

*L. S. Churchward*

★ **AUSTRALIANS**  
★ **IN SPAIN**



*L. Churchward  
Collection*

FROM AN ORIGINAL IN THE  
UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE ARCHIVES

NOT TO BE REPRODUCED WITHOUT PERMISSION

*Our Pioneers Against Fascism* Booklet  
ONE SHILLING

OUT of the proud traditions of Britain's past they came. From the long struggle for freedom—from men like Wat Tyler, Byron, Shelley, the Dorchester Laborers and the Tolpuddle Martyrs—from movements like the Diggers and Levellers, the volunteers of Greek liberation, the Chartists, the British Trade Union Movement. . . .

OUT of the great democratic traditions of Australia, too — the anti-transportation struggles, the campaigns for parliamentary representation, the stand at Eureka, the long and bitter Trade Union struggles, the groping of a people towards greater democracy and fuller nationhood. . . .

THESE Australian men and women went out to fight for something that is deep in the Australian way of life—freedom. Let us honor them, our pioneers against fascism. . . .

Registered at the G.P.O., Sydney, for transmission by post as a book.

# Australians In Spain

By Nettie Palmer and Len Fox,  
with the help of  
Jim McNeill and Ron Hurd.  
May, 1948.



CURRENT BOOK DISTRIBUTORS  
695 GEORGE STREET,  
SYDNEY

Wholly set up and printed in Australia by Newsletter Printery,  
21, Ross Street, Forest Lodge, Sydney.



AUSTRALIANS and New Zealanders in Spain with the International Brigade.—Kevin Rebecchi (back row, left) gave his life. Next to him is Lloyd Edmonds of Melbourne, then Murn McDonald (N.Z.) and Joe Carter (Sydney). In front, from left to right, are Jack Franklyn, who died in Sydney in 1945, Bert Bryan (N.Z.), and Jim McNeill of Sydney.

## FOREWORD

By NETTIE PALMER.

THERE are many reasons today why we should remind ourselves how the war against the Axis began. From the earliest thirties there were acts of aggression in many parts of the world, but in the main battleground, Europe, the war began unmistakably in Spain, on July 18, 1936. There and then began the War Before The War.

Those of us who knew the desperate urgency of the situation were few and not powerful; we seemed to be shouting against the wind; we were choked by the disbelief and mockery of those around us.

But we were heartened by those who not only saw the meaning of Spain in those years but worked and fought to help the Spanish people. The names and acts of the men and women of Europe and America who joined the crusade to Spain have already been recorded in books. But our Australians have had only the incomplete pamphlets like "Australians In Spain," which we published while the fight was still hot, while our knowledge was still incomplete. We want to give a more fitting record of how they lived and fought—and died.

They themselves do not ask praise. But we who publish this booklet feel that theirs is a brave chapter in our Australian history. It is more than that, it is part of our national tradition. We should all know it, and knowing it we will be proud of these men and women, proud to be fellow-Australians with them.

To these men and women, who wrote the story in their toil and pain and blood, this book is dedicated.

## Why They Went To Spain



"WHY did they go halfway round the world to fight in Spain?" That question was often asked at the time of the Spanish War.

The simplest way to answer it now is to say: "They went to Spain for the same reason as Australians a few years later went to El Alamein and Tobruk, to the Battle for Britain, to Syria and Singapore, Timor and Milne Bay and the Kokoda Trail, and on to Bougainville and Balikpapan — because they saw a fight between freedom and tyranny, and they had to be in it on freedom's side."

Today anyone can understand such an answer. All that has happened since has made it clear that Spain was the first stage of an international war into which we would all be drawn sooner or later. But at the time

of the Spanish War the issues were clouded by fascist propaganda that people still believed; many were ready to support the fascists in their alleged "crusade against Bolshevism", and others saw it as just someone else's quarrel—as if all they had to do was to keep out of it.

Yet the facts were clear. The Spanish elections of February 1936, conducted by a conservative government, resulted almost miraculously in a victory for the democrats, the left forces, which then were united in a Popular Front. This parliamentary majority included Liberals, Left Republicans, Socialists, and 16 Communists.

It undertook gradually a program of reforms similar to those carried through in most European countries many years, even centuries earlier, but delayed in Spain, which still kept many of the worst features of feudalism. These reforms meant giving the peasants enough land to save them from semi-starvation, building schools and hospitals, introducing health measures, with mental and spiritual freedoms in association.

In opposition to these reforms stood the wealthy and irresponsible landowners, the top-heavy military caste, the new Spanish fascist party, and pro-fascist sections of



the church hierarchy. Leader of these forces was General Sanjurjo, who between March and July had visited Hitler. On July 18 the right-wing forces struck in an armed rebellion that broke out simultaneously all over Spain.

Sanjurjo was killed in a plane crash as he returned to Spain; Franco, a skilled military expert, took his place as leader.

The fascist Powers, Italy and Germany, poured in help from the first, invading Spain by land and air. They denied this invasion at the time, but later they boasted of it. Spain, the peace-loving Republic, had been chosen as the first European country to be visited by war, as the experimental ground where the fascist Powers were to discover and perfect new methods of mass killing—later to be used against the rest of the world.

The Spanish democrats, attacked and invaded, appealed to the democratic Powers of the world for help, demanding the right of an established Government to buy arms. But the appeasers were in power. Under the catchword of "non-intervention", they crippled the democratic forces. Spain was to be, in spite of its long heroic struggle, defeated, conquered, prostrate.

But in the course of the struggle something new was born. Something that expressed itself in the International Brigades, in the Spanish Relief Movements that swept the world. Something that, in spite of temporary defeat, was to live and grow and conquer.

The something new that was born in Spain was to be the seed of a mighty anti-fascist unity that saved the world in the dark days of 1942, that swept on to V-E Day and V-P Day in the victorious days of 1945, that still leads humanity in the Battles of Peace . . . .

This booklet is the story of that something new, as expressed in the words and deeds of some of the first Australian men and women who worked for it, fought for it, lived for it, died for it . . . .

That tyranny might die, that something new might be born for generations yet to be . . . that was why they went to Spain. That is the story that we now tell.

## International Brigade



By International Brigader JIM McNEILL

WHEN the Spanish people were attacked in July 1936 they hastily formed their militia units and advanced against the rebel fascist strongholds. A handful of foreigners resident in Spain threw in their lot with them and fought resolutely in the ranks. A few other groups—mainly Frenchmen, Poles and anti-fascist Germans—slipped over the frontier. A hundred or so men from half a dozen countries aiding the democratic cause—that was all. There was as yet no International Brigade.

But soon the news was sent round the world that the fascist rebellion had become an invasion. Tens of thousands of Moorish, German and Italian conscripts were poured in, backed by German and Italian tanks, planes, guns. What hope was there for the Spanish militia, armed with old fowling pieces and sometimes even sticks, against the panzer blitzkrieg?

At the end of October 1936 the London Times declared that the Madrid Government's plight was "helpless". Even the British Left-wing Liberal weekly, the New Statesman, said that "failing a miracle," Madrid would fall.

But suddenly, on October 29, the Government troops heard tanks—their own tanks—behind them. (New Zealander Geoffrey Cox, who was there as a newspaper correspondent, tells the story in his book "Defence of



Madrid".) A few days later, planes—their own planes—flew over to bomb the fascist columns. Both tanks and planes had come from Russia.

But the fascist columns still converged on Madrid. The "miracle" that was needed to save Madrid had not yet happened.

And then one day down the streets of the capital came a column of marching men, rifles on their shoulders, songs at their lips, and fists clenched in answer to the "Saluds" of the cheering people, and the shouted slogan "No Pasaran"—"They Shall Not Pass!"

Ron Hurd, who arrived in Madrid from Australia in those decisive early days, describes it in an interview with Australian authoress Jean Devanny:—

"When we arrived in Madrid the people somehow got the notion that we were Russians come to assist them. They poured into the streets and mobbed us, mad with enthusiasm. . . . When at length they realised that the Brigades were formed of workers and other sympathisers from thirty-two different countries, their belief in the justice of their cause was enhanced a hundredfold. . . . They were willing to put up with anything, and everything; to fight the fascists, if necessary, with their bare hands."

There were no Russians among the International Brigade. Apart from the technicians sent to teach the Spaniards to drive the Russian tanks and pilot the Russian planes, Russia did not send troops. There were a number of reasons why it was better for her to send arms and food—which she did throughout the struggle. But there were, as Ron Hurd states, 32 other nationalities in the International Brigade. Anti-fascist Italians formed the Garibaldi group, Germans formed the Thaelmann group. At first there was no British Battalion and the British volunteers fought mainly with the French Battalion, though a few were scattered among other national groups.

But soon the British Battalion (sometimes called the Anglo-Irish—and there were many good Irish democrats in it!) was formed, and most of the Aussies fought with

it, though some were scattered among the Americans, Canadians, and other groups.

Even in the early days, there were a few members from far lands. Geoffrey Cox tells of an Abyssinian in the International Brigade, and a democrat from Indo-China. We can be proud that Australian seamen like Ron Hurd, Jack Barry, Dick Whateley and others were there from the earliest days. But in the main it must be remembered that it was very difficult for Australians to get to Spain. Finance and transport alone were big problems. In addition it has to be remembered that at the time a man wanting to fight for democracy in Spain was looked on almost as a criminal by the "powers that be", and many Australians had to leave for Spain secretly and furtively without even letting their friends know.

But the Brigades grew. About 32,000 men went to Spain altogether, the greatest number there at any one time being 20,000. This compares with the estimate of 200,000 non-Spanish conscripts brought in to fight for Franco—Moors, and Italian and German fascists.

The 11th, 12th, 13th, 14th and 15th Brigades were all International Brigades—five in all. Of the 2,000 British members, 500 were reported killed or missing, and over 1,200 wounded.

Just as there were men of all countries in the Brigades, so there were men of many different political and religious beliefs. Communists and Labor Party men fought side by side with Irish Republicans, members of Youth Leagues, Christian Pacifists and men of no



particular Party. Protestants, Catholics, and those with no fixed religious belief were comrades in arms in the International Brigade just as they were in the Spanish units that fought alongside us—and I would like to pay a personal tribute to the courage and devotion of the men and women of Spain who fought so heroically for a democracy that they have still to win.

There is not space to deal with all the battles fought by the International Brigade—Madrid, Jarama, Guadalaajara, Pozoblanco, the offensives of Brunete and Belchite, the bitter fighting at Teruel and in the Aragon, and finally the brilliant counter-offensive across the Ebro.

The military record of the International Brigade ended towards the close of 1938, when the Spanish Government requested our withdrawal to demonstrate to the world its absolute sincerity in asking for real non-intervention, in place of the one-sided intervention which strangled the democratic forces.

We left Spain knowing that the decisive battles were still ahead. Many of the Brigaders took proud parts in those battles; others were held in concentration camps in France, or were too broken in health. Some, like the Australian Dick Whateley, died years later, as a result of the strain of the fighting in Spain.

The battles fought by the International Brigade will be recalled and fought over again whenever veterans of Spain meet. But greater than the military details was the importance of the International Brigade as a proof to the world that the unity of the Common People against tyranny was real—and ultimately victorious.

Whatever name you called it — Popular Front, People's Front, Anti-fascist Unity, or any other name—it was now more than a name, more than an election slogan. It was something written in the blood of men of all countries who had died together in a new sort of a war. Not a national war, but a war for the liberation of all men and women of all nations. And the International Brigade that fought in Spain is today part of a bigger International Brigade of the millions of men and women—democrats of all lands—who carry on the struggle for human liberation.

## Those Who Died



### JACK BARRY

A STOCKILY built seaman with an A.W.U. union ticket in his pocket as well as his seaman's card, Jack ("Blue") Barry was one of the first Australians in Spain, and soon became almost a mythical figure.

We saw photos of him taken in Barcelona with Australian nurses who had just arrived. We heard he had been reported dead but had come back alive and smiling (or more probably cursing in cheerful Australian style). He had casually told our nurses that the report of his death was premature, for he knew that death was always close in those early Spanish days. We read of him as the "Aussie" in Geoffrey Cox's book, "Defence of Madrid". We met an American who had seen Barry in Barcelona and eaten a seven-course celebration meal with him. (Unfortunately, the American explained, the only food available was octopus, so the seven courses were all octopus, cooked in slightly different ways.)

We read once again of his death, but did not worry. We were sure he would turn up again. But this time the news was confirmed.

An Australian who knew Barry before he went to Spain describes him thus: "Jack Barry was a member of the Communist Party whose main desire for years was to come to physical grips with the fascists. Members of the Workers' Defence Corps gymnasium in Glebe (Sydney) remember him as absolutely fearless. After scrub-cutting for a while in Queensland he shipped as a coal-trimmer to England hoping to get to China to fight fascism there. Instead, he went to Spain, selling everything he had to get there. From Spain he wrote to me: 'I wouldn't miss this for millions'. That was the sort of man he was."

Agnes Hodgson, one of the Australian nurses who met him in Barcelona, tells how he died:—

"Barry was a man of few words, greatest and happiest in action, so that when he was killed a week later at Boadilla, bravely covering the retreat of a precious gun and the gunners, one could imagine what happened. The quick decision that the gun must be saved, the retreat covered, and without thought for himself he took up his position. He and a British volunteer saved the gun. Later the position was recaptured, and Barry's dead body was found, his rifle still in his hand. Words are inadequate to pay such heroes just tribute."

## TED DICKINSON

IN one of the best-known books on the Spanish War, Tom Wintringham's "English Captain", the author speaks of "Ted Dickinson, a Grimsby man, one of my most promising officers." Australians will feel a glow of pride to know that Dickinson came to Australia from Grimsby when only a boy, living here most of his life and looking on himself as an Australian, though in later years he married and returned to live in Grimsby.

It was about 1912 when Ted came to Australia with his brother and widowed mother. The family lived in different parts of Australia; many Melbourne people remember Ted for his enthusiasm for the socialist cause.

Jim McNeill of Sydney, who also fought in Spain, remembers Dickinson well, for they had been militant

socialists together in Adelaide in 1928. Dickinson suffered heavily for his principles, being sentenced to gaol on a political charge during the waterside workers' strike of 1928.

It was about 1929 or 1930 that Dickinson married and went to England. Next we heard of him was that he had been killed in Spain, at Jarama, in February, 1937.

His death was typically Australian—a story we should never forget.

After having been in Spain since November 1936, Dickinson was on February 13, 1937, second-in-command of No. 2 Company of the British Battalion of the International Brigade, holding an advanced position under a terrific bombardment from fascist artillery and planes.

Survivors later told the story to Australian Ron Hurd:—

"At about four in the afternoon, following a heavy barrage, Moors were sent over in an attack against us, but we repulsed them with heavy losses. Ted sent a runner back to headquarters with a message that our position was dangerous, but that we would hold on until ordered to retire.

"At about five, a batch of Spaniards and Moors came over on our left flank, singing the Internationale and giving the clenched fist salute. We held our fire, believing they were giving themselves up. Too late we found it was all a trick. When they got close enough, the hand grenades they had been holding in those clenched fists killed and wounded many of our boys, and as we were surrounded the survivors had no alternative but to surrender.

"Fourteen of the prisoners were immediately executed. The first of these was Ted Dickinson. He had muttered: 'If we had ten thousand Australian bushmen here, we'd drive these b——s into the sea.' The fascist officers, though they could not know the exact words used, could recognise the tone. He was immediately ordered to fall out, back to a tree. Three Moorish riflemen advanced to within ten feet of him. But before they fired he turned



his head towards us, gave the clenched fist salute and calmly said: 'Salud, boys, keep your chins up!'

"Three rifle shots rang out simultaneously, and Ted Dickinson fell dead."

## RALPH BAYNHAM

**A** MEMBER of the Amalgamated Printing Trades Union, Ralph Baynham worked at the Forward Press in Sydney. For years he had been an ardent anti-fascist, and he spent his life's savings on his ticket to Spain.

His aged widowed mother received a cheerful letter from him on May 2, 1938. He had been with the British Battalion, he said in his letter, and was now with the Mackenzie-Papenau or Canadian Battalion—"wonderful comrades."

Four days after his letter arrived, another letter reached Sydney. Written by Esme Odgers, and addressed to Phil Thorne, Secretary of the Spanish Relief Committee, it said:—

"A comrade from the British Battalion has just come into this office where I am typing. I have been feeling pretty low because I have been typing the list of the missing comrades—after the last big offensive. He now tells me, after being told that I come from Australia, that his best pal in the Battalion was an Australian—Ralph Baynham. 'Grand boy', he said. 'Good singer, too. Very big, about six feet tall. Had a specialty: the singing of the Volga Boatman, and was always being called upon by the boys to entertain. Killed by machine-gun bullets from an aeroplane during the fascist recapture of Belchite.'

"I didn't know him, but I can gather from what the comrade says that he put unflagging energy into his work, that he has set a wonderful example of unselfish and untiring struggle against fascism—but what words can be used to describe these grand boys? We can only pay honor to them by increasing the aid to Spain and strengthening our work in Australia so that the Spanish tragedy will not be enacted on our soil."



RALPH BAYNHAM



BILL YOUNG

When told of her son's death, Mrs. Baynham was very much affected. She quickly pulled herself together, saying: "I should be ashamed of myself for making such a fuss of my own grief. Thousands of mothers in Spain suffer the same as I do every day."

## BILL YOUNG

**B**ILL YOUNG was always known as "Big Bill" or "The Big Aussie". A worker in bush and construction jobs, he had in 1924 been attracted by the militant policy of the I.W.W., but later joined the Communist Party.

A good man with his fists when fists were needed, he helped to defend workers' meetings against attacks from the fascist New Guard in the depression days. His hatred of fascism deepened as he read of its atrocities in Italy, Germany, and later in Spain, and his last words before leaving for Spain were: "I hate fascism and am glad I am going to fight it with weapons in hand."

To get to Spain he had to stow away in a coal bunker, and one of the ship's trimmers one day thought he was

seeing a supernatural apparition when a black demon popped up from a coal bunker. "It's all right, mate," said the "demon", who was Bill Young bearded and covered in coal dust, "I'm only a stowaway come up for a drink of water."

The ship was two hands short, and Young was taken on as a member of the crew.

Young's letters from Spain showed his tenderness for children—and his ever-growing hatred of fascism. Telling of a village where fascist bombs had killed 26 women and children the day before Young's unit marched through, he wrote: "The kiddies are just wonderful; they stood with their little fists clenched till we got out of sight."

In the Ebro fighting he was put in charge of his section when the N.C.O.'s were killed. In the critical attempt to take the hill dominating Gandesa, which was held by Moors and fascist Italians and heavily fortified, Young led an attack—and did not come back. His body was never found.

Bill Young's son, only a lad at the time, grew up to enlist in the A.I.F. After being overseas for a number of years, most of them spent as a prisoner of war under the Japanese, he returned to Australia early in 1946.

## BILL MORCOM

**ENGLISH** by birth, Bill Morcom had been a wireless operator on a ship before settling in Australia. At any time he could have returned to his radio job at a good salary, but his faith in socialism was such that he preferred to remain in Australia to do political work at a low salary.

He was soon elected as a member of the New South Wales State Committee of the Australian Communist Party, later being elected to the important position of Party Treasurer for N.S.W. He had previously worked for the Communist Party in Adelaide and Melbourne.

He was affectionately called "Pop", partly, one of his friends explained, because of his slight baldness, partly because of his pipe, but mainly because of his

unruffled persistence in getting on with the job, and his almost paternal friendliness and tolerance to other people.

Very conscientious and earnest, he was highly respected by all who knew him. He didn't drink, and he gave up smoking (though he was fond of his pipe) in order that he might be fitter for his political work and that he might "see as much of socialism as possible".

Going to Spain on the same ship as Joe Carter, Morcom was at Figueras when Jim McNeill was there, but they parted soon after, Morcom being selected to attend an N.C.O.'s school for a month's special training.

He died very much as Bill Young died—in an attempt to take a key point in the Ebro fighting, after being beaten back several times by the well-equipped fascist forces.

A fitting epitaph to Morcom would be the words of a Communist Party member when the news of Morcom's death came through in December 1938:—

"The first thing that struck me about Bill Morcom years ago was his absolute devotion to the working-class movement, to the Communist Party. His very life was based on a desire to work for the betterment of the people. . . He was invariably cool at critical times, and his judgment was 100 per cent correct. . . He was modest and self-effacing, but always effective when the need arose."

## HARRY HYNES

**I**n a book called "The Lincoln Battalion" which tells of Americans who fought in Spain, the author, Edwin Rolfe, has this to say:—

"The third company, led by a Yugoslav named Yardis, boasted the commissarship of Harry Hynes, a West Coast seaman, who in the few months before he was killed in action was recognised as the most courageous and popular of the Americans in Spain."

Just as we can be proud that the "Englishman" Ted Dickinson was in reality an Australian, so can we be proud of Harry Hynes, for he also is an Australian.

Ned Buckby, one of the few Australians who met Hynes in Spain, says of him: "He was a great fellow—an extraordinarily good man, a good Communist and a good soldier."

His mother, Mrs. Hynes, of Elwood, Victoria, was notified late in 1937 of the death of her son in Spain. He had been there since March 1937 with the Abraham Lincoln Brigade.

American writer Herbert Hutner, in a letter to Mrs. Hynes, said "Harry was my political commissar in Spain and the greatest guy in the world as far as I'm concerned." He enclosed extracts from a book he had written, in which he describes Hynes:—

"He's the quietest, most unassuming, likable, fine fellow. . . He never says very much, but we get everything we need and on time. When the going gets particularly rough, his smile is oil on stormy seas. . .

"Later I learned how Harry died. The doctor asked for those not so badly wounded to get off the stretchers and walk to the first-aid station. Harry stood up, tottered a few steps, fell dead. He died as he lived. Simply—without dramatics. Giving everything he had in himself to others. The picture of him lying on that hill for five hours, always refusing water until everyone had as much as they wanted, is the portrait of a hero."

### CORMAC MacCARTHY

"EVERY day that this 'little world war' goes on is bringing the world nearer to a catastrophe besides which this war, with all its horror and suffering, would be a mere skirmish of outposts. In the meantime, the fascists continue their campaign of frightfulness."

These prophetic words were written in Spain at the end of 1937 by an Australian, Cormac MacCarthy, writing to his friend Percy Laidler, veteran Melbourne Socialist whose appeals to crowded meetings raised many hundreds of pounds for Spanish Relief.

The son of Irish parents, Cormac MacCarthy was born in 1898 at Victoria, Vancouver Island. When he was two years old his family returned to Ireland, where

MacCarthy became a coal miner. After serving with an Irish regiment in the 1914-18 war, he came to Australia in 1923 and for 12 years worked his way through the Eastern States as fruit-picker, miner, farmhand and swagman.

In 1936 he was working on the Melbourne waterfront. What happened when he heard of the Spanish War can best be told in the words of a personal friend of MacCarthy's:—

"I have yet to meet a straighter goer than Cormac MacCarthy. Having no mean streak in his composition, he just can't help emanating a forthright spirit of comradeship wherever he moves. I drove him to Port Melbourne where he went down into the grimy hold of a dirty coal ship to work his passage to England as a fireman. He went just like that. No brass bands. No colored streamers. No one else. His only fear — he was a bad sailor — was that seasickness might incapacitate him for his job and prevent his getting to 'those bloody fascists'."

In 1938 word came through that Cormac MacCarthy was missing. Some time afterwards Australian International Brigader Charlie Walters wrote to say that he had met MacCarthy at the front, looking thin and ill. "He had worked himself to a standstill", said Walters, "and didn't expect to get back. He asked me to tell Percy Laidler if anything happened." Some weeks later Walters heard that MacCarthy had been killed.



## JACK STEVENS

A BRITISH-BORN member of the Australian Communist Party, Jack Stevens went from Sydney to Perth in the depression days to help the unemployed in their efforts to improve their conditions. At the time this was a dangerous venture, for reactionary groups in powerful official positions in West Australia had been heard to boast that "they were going to clean up the Communists". Furthermore, the Justices' Act gave the authorities almost unlimited powers to deal with anyone whose political views were unpopular with the authorities.

No one, therefore, was surprised when Stevens was arrested and charged with being a "person of ill fame", just as though he were a criminal, when in reality he had been trying to get a fairer deal for the forgotten men of the depression days—and their families.

Leading Australian novelist Katharine Susannah Prichard, whose fame is world-wide, gave evidence for Stevens, stating that she knew him well and that in her opinion he was a man who had been living the same kind of life as Jesus had led—devoting himself to the welfare of others, denying himself food and clothing to try to improve the lot of the underdog.

In spite of this evidence, Jack Stevens was sentenced to six months in gaol.

Unshaken in his ideals, he came out to continue his work in Perth and then in New South Wales. Receiving a small legacy on the death of a relative in England, he went to London, where he was a member of the St. Pancras Branch of the British Communist Party.

It was natural that such a man should go to Spain. After being wounded, he wrote to Katharine Susannah Prichard saying he was glad to be in Spain in the fight against fascism, and that he always remembered what she had said of him and had tried to the best of his endeavor to live up to it. (This letter, given by Katharine Prichard to the Communist Party in Perth, was seized in the police raids under the Menzies Government in June 1940 and never returned.)

Next time we heard of Jack Stevens he had paid the supreme sacrifice in the Brunete advance in June 1937. His friends who saw him buried outside the village of Villeneuve de la Canada knew that he had died just as he had lived—fighting fearlessly against tyranny, for the cause of the common people.

## AUSSIE STEVENS

WHEN Ron Hurd was fighting in Spain, he heard of a young lad known as "Aussie" Stevens who had enlisted in London, but who, as his nickname suggests, had been born in Australia.

Later, Hurd was told that young Stevens had been wounded at Brunete. He was put in an ambulance, which sheltered in a culvert. The driver knew the fascist planes made a practice of bombing ambulances, and hoped to save the wounded by sheltering till the planes had gone. Unfortunately, a bomb landed in the culvert, and some of the wounded men were hit again.

The ambulance men appealed to those not seriously wounded to give their field dressings to those who had been hit a second time. Aussie Stevens was among those who did so. Then another bomb exploded near the ambulance, and Stevens was killed.

Little else is known of Stevens, except that Ron Hurd had been told he had come from a Melbourne suburb, that he was a young religious idealist who had been attracted to socialism because he saw in it the fulfilment of the best Christian ideals—just as he saw in fascism the denial of all that is best in our civilisation.

## JACK NEWMAN

A SEAMAN from Port Adelaide, Jack Newman had served with the Canadian Artillery during the 1914-18 war. On the Great Lakes, a few years afterwards, he met fellow-Australian Ron Hurd, and a friendship began that was to last through the years, from one side of the earth to another.

Newman and Hurd were mates together in the first Lake Boatmen's Union ever organised—this was on the



Great Lakes. Still as mates together, they tramped America. Still as mates — Australian writer Jean Devanny tells the story in her book "Bird of Paradise" — they took ship to Australia, supported the wharfies' strike, were thrown out of work, joined and helped to lead the struggles of the unemployed in Richmond and other Melbourne suburbs, took ship to Antwerp, sought work on the hard pavements of London. . .

For a while the two friends separated, for Hurd's union activities took him away to Africa and later to Australia. But from opposite sides of the world the two mates came together again—the battlefields of Spain had drawn them both like a magnet. They fought in the early days with the French Battalion, then with the British Battalion. They helped hold Madrid's University City in one of the toughest and most glorious battles of the war. They went on to other battles. Newman, Hurd tells, had become the most popular man in the battalion.

Hurd and Newman were together at the battle of Jarama. Newman was killed by a sniper's bullet. He



Sketch from a photo of the grave where Jack Newman was buried.

could have no better epitaph than the words of his friend Ron Hurd: "He was one of the finest mates a man ever had".

## KEVIN REBECCHI

**A** YOUNG Melbourne lad of Catholic family, Kevin Rebecchi was of the quiet, thoughtful type. Worried by the poverty and unemployment that he saw around him, he became filled with the desire to visit the Soviet Union, so that he could see with his own eyes the working of a socialist form of society. So he stowed away on a ship and landed in Britain.

Here, according to Jim McNeill who met him later in Spain, Rebecchi had a very hard time, being unable to find work. But at last he secured a job on a ship and saw the destruction of Bilbao by the fascists, his ship being hit and beached.

He had previously volunteered for the International Brigade, but he had been rejected because no one in London knew him. Now that he had seen the nature of fascism with his own eyes, he went back to the recruiting office, and his determination to enlist was so great that this time the organisers of the International Brigade did not have the heart to refuse him.

In Spain he was in the same company as another Australian, Bill Young, in the Ebro offensive. Hit in the leg with a bullet, Rebecchi was taken back on a mule; the mule slipped and fell on him, and he had to spend a long time in hospital.

Later, as he was waiting at Vich expecting to be repatriated across the frontier, he met another Melbourne man, Lloyd Edmonds. Edmonds tells of their yarns together. Rebecchi had much to talk of in spite of his youth, for he had left home at fifteen and travelled north to the canefields of Queensland and to most parts of Australia as well.

"Rebecchi was an idealist," wrote Edmonds. "He had aims to return to Australia for aid to Spain, wanted to



get a shipload of goods. He was tall, thin, about twenty-one, wore a raincoat continually, not tough enough for soldiering in Spain."

Rebecchi suddenly took ill with typhus and died within a few days. He lies buried in the church town of Vich.

### BUTLER, STEWART, BURGESS

LIKE Harry Hynes, a number of other Australians enlisted in America and fought in Spain with the American battalions of the International Brigade.

How many there were we do not know and will never know, but a news cable from America in 1937 told of the death of three Australians who had been fighting with the Debs Battalion of the International Brigade, named after Eugene Debs, veteran American Socialist. They were Percival Butler, of Sydney, James Stewart and John Burgess, of Melbourne.

Nothing else is known of these men, but they fill an important role in our List of Honor, for with Harry Hynes—and the other unknown Australians who fought with them—they formed a link in 1937 that was to grow in strength and save the Pacific from the first tidal wave of Japanese fascist aggression in the dark days that followed Pearl Harbor.

These Australian and American anti-fascists, fighting side by side, linked the tradition of Eureka with the tradition of great democrats like Jefferson and Lincoln.

### THE NAMELESS ONES

*"And some there be that have no remembrance. . . ."*

IN addition to the 14 Australians whom we have named as giving their lives, there were others whose names we do not know. When the "City of Barcelona" was torpedoed off Valencia on its way from Marseilles to Spain, many volunteers for the International Brigade were drowned, and it is believed that there were ten Australians among them. There were probably other Australians who gave their lives in Spain, but whose names will never be recorded. We salute them—the nameless ones.

## Women Who Served

AUSTRALIANS who supported the Spanish democratic cause in July 1936 were not altogether surprised when obstacles were put in the way of the men who wanted to go and fight.

But what we found harder to understand was the hostility on the part of many powerful groups to the sending of purely medical aid.

When Australian women volunteered to risk their lives to give this medical aid, one might have imagined that such women would have been honored by the Press, Churches, and Government. However, apart from a small paragraph on September 29, 1936, announcing that an Australian Red Cross Unit would be sent to Spain, the Sydney Morning Herald scarcely seems to have mentioned the important fact that Australian nurses were leaving for Spain. A Herald editorial in the same issue admitted that the Loyalists represented the "upward drive of the masses", and that Franco stood for the "remnants of feudalism" — but advised Herald readers not to encourage either side.

The Prime Minister, Mr. Lyons, representing the U.A.P. (now the "Liberal Party of Australia") had been reported on September 12 as having "appealed to the Australian people not to contribute to any appeal for funds or to take action to assist either of the conflicting parties in Spain". The Herald pointed out two days later that the policy of Hitler and Mussolini was also to oppose the sending of financial aid by individuals, but this "went beyond the British Government's policy", as such conditions would be impossible for democratic States". However, Mr. Lyons repeated his appeal in the press of October 10.

On October 24, the Herald reported that U.A.P. member Mr. McCall had asked in the House whether the Government could not stop the Australian nurses from going to Spain. Minister for Health Mr. W. M. Hughes (also U.A.P.) replied that officially he had no power to stop them, but would be "prepared to exercise

my powers of persuasion over them, and, if necessary, offer them inducements to remain in Australia".

Many Church leaders, to their credit, supported the appeal for medical aid for Spain. Others, however, openly supported General Franco's rebellion. One Bishop was reported in the Sydney Morning Herald of October 13 as saying that Franco represented "the followers of Christ against the devil". Six days later the same paper reported an Australian Archbishop as saying that the Spanish Democratic Government had no relieving feature which enabled him to say one good word for it.

It was at this time that Madrid's fall seemed a matter of weeks only. Hitler's lieutenant Hess, sensing an easy fascist victory, telegraphed his best wishes to Franco's forces at Alcazar. (Sydney Morning Herald, Sept. 30). The tide seemed everywhere to be sweeping irresistibly in favor of fascism.

But the Australian people had not yet spoken. When they did, it was not with the voice of Franco, Hess, and their supporters. The real feelings of Australia were represented by a small band of women setting out to serve democracy on the battlefields of Spain.

### MARY LOWSON

THE first nurse to respond to the Sydney Spanish Relief Committee's appeal for volunteers in September, 1936, Mary Lowson became leader of the group of four nurses which sailed from Sydney in October of that year.

In Spain, they were to serve practically on the battlefield itself. At the Jarama, where three of the nurses were sent, the countless wounded pouring through made the place a shambles. The nurses worked on day and night without rest or help. Afterwards the three nurses were in Benecassim on the coast, nursing the wounded in a convalescent hospital, trying to manage with scanty supplies of medical needs and food. Sister Lowson visited Barcelona to arrange for the purchase of supplies from France with funds sent from Australia.

There she met the famous American Doctor Norman Bethune, the first to organise the systematic collection of blood for transfusion in emergency cases. He had

almost been unnerved by his experience in Almeria, where he had received the thousands of surviving refugees from Malaga after their terrible hundred-mile flight along the cliff road, bombed and machine-gunned by fascist planes on the way. This systematic war on helpless civilians was then new; in 1940 the Nazis were to make it usual.



A vivid picture of Mary Lowson's work in Spain was given by Nancy Johnstone, English author of "Hotel In Flight":—

"Sister Lowson, also on her first leave since reaching Spain, has come from Barcelona. She is doing wonders getting out propaganda, arranging for lorry loads of food to get to the fronts where the Australian girls are working, hunting around depots until she finds someone who speaks English to arrange about transport, bearding Spanish officials who don't speak English, and somehow getting her meaning over, pushing her way into offices where no one usually can get without weeks of waiting. . .

"She heard a rumor in Barcelona that Sisters Wilson and Macfarlane were cold. In a few days (anything achieved in a few days is a miracle in Spain) she arrived

at their part of the front with blankets and warm clothes. That sounds kind, but reasonably simple. But it entailed leaving Barcelona for Perpignan in France collecting a lorry load of goods, going back to Barcelona changing into another lorry, and then travelling in it over 600 kilometres to a town under constant shellfire".

At the request of our Spanish Relief Committees, Sister Lowson returned to Australia at the end of 1937 to engage in a strenuous lecture tour to raise funds for Spanish Relief. As she was about to leave Australia to return to Spain, news came through of the air-raid on Barcelona—one of the first mass fascist raids—where 700 were killed and 1000 wounded. It was characteristic of Mary Lowson that her first remark on hearing the news was that it made her more eager than ever to be back in Spain.

During the 1939-45 war Sister Lowson was able to serve once again, this time in a West Australian hospital where she helped nurse our fighting men.

## UNA WILSON

"THE wounded came in in hundreds; we worked without rest or sleep at all sometimes for two days." That was Sister Una Wilson's letter when last she found time to write after the nurses' first terrible month on the Madrid front at the Jarama. "For a long time we were bombed every night. Although the theatre used to shake furiously we went on operating just the same."

Every now and then she had snatched a few seconds to dash a few short sentences in a diary. Extracts from this diary, published by the Spanish Relief Committee under the title of "From The Battlefields of Spain" is the first book written by an Australian eye-witness of the full barbarity of fascist warfare — circulated in tens of thousands and aroused many Australians for the first time to the danger that lay ahead.

February 23: "We had some frightful cases today. Just the remains of once healthy men. My God! how brutal

they are. Every day we are bombed but I am too tired to care what happens. . . We seem to wade about in a river of blood without a break. . . .

February 27: "I have just had three whole hours' sleep, but when I wakened I could not sleep, my voice had gone completely. . . . The groaning keeps up day and night. While we work we hear it and forget that we haven't slept ourselves for days and nights. My last sleep was on the 24th, at about 10 p.m., for about four hours. Mac (Nurse May MacFarlane) had had a sleep so she relieved me for a while. I went to our room about 9 a.m. but found that two wounded occupied our beds. In Mac's was a very young boy with a waxen-like face from loss of blood. He had a severe head injury, in fact his brains were oozing out on the pillow and under the bed was a huge pool of blood.

"In my bed a dead man. I turned back the bedclothes and found he had been shot through the stomach. My bed



UNA WILSON (right) on the job in Spain with her Spanish girl theatre assistant and a Czechoslovak radiologist.

was filled with blood. I had him removed, turned my mattress over and flopped on to it. Shortly afterwards I was awakened by bombs dropping. I looked across at the boy in Mac's bed. He was dead. My whole body ached so much from sheer fatigue I just went to sleep again. In about ten minutes, however, was asked to hop up; they wanted my bed for a patient. I jumped up and ran to the theatre. . . .

"I'm really quite ill and it takes all my nerve to stand these gastric pains which almost paralyse me every 5 to 10 minutes. . . . Mac broke down completely this a.m. . . . Never in my life have I had to exert such will-power. I felt myself sleeping as I stood up and yet there staring me in the face were the piles of instruments and the theatre—or should I say both theatres in a mess and nothing ready. . . . Again I heard the groans of the hopeless cases outside and thought a few hundreds more will be arriving from the battlefield. . . ."

Una Wilson served, with short breaks only, from Jarama till after Teruel. After returning to Australia and lecturing for the Spanish cause, she volunteered for similar service in China, but was unable to complete arrangements, and resumed nursing in Sydney. She served in a military hospital during World War II.

### MAY MacFARLANE

THE third member of the Australian unit was Sister May MacFarlane. She did not look a physically strong girl, but with Una Wilson she went through the experiences that have just been described, day after day and night after night, for months on end without flinching. That she was able to do so was due to her understanding of the issues involved. Before leaving Australia, she had said in a public statement: "I am going to Spain for two reasons. Firstly, because I feel that every assistance should be given to the Spanish people who are fighting to defend their constitutionally elected government, and secondly, because I feel that the result of the Spanish civil war will be felt all over the world."

That must, to many people, have seemed an exaggeration at the time. We now know it was a simple statement of fact.

May MacFarlane, like Una Wilson, saw long service in Spain with few breaks. Her letters told simply of her experiences, her longing for the food that was denied to those who took part in Spain's struggle. "Right now I would like some Aussie plum jam, the sort I used to turn up my nose at when I was a kid. I have not had butter for seven or eight months now. . . ."

After recovering from the severe nervous and physical strain of her experiences in Spain, Sister MacFarlane, like Sister Lowson, resumed nursing in West Australia. She was recently married.

### AGNES HODGSON

"ONE worked in a state of shock, caused by the sight of wholesale human wreckage," wrote Sister Agnes Hodgson in the Australian daily press of March 22, 1938.

"We concentrated on the more urgently wounded," she continued, "but it was hard to differentiate between them. Many who in ordinary hospitals would have been given immediate treatment had of necessity to wait. . . . The wards became a nightmare, despite the soldiers' bravery; groans and cries escaped them; some were driven mental by pain and shock. Brothers watched each other die in adjoining beds. We had not time even to discover they were brothers. . . ."

Agnes Hodgson had not gone with the other nurses to the Jarama front, but was sent instead to Granen, in Aragon, where the British Medical Aid Unit had established a hospital in a derelict farmhouse. (Aileen Palmer, another Australian, had been serving here as an interpreter and secretary.) From Granen, Sister Hodgson went to Polenino in the same region. Here she questioned a girl who had escaped from Saragossa, held by the Franco forces.

"She told me," wrote Sister Hodgson, "that in that town people were not allowed to walk about in pairs,

"She told me," wrote Sister Hodgson, "that in that town people were not allowed to walk about in pairs,



not even small children. All houses must be left open day and night, and were subject to frequent searches. The inhabitants were forbidden to discuss the war, and if discovered listening to government broadcasting stations they were shot. Men were stopped in the streets and told to put up their hands, and if after three times of asking they refused to say 'Arriba Espana' (the fascist slogan), and give the fascist salute, they were killed. . . ."

Sister Hodgson returned to Melbourne, and later lived in Tasmania, where she served during the war as officer in charge of the Women's Land Army. She is now married and lives in Melbourne.

### AILEEN PALMER

**A**ILEEN PALMER, a student of modern languages, left Australia for Europe in 1935. Next year after some time in Austria, she was living near Barcelona when the war in Spain broke out. She had been working with an international group who were organising the People's Olympic Games which were to have been held in Barcelona. But the day after the athletes began to arrive from abroad Franco's supporters staged their rising.

In Barcelona itself the fighting was over within 36 hours, except for some sporadic sniping, and young men were volunteering to form flying columns to go out against the scattered fascist nests. Assistance to the fascists from outside of Spain was soon to change the picture.

During the first week of the war, Aileen was interpreting for the athletes. Shortly afterwards, as secretary and interpreter, she joined the first British Medical Unit that went to Spain in the first month of the war.

The unit first set up an English Hospital at Grañes on the Aragon front, then moved to the Madrid front where the most crucial fighting was taking place. Here the unit became merged in the medical service of the

International Brigades that also included Una Wilson and May Macfarlane.

Her work included listing the names of the wounded as they came in — sometimes up to a thousand a day — keeping records, arranging evacuation of patients.

After the Jarama battle, the hospital moved to Navacerrada in the Guadarrama Mountains, then Escorial near Brunete, then on to the Aragon front near Belchite and afterwards to Teruel. At this time the bombing became much more intense. From their hospital near Teruel, Aileen looked out with Una Wilson and saw great flights of bombers overhead from dawn to dusk, cruising about, pursuing any vehicle on the roads, reducing to rubble the villages for miles behind the lines.

After this, the hospital was installed in tents. But



IN BARCELONA in the early days.—From left to right: Agnes Hodgson, May MacFarlane, Jack Barry, Mary Lowson, John Fisher, Una Wilson and Aileen Palmer.



even hidden among the olive groves the bombers found them. At Belchite a bomb exploded close to the hospital; two nurses were wounded.

On the retreat from Belchite, Aileen Palmer wrote of "the pitiful pilgrimages — peasants driven from their homes . . . women carrying children and making the long trek on foot. . . . The Spanish people don't ask for much. . . . All they ask, and demand, is the right to buy arms and planes with which to defend themselves and their wives and children from wholesale murder."

But they were refused that right by the policy of so-called non-intervention.

Aileen Palmer left Spain in May, 1938. Except for two brief intervals, she had been working continuously in Spain for nearly two years. Back in England, she took an active part in the campaigns for Spanish Relief and for the right of the Spanish Government to buy arms.

The day the world war broke, Aileen Palmer joined the ambulance service in the East End of London. After working in London throughout the war, she has now returned to Australia. She said recently:—

"For those of us who had been in Spain there was nothing new about the blitz on London. Preparations for civilian defence could have been better if the authorities had cared to listen to people like Professor Haldane who had studied the effects of air attack in Spain. But up till Dunkirk, England was dominated by the 'old gang' who could not think in terms of fighting fascism; they'd gone on so long hoping to save 'peace in our time' by sacrificing someone else. . . . We musn't let them do that any longer. It's time the victor nations got together to turn out Franco, if they don't want the whole thing to start all over again."

### MARGOT MILLER

"[I]n the press office in Madrid," wrote Australian journalist John Fisher in one of his articles, "we met Margot Bennett, nee Miller, a stalwart, handsome, raven-haired Sydney girl who was wounded in both

legs in September, when going to the aid of a wounded militiaman on the Aragon front. She lay under machine-gun fire for twenty minutes. Later she flew to London to address an Albert Hall rally which produced £2000 for Spain, and returned to Spain in time to break an arm and receive concussion in a lorry smash."

Margot Miller left London with the first British Medical Aid Unit. A News-Chronicle pamphlet "British Medical Aid in Spain" told of her bravery at the time she was wounded, and the bravery of the militiaman who carried her back on a stretcher under rebel fire.

Another Spanish militiaman, we are told, hearing of the Australian girl who was wounded in the cause of democracy on the high plains of Aragon, vowed that when peace was restored he would plant a rose-tree on the spot where "she who came to Spain to aid her brothers, the heroes of the people," was wounded.

According to John Fisher, Margot Miller, when she was told of the vow, said appreciatively, but with an eye to hard reality, "I can't imagine any blooming rose-bush on that blasted bit of territory."

### PORTIA HOLMAN

PORTIA HOLMAN, daughter of W. A. Holman, former Premier of New South Wales, was completing her medical course at Cambridge when the rebellion began in Spain. From the first she threw herself into the democratic cause, organising, collecting, and working medically.

She visited Spain twice as a representative of the Spanish Medical Aid Committee, and worked with her special knowledge in the new fever hospital at Valencia.

While in London, she was secretary of the Holborn and West Central London Committee for Spanish Medical Aid. Her mother was a member of the Spanish Relief Committee in New South Wales.

After visiting Spain, she wrote something that still

applies to the Spain of 1948: "Beautiful Spain is sad indeed today, but its people — who are the real Spain — are determined to defeat fascism."

### ESME ODGERS

"ESME ODGERS and a co-worker are jointly in charge of several hostels in Puigcerda, in the Pyrenees, to the north of Barcelona. She has control of 700 of the 3000 children in the settlement. Acting as nurse, mother, housekeeper and general organiser, she is doing really remarkable work. In addition to her other duties, she supervises the arrival of stores and supplies at the frontier, and she is a real angel of mercy to refugees from the Basque country and Asturias. . ."

Thus wrote R. T. E. Latham, Australian Rhodes Scholar, when he visited Spain and drove a truck for medical aid in 1937. Many of the children in the colony where Esme Odgers worked were supported by Australians, through the Joint Spanish Aid Council, whose honorary secretary, Miss Helen Strong, did a splendid job throughout the period of the Spanish War and even after, when the children were being cared for in France.

Describing the arrival of a shipment of food from Australia at the colony, which strangely enough was situated in a valley where hundreds of wattle trees were in bloom, Miss Odgers wrote: "Senora Sola thanked me profusely. I felt a bit of a fraud, because I was receiving thanks and felt quite happy about it, when the real thanks should have gone to the people of Australia who have worked so hard to collect these things."

After helping to care for the children in France for a considerable time, Esme Odgers married and settled in England.

Before going to Spain, she had been prominent in the Labor Movement on the New South Wales coalfields, and had worked in Sydney on the magazine *Woman Today*.

## Men Who Returned



### JACK FRANKLYN

WRITING to Australia from Spain in September, 1938, Jim McNeill told of an Australian seaman named Jack Franklyn who was fighting with the International Brigade. "Jack is very cool," he wrote, "and a great soldier, and did not want to leave the lines, but was ordered to do so by the Sanidad (Medical Corps). Jack was made Q.M. of No. 2 British Battalion (57th). In the severest fighting he has always kept the food up to the men, no matter how heavy the shelling. . . Jack was prominent in the Seamen's Union."

Solidly built and a fearless fighter, Franklyn had been born among the Lancashire cotton mills, had served with the British army in the trenches of the First World War, and had spent many years travelling across the seas or through the United States of America, where his hatred of injustice often caused his victimisation.

By the time he reached Australia he had been through scores of struggles, but his best fights were still ahead. When the unemployed of the depression days faced up to the batons of the police, Franklyn was in the front ranks. When the seamen struggled for decent conditions, Franklyn was there leading them. When the unemployed at Darwin demanded the right to be treated as humans, Franklyn again was in the lead. So much so that the UAP Government railroaded him to Fremantle. That, Franklyn used to say, was the one good

thing the UAP Government ever did. It enabled him to get a ship to Spain. He went into action at Belchite in January, 1938.

In a letter to Australia he described his most vivid memory of Spain:—

"I shall never forget that memorable morning when we left Spain. The train slowed down approaching French territory. I happened to be gazing out, looking at the Pyrenees Mountains high up in the air, when I saw a lovely little Spanish house near the railroad tracks. Just outside, only a few yards from it, stood a Spanish peasant woman, symbolic of her race. She was standing upright to attention, fist tightly clenched, upraised in salute to our Battalion.

"As the train crossed over into French territory, to be quite frank, I was choking. That old lady was 70 if she was a day. . . . Yet she could stand there on that cold morning and show her hatred of fascism, raise her fist in clenched salute, and cry, 'Vive La International.' That last silhouette of Spain will stay in my memory as long as I live."

After returning to Australia, Franklyn joined the A.I.F., but was invalided out and became employed on the Sydney waterfront.

In July, 1945, Franklyn fell 20 feet into the hold of a ship, and was hurt more seriously than was at first thought. He died some weeks later. Four hundred trade unionists marched through Sydney streets in front of his coffin. For many years Franklyn had been a member of the Communist Party, and he was given a Red funeral, those who paid tribute marching in front of the coffin, rather than behind it, for at a Red funeral the emphasis is not on the dead, but on the living. Not on the past, but the future.

## DICK WHATELEY

FIRST week of August, 1936. An Australian seaman named Dick Whateley—a quiet, thoughtful-looking chap—walked down a London street, and bought

a copy of the Daily Worker. Walking on, he glanced quickly at the headlines, for he had been at sea, out of touch with world events.

Suddenly he stopped, and he began reading, forgetful of his surroundings, the roar of the traffic, the thousands of people passing by. . . . A heading had caught his eye: "How Unity Won In Barcelona." That article, the first news to Whateley of the war in Spain, was written by well-known Australian author Vance Palmer, who with his family had been in Barcelona at the outbreak of the fascist rebellion.

A few days later, Whateley was in Paris, seeking a way to get to Spain. For some weeks he was at a loss and starving, until he found out about a ship that was to sail for Spain from Marseilles carrying volunteers for the International Brigade in its hold. ("Like the crew of Noah's Ark they were," Whateley used to say afterwards, "mixed, perhaps two of a kind.") He reached Spain weakened by his privations but went straight into the front line at Madrid, carrying the obsolete and worn-out French rifle that was all the Brigade had to issue. He was among the first of the English-speaking volunteers.

How he helped to save Madrid in the critical days of November, 1936, is told in Esmond Romilly's book "Boadilla." It is the story of a little English-speaking group in the Thaelmann Battalion of the International Brigade. There were eleven in the group; only three came out alive. Romilly draws some graphic pictures of Whateley—"Aussie" they called him—lending his overcoat to his mate because it was cold—walking along expounding his quiet philosophy in a jerky manner—liking to do things by himself, but a good friend, proud of the group he belonged to.

Whateley knew Australia well; when still a lad he had knocked about droving sheep over most of the continent. He knew the struggles of the pastoral workers, and was a member of the A.W.U. He had wandered and worked as a miner and sailor in Latin

America too — Mexico, Colombia, Brazil, Paraguay — and felt drawn to the Spanish people.

After nine months' continuous service in Spain he was invalidated back to Australia, a physical and nervous wreck. But he still fought on. Though no orator — in fact he hated having to speak in public — his quiet sincerity, the intensity of his memories and even the nervous twitching of his hands as he spoke made him one of the most effective anti-fascist speakers we have known.

Recovering partly in health, he became a member of the Ironworkers' Union and worked on the Sydney waterfront. In March 1943 he suddenly collapsed with acute pneumonia. By sheer will-power he fought on for months after the doctors had abandoned hope. "I refused to die," he said to a friend. "I didn't want to die before fascism was finally defeated. No, the doctors wouldn't understand it, but I refuse to die until I see Socialism in Australia. That gives a man something to live for."

He died late in September that year. Nettie Palmer wrote from Melbourne: "He was a deferred casualty of Spain. . . . If only Dick could have known how many people remembered him. In fact, no one has forgotten him, and always they have remembered him with love."

He was buried at Liverpool Cemetery. At the close of the funeral service, Adam Ogston, a member of the RAAF and of the Australian Communist Party, addressed these last words to him:

"Goodbye, Dick, and on behalf of the common people of every country in the world, I want to tell you that we are carrying on the struggle for the cause that you fought for, and that we will carry it on until the cause is finally victorious."

### JIM McNEILL

ON November 25, 1931, the Sydney Daily Telegraph reported on its front page that a large crowd of New Guard fascist supporters had rushed a Communist

meeting at Drummoyne, and that one of them had fired a revolver point blank at a man who refused to give his name. This "man who refused to give his name" had just come to the rescue of Mr. Steve Purdy (later manager of Current Book Distributors in Sydney), whose defence of free speech had resulted in three New Guards attacking him, one holding his arms while others rained "rabbit-killers" on the back of his neck.

The Telegraph published a flashlight photo of the "man who refused to give his name." It is recognisable as Jim McNeill, one of the best known of Australia's International Brigaders.

McNeill, born in Redfern (Sydney), is a member of a Scots-Irish Catholic family. Attracted to the socialist policy of the I.W.W. in Adelaide in 1928, he worked alongside fellow-socialists Ted Dickinson, who was killed in Spain in 1937, and Jack Zwollman, well-known swimmer and ex-A.I.F. man. Before long McNeill joined the Communist Party.

After his clashes with the New Guard in Sydney, he bought a house for his mother on the South Coast, and went down there himself to work as an ironworker.

To get to Spain, he stowed away on a Vestey meat ship. In Spain, he fought at Belchite and later on the Ebro front.

Wounded in the leg on September 23, 1938, he lay on the ground till dark, and crawled back to a Spanish battalion. His mates did not know what had happened to him, and McNeill's name was read out at the last roll-call of the International Brigade in Spain as "Missing, believed dead."

But McNeill came out of Spain alive — to enlist again in the anti-fascist fight at the beginning of the Second World War, being in the first queue of volunteers for the A.I.F. at Wollongong. In 1940 he was standing guard in an England threatened by invasion. Later, when his Spanish wound gave trouble, he was transferred to an A.I.F. Forestry Unit. Marrying an English girl, he returned to Sydney, was invalidated out of the Army, and





BACK FROM SPAIN.—From left to right in front: Charlie Walters, Charlie Riley, Joe Carter; and at back: Jack Franklyn, Charlie McIlroy and Jim McNeill.

is now living in a Sydney suburb with his wife and little daughter Vanessa, who came out from England early in 1945. Mrs. McNeill had been a member of the Spanish Relief Committee in London.

Jim McNeill is now working in Sydney in Current Book Distributors. He says little about his own record in Spain, but it is significant that when Joe Carter wrote to Australia from Spain in October 1938, he said that McNeill was "regarded by the whole of the 15th Brigade as one of the most courageous anti-fascist fighters."

## RON HURD

ONE of the best known of the Australian International Brigaders, Ron Hurd, after being twice wounded in Spain, returned to Australia permanently disabled and wearing a plaster jacket. His friends felt he had done more than his share of fighting fascism, and would not have blamed him if he had settled down to a life of quiet. Hurd had other ideas.

Still wearing his plaster jacket, he threw himself into one of the toughest lecturing tours any Australian has tackled, addressing 500 meetings in twelve months from Fremantle to Mt. Mulligan in the north of Queensland — telling the truth about Spain, explaining the meaning of fascism, and collecting aid for the Spanish people. At one stage he was addressing 16 meetings a week.

Ron Hurd wouldn't have been happy any other way. Coming from an Irish family — his father had been an old sea-dog in his day — Ron from his earliest days had found his way from country to country and from adventure to adventure. Not the unreal adventures of the Tarzan film or the Mandrake comic strip, but the real adventures of struggling humanity, of men battling as mates together to make the world a decent place to live in — the great wars and struggles of the twentieth century in which we are living.

Ron Hurd had run away to sea at an early age, and in his years in America his early theoretical knowledge of socialism became strengthened by the hard school of experience. Back in Melbourne in the depression days, his nuggety frame and broad shoulders were to be seen in the forefront of the struggles of the unemployed in Prahran, Richmond and other suburbs.

With his friend Jack Newman, Hurd took ship again, and before long he was organising for the International of Seamen and Harbor Workers in Liverpool.

The I.S.H.W. chose Hurd to visit South Africa in 1935 to study the conditions of Negro workers. From South Africa he went on to Australia, and he was on the Ceramic in an Australian port when he heard of the war in Spain. His mates in Liverpool had 12,000 miles start in the race to get to Spain, but Hurd got there at the same time as they did — his old friend Jack Newman being one of them.

Though he had little knowledge of arms, Hurd was soon appointed to the position of political commissar, which involved, among other things, supervising food



supplies, hearing and adjusting complaints, co-operating with military leaders in planning attacks, and leading the advances.

Twice wounded — at Jarama and Brunete — Hurd returned to Australia with a piece of shrapnel in his leg and a plaster jacket around him for his long lecture tour. Later, he went to New Zealand, where he was elected General Secretary of the Auckland District General Laborers' Union. In October 1941 he relinquished the position to return to Australia, hoping to enlist in the AIF and once again fight the fascists gun in hand.

Rejected on medical grounds, he joined the Merchant Navy and made his contribution to the war effort by helping to keep the flow of supplies moving northward to the fighting men in New Guinea and the other islands.

At the end of 1947 he was elected West Australian State Secretary of the Seamen's Union.

## KEN MCPHEE

INTERVIEWING Ken McPhee for the Workers' Weekly on August 19, 1938, W. F. Burns described him as a sun-tanned, open-faced, typical Sydney boy who in his 23 years had done "more than most men do in a complete lifetime. He has served in the world's most spectacular and heroic army brigade and lived through things which would have killed you and me.

"Two bullets have passed through his arm, one through his foot, and another has pierced his lung. But he worked his way out to Australia on a dredge whose journey was so tough that the daily papers described it as a 'Nightmare Voyage'."

A young seaman from Manly, Ken McPhee joined the International Brigade in Spain in January 1937, fighting at Jarama, Brunete, Belchite. His fine service won him promotion from private to sergeant; later he was trained as an officer but was wounded before taking over.

Under heavy questioning McPhee admitted that he had saved a company of Americans from walking into a trap, and that to do so he had to rush through heavy

machine-gun and rifle fire. Ron Hurd's description of the incident is even more revealing. The Americans had advanced under heavy fire and had been recalled, but it was impossible to get the message to them.

"Ken McPhee was with me on the parapet covering the American advance," says Ron Hurd, "and I turned round and missed him. After about five minutes, back he comes, his nose skinned and bleeding, and being the leader of the section I right away jumped on him for leaving his post.

"He half apologetically told me he'd brought in a wounded man. He'd gone over the top, run along to the American line with the message to come back, found a wounded man, and carried him in. How he got in I don't know, as the fire was wicked. So I patted him on the shoulder, and just said 'Good kid,' but I felt more like hugging him."

## SAM AARONS

ALTHOUGH he is probably better known in Sydney and Adelaide, Sam Aarons comes from Melbourne, being a member of a Jewish family all of whom are known for their years of hard work for the anti-fascist cause.

Still a lad when the First World War broke out in 1914, Sam played an active part in the struggles of the Labor Movement, and once came home from an anti-conscription demonstration with his head cut open by a police baton.

Moving to Sydney, he became well known for his work with the Australian Friends of the Soviet Union; as general secretary of this organisation he did difficult pioneering work for the Allied Unity which was later to prove the key factor in winning victory in the war.

He left Sydney for Spain early in 1937, and was rapidly promoted to the rank of sergeant in the International Brigade. He served at Madrid, Brunete, Teruel and on

the Ebro. After 18 months' service he returned to Australia in order to conduct a lecture tour for the Spanish Relief Committee.

On one occasion during this tour, he was speaking on the municipal reserve of a small N.S.W. town where a collection was forbidden. However, he told the audience they could give money for Spain if they cared to. They did. Then Aarons saw a policeman walking towards him. "This is where I'm arrested," he thought. Instead, the policeman stopped, put his hand in his pocket — and threw a two shilling piece into the collection.

Sam Aarons is now Organiser for the Australian Communist Party.

## JOE CARTER

**A**N ironworker at Australian Iron & Steel, Port Kembla, Joe Carter was handy with the gloves and had done some boxing. When he read of the war in Spain, he became attracted to the idea of a different kind of fight — not for glory or money in the boxing ring, but for a better deal for the common people — on the battlefields of Spain.

For six months he "lived on the smell of an oily rag" and saved every possible penny to get his fare to Spain. The Communist Party assisted in paying his fare, and he left by the same ship as Bill Morcom.

Twenty-six years old when he reached Spain, he became a machine-gunner in a special machine-gun battalion, and saw a lot of fighting. His friends describe him as "a tough fighter, well-built and a good boxer, very game."

Carter saw many fascist atrocities in Spain. In an interview with a Daily News reporter on his return, he said: "In Spain I saw Franco's airmen shoot down two Loyalist pilots as they were coming to earth in parachutes."

After returning to Australia, Carter became a water-side worker at Port Kembla, and later in Sydney.

## LOU ELLIOTT

**B**ORN in New South Wales, Lou Elliott had been active in the Labor Movement in Queensland. In 1936 he stepped off a ship in London and was soon active in the campaign to aid Spain. He tried to volunteer, but in those early days the Spanish Government was not allowing isolated outsiders to enter.

Then came the day when Elliott heard that volunteers were being accepted, and he left London, with a weekend ticket to Paris in his pocket, in one of the earliest groups to cross over. On the boat in the channel he discovered that famous English writer Ralph Fox was on the boat. "Where are you off to?" Elliott asked. "Same place as you fellows," Fox replied.

Elliott and Ralph Fox were 2 of the 22 original English-speaking members who formed the nucleus of the First Company of the Twelfth (French) Battalion of the 14th Brigade. Ralph Fox was elected Co-commissar of the Brigade, while Lou Elliott was elected political leader of the English-speaking group, which grew to 280, with an English Jew named Nathan as their military commander.

As Christmas drew near, so did the smell of battle, and it was on Christmas Day, 1936, that the Battalion went into action at Lopera, to check the fascist advance on the rail junction of Andujar.

"We suffered from a terrific lack of equipment," Elliott says. "Our arms were of a most antiquated vintage; some of them were guns captured by the Russians from the armies of intervention in 1918 and 1919."

The First Company acquitted itself with great honor. It included some of the best-known members of the British Communist Party. Ralph Fox was killed on the second day. "For all his brilliance," says Elliott, "Ralph Fox was an unassuming, quiet, gentle comrade, always prepared to listen to any doubt or grievance; but once a decision had been made he was very firm in seeing the decision was carried out."

After hard fighting, the Battalion stabilised the front, and then switched to Madrid where it helped to "beat the hell" out of the fascists and force them to a stalemate.

After being sick in hospital, Elliott became commander of the machine-gun section of the 4th Company, serving 3 months without leave at Jarama. Wounded in the eye, he was later transferred to the artillery, serving with the "Flying Circus"—a Czech AA Battery.

Fighting till the end, Elliott returned to Sydney. This war found him on a ship carrying supplies across the Pacific; later he worked in Sydney as a member of the Australasian Society of Engineers.

### CHARLIE WALTERS

CHARLIE WALTERS was in South Australia in 1928, but went to Tasmania, where he joined the Communist Party and became a leader of the unemployed in their anti-eviction fights, both in Launceston and Hobart. (When he went from Launceston to Hobart he walked the whole way.)

After a protracted struggle against eviction in Hobart, Walters was arrested and severely handled by the police, later being told to leave Tasmania in 12 hours. A broad Unity Committee including churchmen protested, and under pressure from this Committee the authorities withdrew the deportation order. Walters stayed in Hobart a year, then going to Adelaide.

When the news of the fascist attack on Spain came through, he kept the newspaper cuttings. "They haunted me till I was compelled to go," he said.

From Adelaide he went to Hobart; from there he worked his passage to London. In Spain he served for 17 months on the Aragon and Ebro fronts. Walters was at Teruel and was blown up during the evacuation. During his five months in hospitals and convalescent homes, he met Egon Kisch, fiery anti-fascist writer whose visit to Australia in 1934-35 had done much to awaken us to the realities of fascism.

"I talked with Kisch quite a lot at Benecassim," says Walters. "He had an amazing knowledge of Australia. He was always 'one of the boys' and we all liked him."

Charlie Walters was the only Australian at the ceremony in the plaza at Mondejar where the present British Prime Minister, Mr. C. R. Attlee, had his name conferred on the British Battalion. Mr. Attlee later said of the International Brigaders on their return to Britain:—

"Their arrival in England brought to a conclusion an episode of which every one of us should be proud. When the history of our time comes to be written I am certain that the story of the International Brigade will find an important place."

Walters was sent out of Spain with a batch of wounded in November, 1938. Returning to Australia he addressed a number of meetings and became Assistant Secretary of the Spanish Relief Committee in Adelaide.

### LLOYD EDMONDS

LLOYD EDMONDS has been close to the Labor Movement since his earliest days. A photograph taken of the Socialist Sunday School founded early this century in Melbourne by the British Socialist Tom Mann and carried on by loyal Socialists until the 'twenties, shows Lloyd seated near the front. Next to him is Ron Hurd.

Lloyd's family were Labor people living at Sandringham, and he grew up to be a member of the Australian Labor Party, and soon became Secretary of the Teachers' Industrial Union, as well as being an active member of the Movement Against War and Fascism which fought so hard — and so successfully — for the right of Egon Kisch to enter Australia as an anti-fascist lecturer in 1934-35.

Lloyd was in London when war broke out in Spain, and it was not long before he was finding his way across the Pyrenees in the dead of night, dodging the frontier guards as many other Australians had done to get a chance to fight fascism.

While at Albacete, the base from which he was serving as an ambulance driver — a difficult and dangerous task — he wrote:—

"I'm very proud to be in Spain today. It gives me added pleasure to remember the movement back home that is fighting the same fight as Republican Spain . . . I'm surer today, after six months in Spain, that if anything in history is reactionary and horrible, it is the rebel generals' mutiny, followed by the German and Italian military invasion. This picture has a much more ~~accurate view and that is the way the ordinary 'tax-~~ gotten' people have rallied to the assistance of the Spanish people."

Lloyd was one of the last Australians to leave Spain. Returning to teaching in the Victorian countryside, he has since married, trained as an industrial welfare officer, and has done important work in a Victorian war factory.

### JACK ALEXANDER

WHEN RAAF men flew over Germany to bomb the industrial centres of the Ruhr and the Rhineland, one of them—a young air-gunner—had a special sense of satisfaction as he saw the bombs hurtle down. A Queenslander born at Enoggera, Jack Alexander had travelled considerably while still a youth, working as a merchant seaman, toiling on the Argentine railways, and signing off a ship in London just as the Spanish War started.

In London he helped the British workers fight Mosley's blackshirts, and attended the huge London rallies where as much as £6,000 was donated in one night for the Spanish Relief funds. More and more he became convinced that the Spanish people were fighting our battle. He arrived in Spain to fight with the International Brigade in time to see the victory of Teruel, and to fight in the bitter battles that followed as the fascists counter-attacked with the full weight of their troops and armor.

Wounded in the head at the Battle of Aragon by a piece of Nazi shrapnel, Jack Alexander was captured



FRANCO'S BLUE DIVISION troops give the fascist salute as they go to fight for Hitler on the Eastern Front. The Blue Division was routed and smashed by the Red Army.

and thrown in one of Franco's concentration camps. (At first he had been held for a time in a church at Alcaniz which the fascists were using as a supply base; then he was transferred to a concentration camp which was an old monastery.)

Alexander was tortured physically — beaten with sticks and leather thongs, and pounded with fists. Twice he was sentenced to death and taken out to be shot, then returned to prison.

Other Britons were fellow-prisoners with him, including Clive Branson, who was killed in 1944 fighting against the Japanese in Burma after writing the book "British Soldier In India," and the well-known Irishman, Frank Ryan.

Ryan never returned to Ireland. The Eire Government announced after many years that Ryan had died at

Dresden, in Hitler Germany, in June, 1944. To Jack Alexander, who had seen German Gestapo men given the free run of Franco's prisons to "interrogate" the anti-fascist Germans, there was nothing unexpected in one of Franco's prisoners dying in Hitler Germany.

Alexander himself, with Branson and other Britishers, was at last released on exchange, to return to Australia as a merchant seaman, work as a rigger on Garden Island and the Sydney waterfront, and enlist in 1941 in the R.A.A.F. It was not much later that he had the satisfaction of returning with interest the piece of Nazi shrapnel that had hit him in Spain. Then his Spanish wounds gave trouble, and he was forbidden to fly any more.

Returning to Australia, he was demobilised, and settled at Bronte Beach, near Sydney.

### NED BUCKBY

A VETERAN of the 1914-18 War, Ned Buckby was living in Queensland in 1936. An engine-driver in the sugar mills of the Lower Burdekin, he was a member of two Trade Unions—the A.W.U. and the F.E.D.F.A.

A keen socialist, he was soon itching to go to Spain in spite of his age. Collecting a number of Spaniards who were living nearby and who were also eager to fight for Spain, Buckby overcame all obstacles and was soon in France at the Spanish frontier. His Spanish friends were allowed across, but he himself was arrested and jailed by the French police, being held in the village of Bourg-Madam in a hotel that had been converted into a prison.

His friends dramatically rescued him in the dead of night, and soon he was in Spain, being questioned by an interpreter, who turned to the Spanish people present and said: "This man has come 18,000 kilometres to fight for Spain."

But Buckby was fighting for Australian freedom as well as Spanish, and he soon met other Aussies there, including Ron Hurd, who says that Buckby did "an excellent job," and Harry Hynes.

Buckby, after fighting first with a mixed Spanish Brigade in the Jarama Valley and then with the British Battalion, was wounded in the leg and hand and sent to hospital in Paris, and then England.

He is fond of telling of a Negro in the International Brigade who was noted for his kindness to the Spanish children. The Negro used to share his food with the children. This was against regulations, and it was Buckby's duty to report the Negro for this "offence." Naturally he "forgot" to do so, and instead became friendly with the Negro, who was later killed in action.

Interviewed early in 1945, when he was working on the Sydney waterfront, Buckby expressed confidence in the growing strength of the anti-fascist forces in Spain, and in their final victory.

### CHARLIE RILEY

[I]t was long after the news of the Spanish War had reached Sydney and Melbourne that it penetrated to Tennant's Creek. One of the prospectors there, Charlie Riley, had been a sergeant-major during the 1914-18 War. He began to think about the events in Spain, and one day he quietly packed his swag and set out to hitch-hike to Darwin—or rather to Spain, for Darwin was merely the first stage of his journey.

His biggest problem was to get his train-fare from Darwin to Sydney. But a group of Chinese people who knew him, and who knew he wanted to go and fight for freedom, put their hands in their pockets and presented him with a sum of money that made the trip possible—an interesting and inspiring gesture from the Chinese people to the people of Spain.

From Port Kembla, Riley, 44 years old but still keen for a fight for a good cause, worked his way to Birkenhead, and before long his military experience was at the service of the democratic government of Spain.

Riley became a bomb instructor for the British Battalion in Spain, and when he returned to Australia he proudly showed his friends a card from the Spanish Government declaring him a model soldier — "an example to all



other comrades in discipline and hard work, defending the cause of the people."

Riley was badly wounded in the last stages of the Ebro fighting. After returning to Australia he is believed to have gone to New Zealand.

### CHARLIE McILROY

ONE of the youngest of the Brigaders, Charlie McIlroy was noted for his gaiety and cheerfulness out of the lines, and for his courage in the lines, where he served as a member of the Sanidad — the Spanish Medical Corps. Those who knew him in Spain pay tribute to his bravery in dragging in wounded men under fire.

McIlroy's family had been West Australian people who were in a position that enabled him to begin studying for the medical profession. When the depression swept over Australia, Charlie had to change his plans, and he became a medical orderly at a Subiaco hospital.

In Spain he was able to put his medical knowledge at the service of the people. One incident is seared deep in his memory. He was attending a Spaniard who knew he was dying. With his last breath the Spaniard gasped: "My house, my wife, my children, and now me. English comrade, remember!"

McIlroy returned to Australia with five other Brigaders — McNeill, Carter, Franklyn, Walters and Riley. Among the crowd that welcomed them in Sydney were members of the crew of the Dalfram, on strike against the shipping of Australian pig-iron to Japan. The Daily News report (17/2/39) is interesting:—

"Twelve policemen watched the 2,000 democrats who welcomed returning members of the International Brigade at the Town Hall last night. A plainclothes policeman took a verbatim report. . ."

But the real feelings of the Australian people were shown by the enthusiastic receptions everywhere, and the 96 telegrams of welcome that the Brigaders received when their ship reached Perth.

### ERNIE BARATO

ITALIANS were poor fighters when they had to fight for Mussolini. Many people began to think that Italians had no courage. But in Spain a small group of liberty-loving Italians formed the Garibaldi Group, and before long they won a reputation for courage that was second to none. Preserving the traditions of the real Italy of Garibaldi and Mazzini, they set the seeds of the new freedom-loving Italy that will rise from the ruins of Fascism.

Among these Italians who covered themselves with glory in Spain was one who heard the call of battle while he was working in the sugar-cane fields of Northern Queensland. Ernie Barato had been living in Australia for many years, had learned to love Australia as he loved Italy — but he sensed that Spain's battle was one that affected all lands. He took his savings from the bank and paid his passage to France.

Soon he was in Spain, fighting at Jarama with the Yugoslavs of the Dimitrov Battalion — men who were later to fight again as Marshal Tito's victorious partisans. "He won a pretty big name for himself in Spain," says Ron Hurd of Barato. "He was one of forty survivors of his unit who were cut off and fought their way out with hand grenades and bayonets. Barato was one of the most fearless blokes I ever met."

### ORME DOWNING

A VETERAN of the 1914-18 war, Orme Downing had been wounded three times in France while fighting with the 37th Battalion A.I.F. Despite his age, he enlisted again when he saw another world war commencing in Spain, and went through the bitter Jarama campaign, spending four months and two days in the front line. When two men were invited from the British Battalion to the Brigade dinner in honor of the Sixth Anniversary of the Spanish Republic (April 14, 1937) the men chosen were two Australians — Ron Hurd and Orme Downing.

Downing went through further fierce fighting after the Jarama campaign, and won the rank of corporal before he had to be invalided out of the army. He comes from Beechworth in Victoria.

### JACK KIRKPATRICK

**A** NATIVE of Queensland, Jack Kirkpatrick was in England in 1936. It did not take him long to make his decision; by the end of the year he had given up a good job and was fighting in Spain. Badly wounded in the heavy fighting around Jarama, he was repatriated to England.

Ron Hurd, who met him in Spain, speaks highly of his fighting ability, and adds: "He was a real good guy."

### WILLIAM BELCHER

**B**ORN at Geelong in 1912, William Belcher was educated at Bradfield College and at St. Catharine's College, Cambridge. By profession an engineer, he left for Spain in August, 1936, as a driver for the British Medical Aid Committee.

Later he held a commission in a Spanish Battalion called the *Batallon de la Muerte* (Battalion of Death). He was missing for a long period, but reappeared safely again. His father, Sir Charles F. Belcher, formerly lived in Victoria but settled in Kenya Colony.

### BERT ROBINSON

**W**HEN Jim McNeill was in hospital at Mataro in Spain, he met an Australian named Robinson who was fighting with the Abraham Lincoln Brigade. Robinson was a ship's engineer and had not been in Australia for about ten years.

He arrived in Spain at the beginning of the fighting and paid off from his ship to join the Republican cause. Later, when still ill, he volunteered to go and fight in the Ebro offensive.

When a grenade landed among a group of soldiers, Robinson courageously picked it up, hoping to be able to throw it back before it exploded. It went off as he threw it, inflicting severe injuries on his hand and arm.

### ARTHUR HAYMAN

**B**EFORE going to fight in Spain, Arthur Hayman had lived for some years in Melbourne. A seaman on a ship that visited a Spanish port, Hayman decided to stay in Spain to fight with the democratic forces.

Jim McNeill, who met him in Spain, says that Hayman was in a lot of fighting, and was with the International Brigade till the end. Even after the Brigades had been sent out of Spain, Hayman still helped the Spanish anti-fascists by working on a food ship plying between England and Spain.

### TOM MURPHY

**T**OM MURPHY, like many International Brigaders, is an Irishman, but as he lived in Australia for many years we can claim him as one of us.

In fact, he knows more of Australia than many Australians do, for when Jim McNeill met Murphy in Spain, he found that Murphy had carried his swag all round Australia. His deepest memories were of the West Australian timber country and of Kandos (N.S.W.).

Leaving Australia about 1934, Murphy visited the Soviet Union, went to Britain, and then to Spain, where he was wounded at the same time as Jack Franklyn. Murphy later lost his arm as a result of his wounds.

Tom's brother Pat Murphy, who also fought with the International Brigade in Spain, came to Australia early in 1947. Pat reported that his brother Tom had secured a position as a commissioner under the new British National Coal Board.

### LIONEL EAST

**B**ORN in England, Lionel East had lived for a number of years in Queensland, where he worked in the canefields. He met Jim McNeill in Spain, and expressed a wish to return to Australia after the conclusion of the Spanish War, so that we are perhaps justified in claiming him as an Australian.

McNeill later heard that East had been taken prisoner by Franco, and that was the last that he heard of him.

### PETER COLL

A MEMBER of the Painters and Dockers' Union in Sydney, Peter Coll enlisted in the AIF and won a DCM at El Alamein, but owing to wounds had to be invalided out of the Army.

He had previously fought in Spain, and is proud of the fact that at least 700 of his countrymen—he comes from Ireland—are known to have fought for Spanish democracy.

It was not till after the Spanish War that Coll came to Australia, but his life here and his service with the AIF have earned him a place among the Australians who fought in Spain.

### W. L. CLEAVER, P. J. LYNCH

SOME of the Australian Brigades remember that a man named Cleaver in the British Battalion had told them he came from Tasmania. This is presumably the W. L. Cleaver of Liverpool, whose name is on the records of the International Brigade Association in London, and we feel that his name should be included on the Honor Roll of the Australians who fought in Spain.

The records of the British International Brigade Association also show that another Australian, a P. J. Lynch from West Perth, fought in Spain.

There must be other Australians who fought in Spain whose names cannot be traced. We know of 57 who served—of more than 60 if we include the Spanish people who went from Australia to fight.

Sixty who served—twenty-four who gave their lives. These are figures of which Australia can be proud.

### HERMANN BOTTCHE

ONE of the best-known American heroes of Spain and later of New Guinea and the Philippines was German-born Captain Hermann Bottcher, who died heroically on Leyte in December, 1944. Bottcher spent some years in Australia after leaving Germany. A loyal trade unionist and Communist, Bottcher wrote shortly before he died: "The hardest battle for us will be to win the peace."

## Spaniards In Australia

A NUMBER of Spaniards who were living in Australia in 1936 returned to Spain to fight. It is impossible to give anything like a full list of those who went, nor do we know much about some of those whose names have become known to us.

Some of these men had not been living in Australia long, and were more Spanish than Australian. But others, like Ray Jordana, had come to Australia at an early age and had become "dinkum Aussies."

Ray Jordana, son of a Spanish radical who had left Spain under the persecution by King Alfonso XIII in 1909, lived with his family for many years at Innisfail, North Queensland. Soon after the outbreak of the Spanish War, he came to Melbourne, where he became a member of the Storemen and Packers' Union. Melbourne people



J. GARCIA in Barcelona with Australian nurse Mary Lowson.

will remember his dark Spanish face as he spoke at a big Aid for Spain rally. He was not a practised speaker and his nervousness was evident; but no one could miss his sincerity, enthusiasm and understanding of the issues.

Then, as he had intended, he quietly slipped away and made his way to Spain, where he served till the end, first in the International Brigade, and then, for the last months, in the Spanish Army. Escaping only at the last moment across the Pyrenees, he was put into the French concentration camp of Gurs. He was ultimately released as an Australian with a homeland to go to—which his German and Austrian fellow-prisoners had not — and after his return he served during the Second World War in the R.A.A.F.

Another Spaniard who went to Spain from Innisfail was J. Garcia, who had also lived in Australia for many years. Wounded in the fighting, he was invalided home during the war, and on returning to Innisfail found an enthusiastic Spanish Relief Committee, his wife being the hard-working secretary.

Five Spaniards from the Lower Burdekin in North Queensland went to Spain with Ned Buckby. Buckby was told that scores of other Spaniards were keen to go with him too. "Two of the five who went with me, Rosenda Sala and Barba Duesa, were particularly good soldiers," Buckby says. Sala was wounded on the Aragon front and escaped to France after the cessation of hostilities. He was put in a concentration camp, but as a result of the representations of his wife in Australia he was finally released, and returned to the sugarcane fields of Queensland.

A number of other Australian Spaniards went to fight, but their names are not known, except for three—Angelo Plaza, Salvador Barker and Juan Federico.

The Spanish groups in Australia deserve praise for the fine work they did in raising funds for Spanish Relief, and in speaking for the cause. The Spanish Consul-General, Senor Baeza, gave a lead to his people in every way.

## Reporters In Spain

THERE are many other Australians whose names may well be included on the Roll of Honor — men and women who visited Spain and gave fearless service to the cause by speaking, writing, organising. . . .

Most important of them, perhaps, was journalist Noel Monks, well-known Melbourne Catholic, who went to Franco's Spain as correspondent of the London Daily Express. In the issue of April 5, 1937, he wrote that he had been expelled by Franco.

"I am not sorry that I have been expelled," he wrote, "because the lot of a British journalist in Franco's Spain is made impossible by the obstructive methods of the Spanish censors."

"We have nothing against you, Senor Monks," he was told. "If we had we would have shot you."

Noel Monks witnessed the first mass bombing of civilians in Europe — the experiment that was later to be "perfected" in the terrible destruction of Warsaw, London, Coventry.

Ten minutes before the town was destroyed he saw thirty German Junkers bombers flying towards Guernica. He was among the ruins an hour later.

"I saw bodies in the fields spotted with machine-gun bullets," he wrote to the Daily Express. "I saw 600 bodies. Nurses, children, farmers, old women, girls, old men, babies. All dead, torn and mutilated. . . ."

To his brother, Mr. R. J. Monks, of Adelaide, he wrote: "When I was with Franco's forces I used to believe the tales told about the way the Loyalists were persecuting Catholics, priests, nuns, etc., in Bilbao. The very first day I arrived there I saw two priests and five nuns blown to pieces — by a Franco air raid."

Monks went on to say that 90 per cent of the Basques, who fought against Franco, were Roman Catholics. "I often went to Mass," he added, describing his stay in the Basque country. "We'd be in the middle of Mass



when the air raid warnings would go. We'd hear the roar of the planes overhead . . . the crash of bombs . . . but not a soul would waver . . . the priest's voice would go on in the same tempo."

John Fisher, son of former Australian Prime Minister Andrew Fisher, was another Australian journalist whose writings were of great assistance to the Spanish cause. He visited Spain, meeting several Australians there. Later, from London, he took the initiative in sending to Australia the first film of the Spanish fighting.

Among other Australian newspaper men who visited Spain were Thomas Dunbabin, Allan Burberry, Alan Morehead and Ronald Monson.

Rupert Lockwood, now Associate Editor of the Tribune, Australia's central Communist newspaper, also went to Spain. From Madrid he spoke over the radio in June 1937 in support of the democratic cause.

There was another Australian journalist, Leslie White of Sydney, of whom we know only that he was wounded by shrapnel at Valdimoro, and died in hospital in Madrid.

Arthur and Margaret Howells left Melbourne for Spain while the war was in progress, intending that Howells should join the International Brigade, while his wife would work in the hospitals. By the time they arrived, however, the Spanish Government had decided not to allow any non-Spaniards to enter the country permanently. Howells and his wife were allowed in for a few weeks late in 1938, during which time they made an extensive tour of hospitals and battle fronts, recording their experiences in a booklet "We Went To Spain" when they returned to Melbourne. The booklet had a wide sale, and Howells undertook a long lecture tour.

A number of other Australians visited Spain, while there must have been several who, like Colin Mathieson, arrived in London intending to fight in Spain, but found they were too late to be allowed entry. Jim McNeill, who met Mathieson in London, says that Mathieson, who had come from Sydney, later joined the R.A.F. and died in the Battle for Britain.

## On The Home Front

It has been said that in modern war a frontline fighter needs the support of ten workers on the home front. In the Spanish War, every Australian frontline fighter literally had thousands of workers supporting him.

The little groups of Christians, Labor people, Communists and others who met in Sydney and Melbourne in July 1936 rapidly became a nation-wide movement — a movement in every sense of the word, something that grew and changed and gathered force as in town and countryside voluntary helpers spoke, wrote articles, tramped from house to house, talked with friends, organised film showings, took returned brigaders or nurses to factory meetings, sold pamphlets, sped the word everywhere — "Spain's fight is ours."

When the records of the Spanish Relief Committee were returned to the Secretary after having been seized by the Menzies Government in June 1940, they revealed that £17,115 had been raised, of which £4,200 was subscribed by trade unions.

The Committee bought seven ambulances and sent £10,860 to be spent on food and medical equipment. This was sent to international committees approved by the Spanish Government. Following the Government collapse early in 1939, the Committee organised aid for the thousands of refugees from the fascist terror. Total administrative expenses of the Spanish Relief Committee amounted during the whole period to just over £1,500.

Other Committees, concentrating on aid for the Spanish children, also sent considerable sums to Spain.

So many men and women devoted themselves to the Spanish cause that it would be impossible to try to name them, but it is fitting that two names should be mentioned — those of Phil Thorne, National Secretary of the Spanish Relief Committee, and Helen Baillie, Melbourne Secretary, who worked day and night, week after week and month after month, never tiring in their efforts.

## Unfinished Task...

TEN years afterwards... We think of our dead, buried on those Spanish hills. And our dead, too, in the African desert, the New Guinea jungle, in Malaya and the other battlefields. And we know that their task is still unfinished.

Fascism, defeated in war, still retains many strongholds. From these it threatens to re-emerge, armed perhaps with rocket weapons, atom bombs...

Spain itself is one of these strongholds. Spain, where thousands of Nazis fled near the war's end in 1945, where industry has come to a considerable extent under the control of Germans, where, according to a spokesman of the U.S. State Department, German scientists were in April, 1946, working in German-owned plants with facilities for atomic research.

And not only Spain. In other countries in Europe the fascists are at work, in South America, too, while throughout the world sinister groups are in action, stirring up race hatred, distorting the truth, denying democratic rights to the people, plotting atomic war.

As this booklet goes to press, powerful groups in the USA are advocating openly that Franco be strengthened as an ally for a future war against the peoples of Eastern Europe.

Sinister groups — and powerful. Only the most determined unity of the people will stop them from dragging us all into a Third World War, into destruction and death.

If we, the living, are to be true to the memory of our dead in Spain, we must finish their task. We must eradicate for all time the remnants of fascism. We must build the new world of brotherhood of which our fighters dreamt.

In Spain the Resistance Movement gathers strength. Throughout the world the forces of democracy are developing in unity, in historical understanding—to which this booklet is meant as a needed contribution.

Honoring our dead, we pledge ourselves to finish their task.

*Tribune*  
21-7-76

### OBITUARY

Jim McNeill, an international brigader in Spain, died in Sydney on July 10 aged 76.

Delivering the oration at his funeral, Ted Lipscombe spoke of Jim's devotion to the working class movement and the communist party. In 1928 he joined the I.W.W. in Adelaide, and soon after, joined the CPA to work for socialism.

"Jim McNeill was among Australia's first pioneers against fascism. In 1936 in response to the call for an international brigade to help the Spanish workers against fascism, Jim smuggled aboard a ship in NSW to join other Australians fighting in Spain.

"Returning to Australia, he enlisted to go overseas during the 2nd World War to continue his fight against fascism. After the war Jim continued as a communist with widespread activities for peace, democracy, socialism and international friendship.

"Jim retired from work 10 years ago. He never let up in his activities for the causes he believed in. For years he sold Tribune in the streets of Guildford every Saturday until less than 18 months ago.

"To his wife Mabel, his daughter Vanessa, to his other close relatives our deepest and saddest regrets, our kindest and warmest feelings of deep understanding. You have just cause to be deeply proud of Jim and the life he lived.

"His name for ever more is written into the pages of the history of the Australian labor movement. His name has found a place on international record, the history of the international working class."

Tribune joins with Ted Lipscombe in expressing deep sympathy to Comrade Jim McNeill's family and friends.