained of all moisture. Well, someone gave me a canteen and I emptied it pretty fast. Then the words came. Or rather the questions. Armitage? Dead. Max? Killed - shot through the stomach. Mooch? He's O.K. You couldn't kill that son-of-a-bitch. John Oscar? Dead - shot in the head. Hank? Just wounded - the lucky bastard. He'll be O.K. And so it went. I had to ask the questions even though I dreaded hearing the answers. What a god-damned way for a man to live - killing other men!

Steve - (quietly) There is not other way, Charlie. If the Spanish people hadn't resisted, if they hadn't fought back - would the world be better off?

Charlie - I understand, I understand. The world owes a debt to these people it will never be able to repay. There is no other way. I know it. Not against fascism. And they have shown us how it must be done. But that makes it even more horrible. The incontestable fact is that peace-loving men must fight in order that there can be peace. You who hate killing must kill in order to stop the protagonists of slaughter. Decent, honorable men, who just want to live and build a little better world, must die so that those who would dishonor mankind shall not inherit the earth. Oh Christ! What a rotten world we live in!

Sam - It's a pretty rotten world, all right. Still, I wish my chances of living on this lousy earth were at least slightly better than they appear right now!

Steve - Charlie, you have stated the dilemma of our times, the question every man must face today. Will you take your stand no matter what the consequences, no matter where it leads, no matter what sacrifices it entails? Are you for victory over fascism, complete and thorough victory, nothing less, or will you temporize in the vain hope of postponing the inevitable? Humanity cannot save itself with embargoes and non-interventions and appeasement. That's what's at stake here Not just the cause of democratic Spain - but the future of all mankind!

Sam - You are right, Steve. Every man must make his choice or cease to claim to be a man. I know I've made mine.

Charlie - We all have, Sam - we all have. (Steve examines the canteens.)

Steve - We need water. One of you guys fill the canteens. There's a spring about 50 yards back there. We passed it on our way up this morning.

Sam - I remember. I'll go. (He takes the canteens and exits.)

Charlie - I was thinking, Steve.

Steve - About what, Charlie?

Charlie - Oh, about us here. The 3 of us. Me, you, Sam. You're a Communist, Sam's a Jew and some kind of a liberal. Me, I'm a Roman-Catholic. Never much interested in political parties. Here we are - 3 Americans, thousands of miles from home, holding back the advance of fascism in a mountain pass in sunny Spain. And not knowing if there's going to be any tomorrow. A strange combination, huh? The 3 of us.

Steve - Not really so strange, Charlie. The strangeness is only superficial. Actually, it's been duplicated all over Spain now for some time. Not the exact example you cite, but people of various beliefs, setting aside their differences, to unite against the common enemy.

Charlie - I guess you're right. It kind of proves that the few really big things that should unite all decent men are far more important than the many issues that divide them. Too bad the whole world hasn't learned this lesson of Spain.

Steve - Well, I'm not a pessimist but I don't know how it can be avoided. Hitler won't stop until he's stopped.

Charlie - There's something I can't understand about you, Steve. A man like you, with your ideals, a man who believes so fervently in the brotherhood of man. How can you reject the fellowship of Christ? It's incomprehensible to me. How can you deny God? How?

Steve - Religion has never interested me. Superstition has never impressed me. Besides, God, religion, superstition, whatever you want to call it, has always been on the side of the oppressor, for the status quo, against man's efforts to free himself from the bondage of ignorance. No, Charlie, don't offer God to me. I have no need of Him. A long time ago I once read something by Bobbie Burns that sums up my feelings:

'A fig for those by law protected, Liberty's a
glorious feast!

Courts for cowards were erected,

Churches built to please the priest!"

(There is silence for a few moments. Charlie is about to speak when suddenly a shot is heard from Sam's direction.)

Steve - What's that? Quick, see what happened. (Charlie has already grabbed his rifle and is off. In a few minutes, he and Sam return with a prisoner.)

Sam - (Joyfully) I got me a prisoner! I got me a prisoner!

Steve - What happened?

Sam - I almost stepped on him. He was drinking at the spring. He went for his rifle and it's lucky for him I shot fast or he'd be dead, instead of wounded. Better bandage him. His shoulder's bleeding. (He gets bandage from the knapsack and bandages the Moor.)

Charlie - I wonder how he got there? Maybe there's more of them back there.

Sam - I don't think so. If there were, my shot would have brought them.

Steve - He's probably lost contact with his unit and was just wandering around.

Sam - Hey, fellows, maybe we can arrange an exchange. Him for us. Charlie - Fat chance. What are we going to do with him?

Steve - Better make him a sling. We'll hold onto him we decide. He looks pretty sick to me. (The Moor sits down and retches.) Tie his ankles. Though I don't think he's in any condition to run.

Sam - Boy, this is really something! First Moor I ever captured. I ought to get a medal for this!

Charlie - Yeah, the Congressional Medal of Honor. If there's anything we don't need now, it's a wounded, sick Moor. Now, if you had captured Franco we'd be in a bargaining position.

Sam - You're just jealous, Charlie. Jealous because you won't be able to tell your grandchildren how you captured a Moor in Spain.

Charlie - I'm jealous all right. But that's not why. I'm jealous of the guys who are going to live to have grandchildren.

Sam - Anyhow, this is my biggest thrill since Quinto.

Steve - Quinto was your first action, wasn't it?

Sam - Yeah, Quinto. Hey, that was a battle for you. We poured into that town like nothing. It was beautiful, just beautiful. And very few casualties too.

Steve - You know we got a unit citation for that job? The whole 15th Brigade. From General Pozas in command of all the armies on the Aragon front. (He takes out a wallet, looks through it and extracts a faded clipping.) I clipped this from the Volunteer For Liberty.

Here's what it says: 'General Walter, Commander 35th division. I send my most enthusiastic congratulations to all in that brave division, and to the 11 and 1.9 Brigades for the heroism and fighting spirit shown in the brilliant action of the taking of Quinto... Forward the 35th Division! Signed Pozas, General in Command. '

Charlie - The 1 Brigade - That's the Germans. The anti-Hitler Germans. They're great - just great!

Steve - They sure are. There isn't a better outfit in Spain.

Sam - Remember the briefing we got the day before the attack from General Walter? He was one Pole. I'd hate to bump into him on a dark night on a lonely street. (Sam assumes the role of General Walter. He throws out his chest, strides back and forth and speaks in short, sharp, concise phrases.) 'Every unit will carry out its orders without fail. When the order is given to advance, every unit will advance. If any unit fails to advance, for any reason, I will personally investigate as to why. '

Steve - I was translating. Walter spoke Polish, Russian and German but no English. You could have heard a pin drop. Until Charlie here broke the tension.

Charlie - You tell the General, Steve, we'll take that mucking town like Grant took Richmond... But let's not talk about it.

Sam - Maybe you should talk about it. Talk about it, get it out of your mind and forget it. It's been bothering you for a long time now, Charlie. Get it off your chest. You have nothing to blame yourself for. Nothing to feel guilty about. Well, I did the same thing.

Charlie - I can't get it out of my mind. I can't forget it! I'll never forget it! Christ, I wish I could!

Steve - But I gave the order, Charlie. And anyhow you've killed lots of men in this way - as recently as a few hours ago.

Charlie - That's different. It's not the same. It's not the same at all. Those others could have killed me. It was me or them... Doesn't it even bother you, Sam?

Sam - Does Hitler worry about some poor Jew killed in a concentration camp? Does Franco grieve for the victims of the Badajoz bull ring? For the women and children of Guernica? No, it doesn't bother me, Charlie. I lose no sleep over a dead fascist and how

he got that way gives me no nightmares. I sleep soundly - when I get the chance - and so should you. You have nothing to be ashamed of, to feel guilty about.

Steve - You remember the women? The hatred in their faces... the anguish? Don't worry about it Charlie. Don't feel guilty. The man was a fascist. He got exactly what he God-damned well deserved.

Charlie - (shouting) But in cold blood, God damn it! In cold blood! God have mercy on me!

(The lights fade. When they come up again the scene is the town square, Quinto, August, 1937. The entrance to the church is on the extreme right. Steve, Sam, Charlie and 6-8 other Lincolns are on the stage. Also a few old men and several women from the town. Five enemy soldiers file out of the church, arms upraised.)

Five Soldiers - 'Viva Russia, Viva Russia, Viva!'

Steve - That looks like the last of them. One hundred-fifteen in all. Silencio, silencio! They really believe Franco's propaganda. They think we're Russians. Sergeant Reeves, take another man and escort the prisoners back to Brigade headquarters with the others.

Old Woman - Mas, mas! (She points to church.) Mas! Dos, Dos! (She holds up two fingers.)

Steve - Charlie, Sam, take a look Be careful. (They cross the rubble in front of the church entrance and enter. A few minutes later they come out with two Spaniards in civilian clothes.

The women - (shouting and screaming) 'Murderers! Assassins! (One woman tried to claw one of the men.)

Steve - Who are these men?

Young Woman - I speak English, Senor Commander. He (pointing) is head of the Falange in this town. He is Commander of the Civil Guard. Their hands are red with blood. They kill her son. They torture her husband. He die. Fascistas! (She spits out the word. Charlie and Sam look at Steve. He looks at the women and then nods.)

Steve - Bump them!

Sam - I'll take this one, Charlie. You take El Caudillo.

(He shoots the Civil Guard Commander in the head. The women make the sign of the cross over themselves.)

Falange Leader - (falling to his knees) No tierra, no tierra!

(Charlie hesitates, looks at the women. There is no pity in their faces. Only hatred. He shoots the falangist. The women cross themselves and exit.)

Steve - Let's go, fellows. We'll be moving out before long. I think we're going to hit Belchite next. And no one - not even Napoleon - ever took that town.

Sam - We'll take it.

(Steve and Sam exit. Charlie gazes at the dead men. He turns abruptly and exits. The spotlight is on the dead men. Blackout.)

Scene 4 About two hours later.

(As the scene opens, the three men are seated behind the machine gun emplacement. The Moor is sitting in the same spot as before. He is listening to the three who are singing.)

Viva la Quince Brigada,

Rumbala, rumbala, rum-ba-la
(repeat)

Que se atribuye la gloria,

Ay Manuela, ay Manuela!
(repeat)

Luchamos contra los moros,

Rumbala, rumbala, rum-ba-la
(repeat)

Mercenaries y fascistas,

Ay Manuela, ay Manuela!
(repeat)

Todo nuestro deseo,

Rumbala, rumbala, rum-ba-la
(repeat)

Acabar con el fascismo,

Ay Manuela, ay Manuela
(repeat)

En el frente de Jarama,

Rumbala, rumbala, rum-ba-la

(repeat)

No tenemos triadores,
Ni tanques, ni
canones,

Ay Manuela!

(repeat)

Ya salimos de la Espana,

Rumbala, rumbala, rum-ba-la

(repeat)

Luchamos otros frentes,

Ay Manuela, ay Manuela!

(repeat)

Sam - It was after Quinto but just before we moved up to Belchite. About a dozen of us were sitting around - shooting the bull - taking it easy. What were we talking about? What would 12 guys be talking about? Women. There were 3-4 seamen in the group and they had an advantage over the rest of us. Being seamen, they had been around. And lie? I never met a seaman who wasn't a god-damn liar. It must be something in the salt air. Philadelphia - he was the worst. There wasn't a country in the world he hadn't visited and to hear him talk, he had to fight off the women in every one of them. And you remember what a short, sawed-off, ugly little son-of-a-bitch he was. Well, the seamen hogged the conversation pretty much until finally someone said, 'Hey Mexico, how about the women in your country?' Mexico, you remember him. Not Crazy Mexico - the other one - just sat there silently like he hadn't heard. Then he looked up, blinked both eyes, and said quietly, 'In my county they pee sitting down too.' (laughter) That Philadelphia. What a lying bastard (*mentiroso*) he was.

Charlie - (singing) I want to go home, I
 want to go home,

(The others join in.)

The machine guns they rattle,
The cannons they roar, I don't want to go
To the front anymore!
Oh take me over the sea,
Where the fascists can't get at me,
Oh, my! I'm too young to die, I want
to go home!

Charlie - Maybe you guys think I'm kidding. We'll I'll let you in on a little secret I'm not.

Sam - Many a true word has been spoken in jest.

Steve - Call the tourist bureau and book passage for three - first class.

Charlie - Oh, I wouldn't go if it wasn't first class. After all, I've grown accustomed to nothing but the best.

Steve - Wonder what our Moorish friend is thinking? I'll bet he thinks we're nuts.

Charlie - Want to know something? He would be right. (He looks through the binoculars.) I don't understand it. Another couple of hours and it will be dark. What are they waiting for?

Steve - Let 'em wait. The longer the better.

Sam - You said it. Wouldn't it be something if we make it out of this dead end?

Charlie - Steve! Sam! There's some action down there. I think they're moving again. Yeah, they're moving. (He hands the binoculars to Steve.)

Steve - It's another attack, all right. Hold your fire until I give the word. There's not so many this time... O.K. boys, let them have it! (They fire rapidly. Charlie throws several grenades.)

Steve - Hold it, hold it! They're running.

Charlie - Well, that was a short one. The shortest yet. We're still here.

Steve - No, no, hold your fire. I'll stop him at 25 yards. He must want to parley with us.
(He shouts) Alto!

Voice - Que es su nacionalidad?

Sam - Tell him we're Russians. That's what he expects to hear. **Steve** - Somos Americanos.

Voice - I am Captain Raphael Alfonso Lopez y Garcia. What is your rank?

Steve - Captain Steve Haines, Spanish Republican Army.

Lopez - Good, then I can talk to you.

Steve - What do you want?

Lopez - What are Americans doing here? We were informed by our intelligence that all Americans were killed or captured over a month ago. Our intelligence is never wrong.

Steve - You are misinformed. What do you want?

Lopez - Your own government does not support your interference in Spanish affairs. You are in Spain against the wishes of the United States government. How can this be?

Sam - (patting the machine gun) Let me give him a haircut, Steve.

Charlie - Tell him to get to the point or fuck off.

Steve - We are here with the support of the American people. We have the backing of the Spanish people and the Republican government - the only legal government in Spain.

Charlie - Jesus Christ! I think Steve's trying to recruit him.

Lopez - There is no more Republican government and the people are sheep. They do not have the courage or the intelligence to support anything.

Steve - State your business, Captain Lopez. What do you want?

Lopez - My business. Ah, yes, my business. Captain Haines, you and your compatriots are brave men. We have no overwhelming desire to kill you.

But you must know your position is hopeless. There are very few of you. We are many. If you surrender immediately we will treat you as prisoners of war under the Geneva Convention. In time you will be repatriated to your own country. Your lives will be saved. The Communist government - the Republican government, as you call it Captain, is finished forever. Forever, Captain. Your cause, if you ever had a cause here, is lost. Why throw away your lives uselessly?

Steve - And if we refuse?

Lopez - If you refuse you will surely die. All of you. We have tanks and artillery now. We can get planes quickly. We will use them all if we must. You have no choice. It is surrender now or death.

Charlie - Well Sam, it looks like they're taking your advice. And throwing in planes for good measure.

Sam - I hope it turns out like some other advice I've given in the past. Bad luck to them.

Steve - I can't give you an immediate answer. I'll have to confer with the Colonel. (Sam and Charlie look around. Sam points a finger at himself.) Come back in an hour and we'll let you know.

Lopez - We will give you 15 minutes. No more.

Steve - A half hour. We need time to talk it over.

Lopez - There is nothing to discuss. Fifteen minutes. Put a white handkerchief on a bayonet and wave it. If we do not see the white cloth in 15 minutes, we launch an all-out attack... Captain Haines.

Steve - Yes?

Lopez - Captain Haines - a question. Ordinarily I would not ask, and would not expect you to answer if I did. But your position is hopeless, you cannot maintain this situation much longer. I am sure you realize that. In any case, I will soon know. Captain, how many men do you have under your command?

Steve - (to Sam and Charlie) He wants to know how many of us there are. Shall I tell him?

Sam - What's the difference? He won't believe you anyway.

Charlie - Sure, tell him, Steve. Tell him three Americans, operating without the consent of the United States government, have been holding up his boat ride across the river since 5 am this morning.

Sam - Tell him if we had three more we would pin him down here for six weeks.

Steve - There are three of us, Captain.

Lopez - Three? Only three? Madre Mia! Captain Haines, be sensible. Surrender. It is not dishonorable. Save your lives.

Steve - One last word, Captain. Why did you wait so long? Why didn't you use tanks and artillery before this?

Lopez - Why did we wait so long?... Yes, why did we wait so long. .. (He hesitates.) Captain Haines, I will be frank with you. Besides saving your own lives, you can do me a small favor by surrendering. All of my men, the Spanish officers, the Moorish soldiers, served under our great leader Generalissimo Francisco Franco in Morrocco. We are the elite of the Nationalist army. To be forced to employ tanks and big guns against such a small force would cause us to -- how do you say it? lose face. You have already held up for many hours. We should have crossed the river hours ago. You have covered yourselves with glory. What more could you want? As one soldier to another, I appeal to you. Save yourselves. Throw down your arms, and in saving yourselves do me this favor.

Sam - Now they are begging for favors. Tell him we want Franco to ask us. I'd like to hear that bastard beg.

Charlie - Did you hear that? Did you hear that? We did it, by God we did it! He admits it. We stopped them! Franco's elite. 'You covered yourselves with glory,' he says. Well, is that what they think we're fighting for? The stupid bastards.

Glory? Gloria y pesetas, gloria y Franco, gloria y fascismo. We're fighting for people, you God-damned fools. People, not glory. But you wouldn't understand that. Glory? We're not collecting it. We're dishing it out. Come and get it, you bastards. A one-way ticket to glory

and no return. Come and get it... Christ, I feel great. Let them come. (He suddenly notices the Moor.) Steve, let's let him go!

Steve - A good idea, Charlie. The poor bastard is half scared to death. Probably doesn't know what the score is anyhow. A fine idea. Even though they won't understand it. Cut him loose! Captain Lopez!

Lopez - Yes?

Steve - Here's a present for you. (Sam has freed the Moor but he does not realize he is free.)

Sam - Scram - beat it - vamoose. Get the Hell out of here. (The Moor approaches the parapet, looks around in disbelief, climbs up and over and is gone.)

And tell all your friends we believe in life not death. Tell them we could have slit your throat. Instead we gave you freedom. And tell them Franco is a God-damned whore!... Thanks for the promotion, Steve.

Steve - Promotion?

Sam - Yeah, Ain't I the Colonel you were talking about? (They laugh.) You don't think they would treat us as prisoners of war?

Steve - (shakes his head) NO.

Charlie - Look at that hillside, Sam.

Sam - No, I didn't think so either. (Silence)

Steve - Well, fellows, we don't have much time. I guess everything's in order.

Charlie - Steve - I'm going to pray.

Sam - I guess I will too. I want to say a few prayers myself.

Steve - Sure, fellows, sure. (He turns toward the machine gun, picks up the binoculars and gazes over the parapet.)

Charlie - God, I wish I had a priest to confess me.

Sam - (softly) I wish I had a rabbi.. .Poor papa... He could never understand why I had to go to Spain. How will he ever understand this? (He moves away and prays silently, standing, head bowed. Charlie also prays silently, but kneeling. He holds a crucifix in front of him that he has taken from around his neck. Charlie rises and is about to speak but stops when he sees Sam is still meditating. Sam turns around.)

Charlie - I've made my peace with God.

Sam - I too am at peace with the Lord. (They look at Steve.)

Steve - I am at peace with myself. My conscience is clear. We did what we had to do. All of us. I have no regrets. None. Except maybe we should have done it better.

Charlie - When the time comes, no man can say more.

Sam - Some day the Spanish people will build a monument to the men who fought for Spain.

Steve - Sure they will. They'll build a land of peace and freedom. That will be our monument.

Charlie - A monument of tuth and love and liberty.

Sam - Of dignity and equality.

Charlie - Spain will become a land of joy and laughter and song. It must! I know it will! We didn't fight in vain. There's meaning to our sacrifice. I'm sure of it.

Sam - Where children no longer gaze at the sky in fear and dread.

Steve - Where the good earth and the good people complement each other. (A shell screams overhead and explodes to the rear.) It's starting, fellows.

(They rush to their stations.)

Charlie - Sam, Steve, if this is it, let's go defring them - right to the end. Let's sing. How about that German song? Some of them will understand German.

Steve - All right, Charlie.

Charlie - They'll understand that three Americans living, breathing, cursing, praying, singing, fighting, dying defiance to fascism and all the bastards who spawn it! That's all I want them to understand.

Steve - Good, good. It's O.K. with you, Sam?

Sam - It's one of my favorite songs.

(Shells are now exploding on all sides.)

Steve - Here they come. Get ready. O.K. give it to them! Let 'em have it! Death to fascism!

(The three Americans are firing as rapidly as possible. Smoke from exploding shells begins to envelop the stage. Their voices rise in song in a last act of defiance.)

Spaniens Himmel breitet seine Sterne

Ueber unsre Schutzengraeben aus.

Und der Morgen gruesst schon aus der Ferne, Bald geht
es zum neuen Kampfhinaus.

Die Heimat ist weit,

Doch wir Sind bereit.

Wir kampfen und siegenfur dich: Freiheit!

Dem Fascisten werden wir nicht weichen,

Schickt er auch die Kugeln hageldicht

Mit uns stehn Kameraden ohne gleichen,

Und ein Rueckwaerts gibt esfuer un nicht.

Spanish heavens spread their brilliant starlight High
above our trenches in the plain:

From the distance moming comes to greet us, Calling us
to battle once again.

(Refrain):

Far off is our land,

Yet ready we stand.

We're fighting and dying for you: Freedom!

We'll not yield a foot to Franco's fascists, Even
though the bullets fall like sleet.

With us stand those peerless men, our comrades, And for
us there can be no retreat.

(Refrain)

(The lights dim and go out)