

# AMERICANS IN SPAIN VETERAN SOLDIERS

ITEM 8.A.2

Writer Visits War-Hardened  
Troops on the Dust-Coated  
Aragon Front in East

## LED ASSAULT ON BELCHITE

Joined by Spaniards, They  
Fought From House to House  
to Expel Last of Rebels

By ERNEST HEMINGWAY

Copyright, 1937, by the New York Times  
Company and the North American  
Newspaper Alliance, Inc.

ON THE ARAGON FRONT, via  
Valencia, Spain, Sept. 13.—When we  
got up with the Americans they  
were lying under some olive trees  
along a little stream. The yellow  
dust of Aragon was blowing over  
them, over their blanketed machine  
guns, over their automatic rifles  
and their anti-aircraft guns. It  
grew in blinding clouds raised by  
the hooves of pack animals and the  
wheels of motor transports.

But in the lee of the stream bank  
the men were slouching, fearful and  
grinning, their teeth flashing white  
sils in their yellow-powdered sta-  
tion.

Since I had seen them last Spring  
they have become soldiers. The  
romantic have pulled out; the re-  
luctant ones have gone home along  
with the badly wounded. The dead,  
of course, aren't there. Those who  
are left are tough, with blackened  
matter-of-fact faces; and, after  
seven months, they know their  
trade.

### Led Assault on Belchite

They have fought with the first  
Spanish troops of the new Govern-  
ment army, captured the strongly  
fortified heights and town of Quinco  
in a brilliantly conceived and ex-

ecuted attack, and have ta-  
ken three Spanish brigades  
in the final storming of Belchite,  
twenty miles southeast of  
sa, after it had been surroun-  
ed by Spanish troops.

After the taking of Qui-  
co had marched twenty mile  
country to Belchite. They  
in the woods outside the t  
had worked their way forw  
the Indian fighting tactics  
still the most life-saving  
infantry can know. Cover  
heavy and accurate artill  
rage, they stormed the  
the town. Then for the  
they fought from house to

from room to room, breaking walls  
with pickaxes, bombing their way  
forward as they exchanged shots  
with the retreating insurgents from  
street corners, windows, roof tops  
and holes in the walls.

Finally they made a junction with  
Spanish troops advancing from the  
other side and surrounded the Bel-  
chite cathedral, where 400 men of  
the town garrison still held out.  
These men fought desperately,  
bravely, and an insurgent officer  
worked a machine gun from the  
tower until a shell crumpled the  
masonry spire upon him and his  
gun. They fought all around the  
square, keeping up a covering fire  
with automatic rifles, and made a  
final rush on the tower. Then, af-  
ter some fighting of the sort you  
never know whether to classify as  
hysterical or the ultimate in brav-  
ery, the garrison surrendered.

### California Was in the Van

Robert Merriman, former Univer-  
sity of California professor and  
chief of staff of the Fifteenth  
Brigade, was the leader in the final  
assault. Unshaven, his face smoke-  
blackened, his men tell how he  
bombed his way forward; wounded  
six times slightly by hand-grenade  
splinters in his hands and face, but  
refusing to have his wounds dressed  
until the cathedral was taken. The  
American casualties were 28 killed  
and 60 wounded out of a total of  
500 of all ranks who took part in  
the two operations.

The total of Government casual-  
ties given in the entire offensive  
was 2,000 killed and wounded. The  
entire insurgent garrison of 3,000  
troops in Belchite was either cap-  
tured or killed, except for four of-  
ficers who succeeded in escaping

from the town during the last night  
before the final assault.

The Government forces took 3,000  
prisoners in the whole offensive, of  
which your correspondent was able  
to see 850, the others having been  
removed to concentration camps,  
and claimed to have inflicted losses  
of more than 7,000 in killed and  
wounded on the Nationalist troops.

The prisoners I questioned said  
they had lost 1,200 killed in Bel-  
chite alone. There is no way of  
verifying these casualties.