

(Had to write this (Memorandum) for a friend who To help keep his memory -
While in Paris, France, studying drawing and painting, fresco etc,
the situation in Spain seemed acute enough to demand more than verbal
support and after long thought and preparation, (letters home to be
delivered, sent, weekly by a friend in Paris etc,) sought out the means
to join the International brigade.

First step was a place that gave medical examinations and passing that
I was put with a British group and we traveled by train? bus?
disguised as tourists to ~~the~~ south France staging point. I vaguely
seem to recall farmhouses that received us and small towns but no names
No one in the group was known to me and I don't recall any long conversations

The actual crossing began a dark night, met by Spaniards, guide
and the walk itself remains obscure. I don't recall any problems.

First night was spent in a village loft, hay, no blankets, I think I
recall a military presence soldiers walking about etc. Impression
remains that we stayed there briefly, perhaps moving out at once,
whether ~~by~~ ^{By} train or truck remains a question but I do recall a
truck ride and arriving at or passing through a village tavern or?
from which I heard flamenco? or ^{old} ~~Spanish~~ music.

I recall some staging point where I met many of the lincolns, ^{who had been there a while} and
became aware of some of the difficulties and disasters of the war,
the advanced weaponry, ^{etc} artillery that came like machine gun fire, a few
old timers went out of their way to let us know of what we faced.
Perhaps this episode was an ^{at} ~~at~~ ^{clear} ~~at~~ time and it seems that it was
brief.

Along this line I recall learning how to straddle a ditch for defecating
this may have been earlier. Of course in France I had the experience
of regular use of a ^{hole} ~~hole~~ in the floor and a shower like means after.

There are various memories of more hiking and perhaps truck drives,
sleeping in farmhouses, ^{or} ~~or~~ barns, awakened and waiting and then moving on
or driven ~~somewhere~~

I recall another place where we were taken to eat and where I became aware dramatically of the population's hunger problems. Up to Spain, ~~beans of any sort~~ ^{ON} beans of any sort were not my favorite food and as I ~~think~~ ^{think} was,

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few no better than to empty my ~~canteen~~ ^{plate} in a barrel there, ^{to} the ~~solely aggressive~~ ^{solely aggressive} style looks of waiting villagers. This memory remains vivid. (guilt?)

Vague memory of being part of a larger group, company, battalion in a place where some prisoners were held, very few. (Recall the guy who had been a boxer there and later saw him often in New York area.)

But soon did become part of the special machine gun battalion and there I met you and began to make friends with others, there I ~~xxxxxxx~~

I recall a kind of headquarters with a place for news items and things the people wanted to put up, and morale boosting items etc. Can't recall

how and where we were put up, (some building or small structures we learned build? chabollas?)

We would meet for morning coffee in a large open ^{outdoor} space where it was poured and bread distributed (a round loaf) that was to last the day

I believe in this village and environs, we did considerable training.

we learned to handle the maxim, ^{machine gun} take it apart, clean it, as well as marksmanship with rifles. We would daily as I recall do all sorts

formations running, dropping, wriggling in irregular patterns, etc.

also lots of marching drill but emphasis was I believe on being able

to move the body over terrain seeking cover, and avoiding fire while moving forward. I recall a stone church and the villagers.

but ~~no~~ ^{no} real contact ~~at~~ Our whole group was put in ^{one} this co, including the English. ^{I think}

I recall that here we didn't dig a trench for defecation but rather just did our thing on the terraces used in farming. I recall a ~~xxxxxxx~~ ^{xxxxxxx}

Some time later we went on a long trek to another village.

(flateralla?) ~~xxxxxxx~~

I recall a ^{hike} march and thirst and how the german commadant stopped us from drinking from ponds pointing to the junk in it.
(was that this ^{hike} march or another after the ebro ?)

Anyway in this area above a small abandoned village we trained further, but mostly waited. We dug in at once, finding various cover and I recall the regular bombing which struck terror when it seemed to come close. and somewhere in all this

3 ~~FOR YEARS~~ FOR YEARS in Ny and wherever, I'd automatically look for possible cover (in case.)

I recall another episode where one of the English friends had captured a chicken and other such and prepared dinner for a group of us.

(This chap later had a leg nearly blown off and I visited him in the monastery where we later were recuperating from wounds.)

but we had no casualties ^{there} from the bombing that I know about

We stayed here for some time and then I think that next we were moved to a hillside position overlooking ~~some~~ ^{or} closer to the front lines.

There we built a fortified position for the gun and I believe that by the I had been made ~~into~~ a corporal and more spanish were in each group so ours was isolated but recall a visit to field headquarters where Milt Wolf was for what reason ^{civilian} I can not recall. I do remember that I was still ~~where~~ wearing a trench coat that I had come with and felt that I looked like anything but a soldier. ^{soldier}

In this position, instructions were to fire warning shots at any troops that seemed to be retreating. The one time our group saw some such movement

I was at the gun and it was said, never verified, that my shots had not been high enough and had wounded someone. This has been another guilty fear or memory. But the Spanish comrades were angry with me. I get the VAGUE IMPRESSION THAT I was alone with the spanish fellows. This remained a problem as I never learned to understand and speak spanish adequately. From this position or visa versa we were moved to some hill or mountain position where we relieved others. There, the gun positions were already in place and we kept a watchful eye on movement below. But nothing much happened relative to our position and later we were relieved. or moved. not sure where we went.

And ~~in~~ somewhere in between ^{time} was a visit to some large city where I ^{hand}

met some of ~~the~~ people and learned of the bombing therefrom first. [^]experi
I get the impression that we walked there and back but can not be sure
but I do recall a road with a pleasant countryside etc

On another occasion during one of the movements toward or from some
position I recall sleeping under grape ^{vines} with ripe grapes and
eating too many, but a pleasant memory. ^{CHES} Also along the way at some
occasion we found some wine that tasted very dry or outright sour to me

It may have been soon after that we discovered ourselves moving ~~in the~~
in trucks with no lights going I knew not where and then we were
let out and our group was given a general direction which in the

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blackness was a problem. Unable to get any one in my group to help me
carry the maxim, they were carrying blankets, even a mattress etc.
And I was unable to communicate adequately anyway and between getting
lost in the blackness and the heaviness of the maxim, I grew desperate

at one point ~~threw~~ down the gun in despair. Someone either ^{you} Levinson
or the German ^{captain} found me and I finally made it. I get the impression
we walked over the Ebro ^{on} a floating walk made with pontoons?

on the other side evidence of war was all about and we seemed to have
an endless hike. I don't recall if we paused or grouped anywhere except if
rest along the road side under cover. *Evidence of war was all over*

The next vivid memory is a climb to the most desolate hill I have
ever seen, ^{or hope to see} not a piece of living vegetation, ^{all dead, grey, pulverized} and here and there a
corpse, we were in the midst of shell fire and took position in a cave.
That refuge would shudder with every explosion and later in its midst

seemingly we were ordered out to take positions, our group rushed to a
position indicated by the German capt I believe and we started digging
and soon realized that we had no water for the maxim and I had to leave
through the damnable fire to find some. the fantastic captain told me
where and how and I succeeded in getting it and rushed back. This was
the first real action I had ever been in and it took more than I had

to somehow manage the intense fear and yet with some inner exultation
did get back to our position and while getting the gun set, apparently
had my head too high and it seemed as if I was struck by an axe.

The same bullet went through the arm of an Australian friend. Still ^{by medic} come
conscious we were rushed to some area below where apparently we were

treated and I awoke ~~then~~ sometime later in a hospital in Barcelona
I have always ^{respected} wondered at the efficiency of the medics working under this
kind of barrage.

I recall in the hospital the beautiful nurses and a German doctor, a
woman who ~~seemed to be~~ ^{was} treating me. It felt so wonderful to be cleaned
up and sleep on sheets ~~on~~ a bed and the scabees that had been all over
me gradually dissappeared. While lying there I read of Negrins
decision to send us home.

When able to get up and walk arround which was soon, I ~~was sent to a monastery~~ ^{was} sent to a monastery, I beleive for recuperation. ~~There~~ ^{There} I visted
^{and} tried some drawing. The English guy with the torn leg wanted me to
illustrate a poem he had written and I tried. I also recall visits
into a village which was ^{also} a pleasant ^{experience}.

Soon we were grouped again in some waiting place ~~then~~ Recall lots
of trees and cool waather finally we were taken to trains ~~and~~ to
france I think and then put on board ship for the US

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Somewhere s in all this there is a memory of a hill
where in all the bombardment when most of us sought cover one
guy would sit under a tree and watch it.

In the bonbardment on the hill overlooking or near Gandesa
a ~~friend~~ an american polish friend who had been in spain fo
more than two years had a shell land on him.

Im sorry I can't recall names. Ive misplaced a map of Spain I
once had. On the ones arround. the towns I recall may not
appear, (too small) I looked but the few names that seem?
familiar may ring a bell for you or perhaps you would know where
we were at all those times. As an officer you may have been
given more information.

Somehow one would think that such an experience would remain ~~at~~
more clear. Im sending you this to see if one or another thing
would remind you of another. If you could get a few such from
others as well then the story might get into focus.

