

AN T-ÓGLÁC

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A FATEFUL TIME

The present time is certain to be a fateful one in Ireland's history, and on the discipline, courage and efficiency of the Irish Republican Army will largely depend the issue of the combat. The enemy at the present moment is pouring men, equipment and munitions of war into this country. His plan of campaign has not yet developed but the inspired forecasts in enemy papers (whether deliberately published with intent to deceive us or not) indicate an intention of acting chiefly on the defensive. Whether this will be the line of action of the enemy army or not largely depends upon ourselves. His intention may really be to strengthen his forces solely with a view to defensive, or at most to counter-offensive, action; but it is quite certain that if we remain inactive, the enemy will not long remain so, and a violent offensive against us may be anticipated.

We pointed out in these columns some months ago that the offensive had passed from the enemy's hands to ours and that it was our business to retain the advantage we had gained; that it was our duty to make our guerilla warfare against the enemy still more intense and menacing; to give his forces not a moment's ease or rest in any part of the country. This line of action has been followed out to a considerable extent, though not in as widespread a manner as it should; it still remains our object. Since we wrote, large tracts of country have been abandoned by the enemy forces, and the abandoned barracks and other strongholds have been destroyed by our troops. In most of those places Republican law is now predominant and peace and order is successfully maintained by the Volunteers. Had all the Brigades been equally efficient and equally active, the enemy's hold on the country today would be even more precarious than it is.

To keep up the fight effectively it is necessary that every officer, every corps, and every individual Vol-

unteer should maintain themselves at the highest point of efficiency. Prompt and cheerful obedience to orders, and zeal, skill and courage in carrying them out on the part of all will bring us far. In recent operations throughout the country the number of mishaps or miscarriages was exceedingly small. The men who were able to do so much successfully should be able to bring off much bigger things, if they keep themselves "on tap" and leave no stone unturned to perfect their organisation, training and equipment. It will be necessary for us all to strain every nerve to intensify the warfare against the invader and make his position an impossible one. In some parts of the country opportunities are being neglected at the present time which may not be there at a later date, and Volunteers may be lamenting lost chances when it is too late.

Our warfare for a long time past has been naturally directed against that portion of the enemy's armed forces which were the principle instrument of his occupation of our country—the body known as "constabulary." These men, Irishmen with plenty of local knowledge, organised and trained as spies on their fellow-countrymen were planted in small bodies in every large village or town throughout Ireland, percolating through the countryside, dominating the people by their armed and disciplined activity, and making the power of the British enemy effective everywhere. The "constabulary" were the chief arm of enemy power in this country; its eyes and ears also. Today we have to a considerable extent reduced that arm to impotence, have stopped those eyes and ears. Large tracts of Ireland are no longer dominated by those agents of British power; in those parts where they still operate their position is now that of beleaguered garrisons in a hostile country, expecting attack at any moment. The moral of this enemy force is collapsing; the nerves of the men are beginning to give way under the strain; and the boy-



cott and social ostracism is telling on them. Every day sees lists of resignations from their force; and the enemy cannot get fresh Irish recruits to fill up the gaps. He is reduced to importing Englishmen, of inferior physique and intelligence, without local knowledge or any understanding of Ireland. The pressure must be kept up as long as any traitorous Irishmen are left in the force. The Englishmen are not likely to give us much trouble; without the assistance of the traitorous Irishmen they would not be able to officiate at all.

A great many unthinking Irishmen undoubtedly joined the enemy "constabulary" forces in former days without a full comprehension of what they were doing. Many of these heartily dislike the work they are called upon to do. Social pressure, boycott and our military offensive are having a combined effect; and resignations from the ranks of the "R.I.C." are going on daily throughout the country. There still remain the peculiarly vicious type who are animated by a spirit of venomous hostility against their own countrymen. A number of these, acting under a high authority have organised a criminal conspiracy to murder leading Republicans; but the effect of this move has only been to increase the disgust of the better class of "constable" with the dirty work they have to perform, and has been a contributory cause to the numerous resignations. Some important and effective steps have been taken with regard to the criminal conspiracy, and others will be taken in due time. The puerile mentality of these hired murderers is shown by the "threatening notices" posted by them to well-known Republicans.

The old "R.I.C." force, England's right arm and eyes and ears in Ireland has largely ceased to be effective for work on its former lines. The new policy of the enemy seems to be to rely more largely on his purely military forces to do "patrol" work, incorporating with these the remnants of the "constabulary" as guides or informers to place their local knowledge at the service of the soldiers. When this new line of policy develops it will be found that the Irish Volunteers have also a line of action to deal with it. Headquarters are prepared to deal with every contingency that arises and it is not likely that the enemy's new military preparations will enable him to regain the ground he has lost. Our own offensive must be kept up vigorously, and the enemy must be allowed no

time to perfect his preparations for a fresh campaign against us. But this can only be ensured by us if every portion of our machinery is running smoothly, if every unit in our organisation is equally efficient. Officers, corps and individual Volunteers must do their share in securing satisfactory organisation, training and discipline. Punctuality, zealous attendance to duties, prompt and cheerful obedience to orders, courage and intelligence in carrying them out are the qualities which will bring the Volunteers to success. The slacker should be shamed into doing his duty or "getting out," and the drunkard may be regarded as a particularly bad type of slacker. The present is a fateful time when every nerve must be strained to carry on vigorously and effectively the war which has been so bravely waged for the past four years and which, if we bend ourselves manfully and sternly to the task, may not be very far off from its ultimate triumph and the realisation of all our noblest dreams.

NOTES FROM HEADQUARTERS.

THE OFFICER—HIS RESPONSIBILITY AND TRAINING, V.

The Irish Republican Officer is required to pay strict attention to every detail in every enterprise in which he may be concerned. Equally he must be thoroughgoing in the execution of his plans—just as thoroughgoing as in their preparation: "the body without the spirit is dead." The aim in war is to gain the greatest success possible; and this can only be done if everyone individually exerts himself to the utmost. If this is not done as a matter of course, some unforeseen accident may render the best plans unavailing.

The readiness to turn a given situation to account—whether that situation is expected or unexpected, whether it is favourable or unfavourable, must be a characteristic of our officers of all ranks. In fact an intelligent and disciplined boldness will spread in an army from rank to rank. If the junior officers and N.C.Os. are good, forceful men, then the higher command can plan its operations with confidence: there is the firm assurance that the utmost will be done to carry out the plan, and that some solid success will be obtained even if not complete success. On the other side, if the command has the spirit of venturing as much as is possible with success, the subordinate leaders will concentrate their energies on their work—realising in the first place that what is

ordered is possible though not necessarily easy, and in the second place that they are required to achieve it even if unexpected difficulties arise. When the various ranks of command are all animated by this sound warlike spirit the army as a whole need not shrink from heavy tasks—it is well on the way to proving equal to them.

General Von Bernhadi (On War of To-day) considered the greatest advantage the German army possessed to be: "above all an officers' corps, as no other army has, with an imperturbable offensive spirit and a uniformity of mind and feeling of duty which guarantee the steadfast and resolute action of everybody." We can give the Irish officer—and private soldier, too—no better advice than to learn that by heart.

FLYING COLUMNS

The principal new method intended to be employed by the English forces in Ireland is said to be the employment of Flying Columns. Up to the present the English have confined themselves to a passive defence of their posts, and this—like every purely passive defence—failed completely. Even where our own troops did not succeed in capturing the post attacked the passive defence allowed them to make a safe and uninterrupted retreat. If hostile flying columns can move around freely the withdrawal of our forces will become much more difficult—so that the English must be given credit for trying a sound method of counterstroke.

It is now necessary for the Republican troops in turn to set about nullifying this new move of the enemy. This can be done in two ways. The first is by pressing the attacks on the posts which the flying columns seek to relieve with more than our previous energy. This is the most important way, because it means keeping the initiative in our own hands and refusing to have it taken from us. It calls for a still higher degree of training in the troops detailed to attack enemy posts, for the provision of plenty of munitions and equipment of the best types available, and possibly for the employment of stronger forces—always remembering that additional numbers can never make up for inferior training. Our troops must be prepared to overcome even the most determined resistance—such as was the case in the formidable post of Kilmallock.

The second method of countering the flying column is by blocking the roads. The flying column is an attempt to pass from the mere defensive to an active, mobile type of action. If by blocking the roads we can destroy the columns mobility we place the enemy again where he started and render him immobile. But blocking a road is not as simple as it looks; there are many points to be studied in order to block it in

the most effective manner—for that alone is any good. First of all we must consider the nature of the column to be stopped—for the barricade will depend on this. The column may consist of infantry in lorries, of cyclists, of cavalry, of armoured cars, of tanks, or of combinations of these arms. What will stop one of these will not stop all, and what would be needed to stop the most formidable would be waste of time against the others. Similarly we must consider the best place for the barricade, and this will depend on many things—where materials are available, where the road is suitable, how far out it is necessary to stop the column. Only when all these factors are taken into account can we be certain of stopping any column in time.

This establishment of barricades means then some engineering knowledge, some knowledge of how to use ground, and reasonable information about the enemy forces in the district. Beyond this it does not call for equipment, numbers nor even advanced training. Small bodies no stronger than isolated squads can make themselves useful in this direction. The main thing necessary is to maintain contact with the nearest battalion headquarters at all times so as to be able to guard that battalion's flank on their own side. Indeed, the value of the small outpost section or squad cannot be brought home better in any other way.

ENGINEERING NOTES.

The following table shows quantities of guncotton to be used for different classes of work. It is to be carefully followed by engineer officers in charge of demolition works. In future after any demolition work a report is to be sent to the Director of Engineering, as follows:

1. Nature of explosive used.
2. Nature of object attacked.
3. Thickness of object attacked.
4. Quantity of explosive used.
5. Length and height of breach made.

TABLE SHOWING CHARGES TO BE USED.

Guncotton.		
Object attacked.	Lbs.	Remarks.
Masonry arch (haunch or crown)	$\frac{3}{4}$ LT ²	Continuous charges.

Object attacked.	Lbs.	Remarks.
Masonry wall up to 2 feet thick	2 per ft.	Length of breach (L) to be estimated at not less than height of wall to be brought down.
Masonry wall over 2 feet thick.	$\frac{1}{2}LT^2$	
Masonry pier.	$\frac{2}{3}LT^2$	
Hard wood stockade.	$3LT^2$	In a single charge, outside.
Hard wood.	$\frac{3}{8}T^2$	
Stockade of earth between timber up to 2 feet 6 inches.	4 per ft.	In a single charge, outside.
Heavy rail stockade.	7 per ft.	
Fort gate.	50	
Breech-loading guns.		For 3 inch gun use 2 lbs. Double the charge for every inch increase in calibre.
Railway rail.	1	Charge fastened against the web. Near a chair if used.
Iron or steel plate.	$\frac{3}{2}Lt^2$	t is in inches.
Steel wire cable up to 5 inches circumference.	1	
Steel wire cable above 5 inches circumference.	$\frac{C^2}{24}$	Where C is the circumference in inches.

In above table, L = length to be demolished in feet; T = thickness to be demolished in feet; t = thickness to be demolished in inches.

The charge is given in lbs.; if the charge is tamped (properly) the amount calculated from above table can be halved. Masonry means concrete, stone or brickwork. In the presence of the enemy, charges may have to be placed hurriedly and should then be increased by half. For emergency purposes LT^2 is effective for all classes of masonry, and $2LT^2$ for all steelwork.

Gelignite.

Gelignite must be used in *double* the amounts given for guncotton and must *always* be tamped.

The method of using the above table is as follows :
1. If an arch (or bridge) is to be destroyed, measure the *width* of same and the thickness of the stonework, (having dug up the macadam or other covering so as to expose the stonework). If the width is 30 feet and thickness 2 feet.

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Quantity in lbs.} &= \frac{3}{4}LT^2 \\ &= \frac{3}{4} 30 \times 2^2 \\ &= \frac{3}{4} \times 30 \times 4 \\ &= 90 \text{ lbs. for guncotton} \\ &= 90 \times 2 = 180 \text{ for gelignite.} \end{aligned}$$

2. If a wall is to be demolished, first ascertain if it is less than two feet thick. Assuming it is, number 2 of above table is to be used, viz. 2lbs. per foot run. In this case however it should first be decided what height of wall is to come down. If, say, ten feet is decided on, then the length is to be taken as ten feet, and 2lbs. per foot would give 20lbs. of guncotton or 40 of gelignite, (tamped properly).

GENERAL NOTES

In the discussions by British military men which have been appearing recently in the enemy Press with regard to plans for the "reconquest of Ireland," reference is frequently made to the poor quality of the British troops available. Lieutenant-Colonel Repington says in the *Morning Post*: "The time is not particularly favourable, for the regiments at home are largely composed of young recruits and many of the best of our old officers fell in the war." Again he prophesies trouble with the "young and partially disciplined troops." Indeed most of the seasoned English soldiers with experience and a stomach for fighting are stationed abroad and with the new difficulties and dangers that have arisen for England on the Continent not a man of them can be spared. In fact the hands of the enemy are pretty full at the present time, and likely to be more so. It remains to be seen how the English people will relish the prospect of being again conscripted for fresh wars. It does not really matter whether they send 100,000 or half-a-million or a million men to Ireland: They are not going to "reconquer" this country. It is ours and we are going to stay here and hold on to it.

Every effort should be made to discourage emigration. We are glad to find that the alarmist stories of a big boom in Irish emigration are unfounded. It is for another Department of the Irish Republic to deal with the economic problems concerned with emigration; but the officers and men of the Irish Volunteers can at least help by their personal influence to create a healthy public opinion on the point.

Ta a lan deunta agsna hOglaigh le deunaighe chun dlighe an tSaorstait do chun i bhfeidhm ar chuirphigh, idir ghadaithe agus lucht foréigin is eile. Is maith e sin. Da mbeadh síochain ann, níor cheart go mbeadh se de churam ar Arm an tSaorstait a leitheid d' obair a dheunamh. Ach, o's rud e go bhfuil coga ann, agus an namhaid ag bru cungcais orainn fagann son go bhfuil ar na hOglaigh síochain a chur i n-airithe agus dlighe agus ceart an phobuil do chosaint ar chuirphigh is bitheamhnaigh gach trath gur feidir leat e deunamh. Taid siad da dheunamh agus is maith ata se da dheunamh aca.