

THE BUNKER

A play in 2 acts by Lawrence Leonard

ACT ONE

(The curtain rises on a World War II concrete bunker [Down-stage Right] with its firing slit slanted slightly towards the centre of the Auditorium. The bunker is built into the side of a hill and is approached by an 'underground' passage in which the action of the play takes place. The passage is separated from the bunker by a closed steel door set into the bunker wall and opening inwards. Thus the exterior of the bunker is visible to the audience but not to the characters. The passage itself is entered by a wooden staircase [Downstage Left] leading up to 'ground level', of which only the opening in the wall and the first few wooden steps are visible. The remaining steps - there are ten in all- are unseen. [The step over which the characters constantly trip is no.5]. Between the stairway and the steel door, the passage has been widened to form a living area and the walls have been roughly plastered, although the floor is still earthen. Thus the action of the play takes place Down-stage. The living area contains five numbered ammunition-boxes, three canvas chairs and a table with a calor gas cooker standing on it. Underneath the table is a calor gas cylinder and a jerry-can of water. Next to the cooker are tin plates, mugs, knives and a kettle. Corporal Gizzel is discovered checking off these items against a manifest which he reads out loud to himself.

Gizzel: 'One table collapsible, two chairs ditto, one calor gas cooker, two plates tin, six mugs ditto, knives - (he looks more closely) two.' No forks. (He gets a pencil from his pocket and writes.) No...forks. No teaspoons either and it's damp. (He refers to the manifest again.) 'Rations for two for twenty-four hours in ammo box five.' (He finds it and peers inside.) Meagre. (He extracts a piece of chocolate and bites off a piece, then looks at his watch.) Twenty-three hours fifty to go. Where's my Number Two? (He gets a scrap of paper out of his pocket and refers to it)