

AN T-ÓGLACH

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FORWARD!

The present is not a time for halting to report progress nor for indulging in self-gratulation, but for pushing forward our campaign with energy and efficiency. The initiative has passed into our hands and we must keep it. We have gained ground; we must consolidate our advantages; but our motto must be always: "Forward!" It is only by incessant activity and ingenuity that guerilla warfare can be waged effectively. To an active and courageous army officered by men of resource and efficiency endless opportunities present themselves of striking a blow at the enemy; but the first requisite to this is that the discipline and efficiency of the Irish Republican Army shall be brought up to the highest pitch, so as to ensure that all enterprises undertaken shall be successfully carried out. The onus of securing this lies on the officers of the Irish Republican Army.

This is a point on which we have dwelt in former articles and we wish again to emphasise it. Nothing is more vital to the success of the work undertaken by our Army than good, conscientious, hard-working and efficient officers. If the officers of any Brigade or Battalion are slack, all the operations of that unit will be characterised by the same slackness. The Brigade Commandants and staff officers are vital links in the chain of organisation, and remissness on their part means that the work in their Brigade area is practically held up. No Volunteer is justified in occupying any such post unless he is satisfied he has the time and ability required for it and is ready and determined to work hard. In order that there may be no misapprehension or sense of grievance at a future date, Headquarters is giving fair and ample warning through these articles in the OGLACH that no slackness will be tolerated on the part of those holding any high command, and that officers who are neglecting their work or doing it in a half-hearted

and incompetent manner will be relieved of their command.

In most parts of the country the state of organisation is fairly satisfactory and will soon be further improved; but in some areas things are in a decidedly unsatisfactory condition. It is only fair to remember that many districts have been hard hit through the capture of their best officers by the enemy; but it should always be possible to secure men to fill the gaps, men who are able and willing to work. That is the first desideratum. All others depend on this. All the military knowledge in the world, all the judgment, all the courage, are of little avail to us if the officer who possesses them is dilatory in acknowledging communications, transmitting orders, and attending to the essential routine work of his command. The more smoothly the machinery is made to run the less trouble there will be for all in the long run.

An enemy newspaper published in Ireland has recently, in several leading articles lamented the triumphs of "the ever-advancing Republican forces" in Ireland. Reference is made to certain parts of the country where the guerilla warfare is being waged with exceptional vigour and to the large number of districts in those parts where the Irish Republican forces are virtually in complete control. We do not refer to this for the purpose of congratulating our Volunteers but for quite a contrary purpose. We wish to point out that those places where the guerilla warfare against the enemy has been waged with great activity and effectiveness represent only a small portion of the country. In some other parts there has been marked inactivity. In some places great military possibilities are neglected because the state of the organisation does not apparently enable the local corps to avail themselves of them. It is of course the first business of officers in each district to perfect their local organisation and see that its machinery works smoothly. No enterprise can safely be under-



taken unless this has first been secured. It is the duty of officers to do all in their power to get their men armed effectively, equipped in a suitable manner and competently trained. It is their duty to be well acquainted both with the local resources of the enemy and their own, and all local conditions of military interest. This should be the preliminary to taking an active share in our present offensive. In those parts of the country where these preliminaries have not been completed it is about time they were. The work must be pushed on with all possible energy. There is a war on, in which some portions of our Army are not fitting themselves to take part. Officers who are neglecting their duties must "get on or get out."

We have said some months ago, in explaining the principles of the guerilla warfare which we are waging against the enemy that it was our business to make that warfare still more intense and more menacing to the invader. It seems scandalous that though months have elapsed since this was written some Brigades have made such little progress towards efficient organisation, and the work of Headquarters is held back by the remissness of responsible officers. Volunteers in many places share in the reflected glory of achievements elsewhere, while themselves neglecting to do their own share of the work. Much has been achieved during the past few months; many notable triumphs have been scored by the Republican forces; strongholds of the enemy have fallen into our hands; there have been many striking exhibitions of skill and courage by individual Volunteers; but there still remain large parts of the country where little has been done in the war for Ireland's freedom.

Our motto must be: "Forward!" We must spread our operations over the widest possible area, striking here, there and elsewhere as occasion arises. We must keep the enemy continually "on the run." To do this our organisation must be equally perfect everywhere and our machinery must run smoothly. We must have business efficiency as well as courage and judgment on the part of our officers. If we are able to do so much under present conditions, how much more could we not do if the organisation were equally perfect in every Brigade area? The enemy would get no rest night or day. No garrison of his would rest secure. No link in his machinery would be safe. Ambushes, raids, surprises, interruption of his communications, interception of his correspon-

dence, destruction of his fortified positions, loss of his weapons and equipment would have to be apprehended by him daily in every part of the country and not, as now, in only some parts of Ireland. The military possibilities of every district could be exploited to the utmost. The enemy would not be able as now to concentrate his most youthful, active and efficient "policemen" in the parts of the country where the Volunteers are best organised, while relegating the elderly, easy-going and incompetent to "peaceful districts." There should be no peaceful districts in Ireland while the War of Independence lasts except those districts which the enemy has evacuated. In those districts peace and order will be maintained by the Volunteers. It is being done already in some districts in the south of Ireland. We must increase the number of such districts. We must push the enemy back on his central strongholds everywhere. There must be no "peaceful district" in Ireland occupied by the enemy. We must have no slackers. Every officer, every man must do his share of the work. The organisation must be brought up to the same level of efficiency everywhere. Our motto is still: "Forward!"

NOTES FROM HEADQUARTERS.

THE OFFICER—HIS RESPONSIBILITY AND TRAINING, III.

The English Military Governor of Ireland has said in his latest pronouncement that the Irish Republican Army has shown marvellous powers of organisation but has produced no military genius. This is a tribute from the enemy to the effect that we are succeeding in our aims. We never tried to "produce a military genius," because we knew all along that only God could do that. But we are forging the efficient instrument that the military genius will be able to turn to account when in his own time he comes on the scene.

The efficiency of an army depends on Training and Doctrine. Training can be got on the drill-ground, on the rifle-range, at manœuvres, and from text-books. This is being done by our troops of all ranks: and the training is being tested and applied on active service. But Doctrine is spiritual and can only be obtained by cultivating a high sense of duty: Doctrine is especially dependent on the officers; it spreads from them to the N.C.Os. and from them to the soldiers.

The great German air-fighter, Baron Von Richthofen

said: "afraid is a word that must never be used by a man who defends his country," and again he said: "it is stupid to die *unnecessarily* a heroic death." The whole thing turns on the word 'unnecessarily': when a heroic death becomes necessary it is no longer stupid. In point of fact the Baron himself died that way in the end. The great fact is that it is necessary for the officer to be efficient—his courage may be taken for granted, in the sense that he is not afraid of his skin. But in another sense—in that of moral courage—the officer may need guidance. For sometimes he must take on himself the responsibility for serious circumstances and not be afraid to do so. Prince Eugene, writing of the events before the battle of Zenta, says: (Memoirs) "General Nehm was attacked. I arrived too late to his assistance, but nevertheless praised him, for he could not have held out any longer, overwhelmed as he was by numbers. God be thanked, I never complained of anyone, neither did I ever throw upon another the blame of a fault or a misfortune." This is the true spirit of the officer—to him goes most of the credit if things go well, must he refuse the blame if things go ill?

In an army there is no better mark of efficiency than a readiness to assume responsibility when the need arises. There will often be circumstances in which there will be no time or chance for communicating with a superior—or the superior even if he can be reached may not be in as favourable a position as yourself to form a decision on the situation. General Bernhardt says (On War of To-day, Ch. viii.) that subordinates must be trained to receive the will of the supreme commander "not in the form of an order, but as a task, leaving them full liberty in the choice of means for its execution"—and he points out how the English failures in South Africa could be largely traced to failure in this respect.

But this readiness to form decisions and act on them—this 'initiative' as we may call it—is useless unless we bring sound knowledge to the forming of the decision. Careful study and thought help to familiarise us with military events: they make them seem less strange and leave us less inclined to be thrown off our balance by any unexpected circumstances. This technical knowledge paves the way for development of initiative, and equally the initiative enables us to turn the knowledge to full account. The Prussian General Willisen has said: "It is always a long step from knowledge to ability to act, but none the less it is a step from knowledge *and not from ignorance.*" Let us remember that—we can never take the step from ignorance.

LESSONS FROM EAST AFRICA, II.

General Lettow-Vorbeck's achievements prove up to the hilt that enormous things can be accomplished

by quite small units of first class troops. His army was organised in companies each of which totalled 16 Europeans who furnished the Officers and N.C.Os. 160 Askari and 2 machine guns. These companies were given a very free scope and wide liberty of action, which was an easy matter by reason of the very high standard of training among the European officers. With poor officers the same freedom of action could not have been given to these companies and less valuable results would have been obtained. Of course the men were also highly trained; in the general's own words: "The spirit and discipline of the black units revealed the admirable education they had received at the hands of my predecessor, Colonel Von Schleunz."

With regard to the organisation by companies the general says: "In distributing the force by companies throughout the country it had been necessary to accept the disadvantage that in many cases it was impossible to employ them in large formations, or to train the senior officers in this respect. It was evident that in war the movement and leading in battle of forces greater than a company would be attended with great difficulty and friction."

To the Irish Republican troops this is a matter of very exceptional importance. At the present time both for purposes of training and active service it is necessary to use the company organisation as the basis. It is, of course, the fact that our troops are further organised in battalions and brigades, and that the details of this higher organisation are being worked out with increased care and accuracy; but the company is for all that the administrative and tactical unit. The question to be solved by the good battalion commandant and his staff is how best to combine the efforts of his several companies.

It is in this respect, most of all, that East Africa can give us valuable tactical lessons. Companies were there employed co-operatively with telling effect. In many of the actions the energetic striking-in of a company, at the critical moment and at the decisive point, was what turned the day. Later we shall give many detailed examples of this. For the moment it will be well to point out that even Lettow-Vorbeck's troops—despite the excellence of both officers and men—did not build Rome in a day. He says in one place of the early fighting: "The force still required much further training to render it fit to carry out combined operations in unison in the bush." This is highly encouraging—for it proved possible even in war time to impart the needed training.

ARRIVAL OF ENGLISH CAVALRY

In view of the arrival of English Cavalry regiments in Ireland the Company Captains of the Irish Republican Army in areas where these cavalry units are

quartered will immediately take steps to give their companies a thorough training in fighting against mounted troops. The following suggestions for their guidance will be found instructive:

1. The engagements in '98 at Old Kilcullen, Saintfield, Tubberneering, and Ballyellis should be carefully studied and explained to the men. They were all victories of badly-trained and badly-armed, but determined and well handled infantry over cavalry.

2. The men will be taught to select ground unsuitable for cavalry, to improve that ground by spikes or other handy obstacles, and to act in formations offering no suitable mark for cavalry attack.

3. Attention will be directed to the possibility of ambushing mounted columns on the march—especially at night—and the helplessness of the horsemen in such circumstances.

4. Care must be taken to impart instruction for dealing with single horsemen or small mounted bodies. In this respect the men must be trained individually.

5. The individual infantryman must be instructed in the use of all weapons against cavalry. Especially is it necessary to understand how to disable or disorganise the horses.

6. Action against the led horses when all or some of the cavalry dismount is also to be studied.

7. English cavalry are not instructed in how to use their firearms with effect when mounted and are thus vulnerable unless able to deliver a charge.

8. If the mounts of a unit include a number of mares in season the neighbourhood of a stallion will occasion disorder. In 1870 a French cavalry regiment horsed with Arab stallions caused considerable trouble in Lorraine.

Company Captains are recommended to map out their scheme of instruction beforehand which will make for clearness and brevity.

GENERAL NOTES

Ta conndaethe i nEirinn go bfuil crut maith ar obair na nOglach. Ta agus conndaethe eile gur suarach agus gur aindeis an crot agus an gleus ata ortha. Ce air go bhfuil an locht? Ar na hoifigigh.

Da luathacht a thuigfidh na hoifigigh ud cad ba cheart doibh a deunamh agus da luathacht a chuirfid siad chuige, iseadh is fearr. Deirtear go bhfuil an sgeul go maith againn. Ta an sgeul go maith againn i bhformhor na n-aiteanna, ach ta aiteanna ann na fuil puinn da dheunamh. Ni mhor duinn a chur i n-umhail do gach cinne na teastuonn uainn ach oifigeach a dheunfaidh an obair.

The most vital question at the present moment in the War of Independence is the attempt of the enemy

to stimulate and encourage the emigration from the country of young men of military age. It is necessary to speak plainly and strongly on this point. The young man who joins the enemy forces for "police" or "military" service at the present juncture is a traitor who deserves the sternest punishment; but the young man who at this juncture deserts his country by emigration is hardly less culpable. Every form of pressure may be lawfully applied to prevent Irishmen joining the service of the enemy; pressure may and should also be employed to prevent Irishmen leaving their country at the present juncture. From the military point of view no more menacing move has been made against us by the enemy than the attempt to deplete our man-power by encouraging emigration. It has been the declared policy of the heads of the enemy army to weaken the Republican Army of its forces by depleting Ireland of its vigorous young manhood. The attempt will be met and defeated. It is the duty of the soldiers and officers of the Irish Republican Army to bring the position home to all whom it may concern.

The Irish Republican Army has found it necessary to take drastic steps for the enforcement of law and order in various parts of Ireland. Evil-disposed persons have endeavoured to take advantage of the disturbed situation resulting from the present warfare to indulge in unauthorised interference with the rights of individuals. In Kerry the Volunteers have firmly put an end to the activities of certain persons actuated by land-greed or the desire for personal advantage who sought to avail themselves of the unsettled conditions of the present state of war.

In Millstreet the Irish Republican Army has had to deal with a highway robbery of a peculiarly audacious type and on an exceptionally large scale, on the part of persons of substance who traded on their friendship with the enemy "police" and hoped thereby to secure immunity from the consequences of their crime. Stern and drastic measures have been taken and when certain formalities have been completed a full official account of the case and the penalties inflicted will be published.

The criminal conspiracy on the part of the enemy "police" to murder leading Irish Republicans is also being dealt with. Whatever healthy feeling remained among the members of the "R.I.C." rose in revolt against this odious murder society and the consequences will soon be visible.

England will not be much longer able to use Irishmen as semi-military spies, in plain clothes or uniform against their fellow-countrymen. The new recruits are mostly Englishmen, physically and morally degenerate and inefficient and with small knowledge or understanding of the country. When the Irish Republican Army comes to deal with these men it will make short work of them.