NUEVE, The Forgotten Men of the 9th Company (LA)

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History does not always recognize true heroes... Like those Spanish republican soldiers of the 9th company in General Leclerc's 2nd Armoured Devision. They had fought Nazism on the side of the Allies, yet their contribution and sacrifice had not been acknowledged - they are the forgotten heroes of WWII.

Like true freedom fighters, they'd been battling relentlessly against fascism in Europe. For ten years, ever since the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War, they'd fought at first in their own country, then in France, North Africa and elsewhere in the hope to return one day to a liberated Spain. As one of them said: "We did not fight for a flag, we fought for our ideals, for freedom".

On 24 August 1944, victory was finally theirs and they were among the first soldiers of liberated France to enter occupied Paris. Their hopes to bring freedom to Spain, however, were shattered by the realities of the Cold War: Franco was spared and became the ally of the free world...

Luis Royo and Manuel Fernandez are the last survivors of this epic tale. They look back without a trace of bitterness or resentment. They speak of those years with great calm and dignity, with realism and a touch of humour. The are secure in the knowledge that they did the right thing. And if they had to do it all over again? They wouldn't hesitate a moment...

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