

AN T-ÓGLÁC

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FIGHT ON

The immense increase in activity and effectiveness of the Irish Republican Army during the past twelve months are strikingly illustrated by some figures compiled by the "Irish Bulletin," which show that during the four weeks ended May 28th last 192 attacks were delivered against British patrols and barracks as against 15 in the May of 1920—an increase of 1,200 per cent—and that the ascertained casualties of the British forces during that period were 76 killed and 106 wounded. It may be taken for granted that this last figure is an understatement, a seven within the last week two glaring instances of the enemy concealment of casualties have occurred. It may also be remarked that the admitted casualty list of the enemy was higher in the past two weeks than ever before and shows a steady increase. Even more remarkable is the widespread areas over which these activities of the Republican Army occurred. At a former period a week of heavy enemy loss was explained by one or two successful operations in an active area. To-day reports of such operations come from every part of the country. Nor are the attacks a complete measure of the increased activity of the Republican Army. Much important and valuable work such as the raiding of mails, capture of enemy's stores, trenching of roads and destruction of bridges, cutting of communications and so forth are being carried on incessantly and with increasing effectiveness in areas from which come few reports of armed conflicts; and in many cases the absence of such reports of armed conflicts is due to the increasing enemy wariness and timidity. The enemy in many parts of the country is showing a growing reluctance to coming out from the shelter of his barracks or fortified post and run the danger of a fight. This deterioration in enemy morale is not surprising when the circumstances under which these men live and their type of character are taken into account. The many R.I.C. documents captured in raids give amazing information as to the low state of discipline which

prevails in barracks, the drunkenness, insubordination and thefts, not only from outsiders but from one another, which are common occurrences. The private letters of Black-and-Tans to their friends in England paint dismal pictures of their conditions and take a gloomy view of their war prospects. They declare themselves "fed up with the job" and long to go home. The only bright spot in the picture for them, which is usually accentuated, is that "the pay is good." (They fail to add that the chances of loot are also good.) It is not surprising that men of such a type and in such a frame of mind should have little appetite for exposing themselves to the hard knocks of the Irish Republican Army.

The "hard knocks" continue in increasing quantity. The destruction of the enemy Custom House, referred to in our last issue, is one of the biggest blows that English power in this country has yet received. By it all the most important branches of enemy civil administration their "Local Government Board," Inland Revenue and Customs, Estate Duties, Company Registration, Stamp Office, Assay Office and Stationery Office—are reduced to virtual impotence. The machinery by which Ireland was robbed and thwarted has been destroyed or put hopelessly out of gear. This was done by order of the Republican Government and carried out by the Dublin Brigade with a skill, efficiency and courage of which Ireland may well be proud.

One of the latest "hard knocks" reported is the killing of 7 enemy soldiers and the wounding of 20 others in an ambush near Youghal. The facts and figures we have referred to show eloquently the complete and ludicrous failure of the enemy's campaign of "frightfulness." His murder, arson, torture of prisoners, carrying of hostages and other uncivilised devices have got him no further. They have only raised the people of Ireland to a white heat of indignation and rallied even the weak and timid to the support of the brave men of the Irish Republican Army who are fighting for the rights and liberties of

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all. In this connection we must refer to the contemptible device—the attempt of armed enemy officers who are carrying on a campaign of outrage to shelter behind the skirts of their female friends by bringing them with them in cars. This device was responsible for the deaths of Miss Barrington near Newport, Co. Tipperary and Mrs Blake at Gort, Co Galway. The persons responsible for their death were the armed officers who took them with them, and the enemy attempt to make propagandist use of the accidents is a piece of dishonest hypocrisy.

The reports in the enemy Press of proposed enemy reinforcements and fresh military measures against Ireland will be read with amusement by soldiers of the Irish Republican Army. Even the military chiefs of the enemy realise the futility of all their efforts up to this, and none of the "new measures" talked about are in the least "new." They have all been tried before and failed. "Official reprisals" are beginning to recoil on the heads of their inventors. The aiders and abettors of the enemy, the friends and hangers-on of the enemy garrison are being made to pay for it and a wail of terror has risen from them. A pro-enemy friend of Colonel Guinness resident in the South of Ireland was quoted by him in the British House of Commons as writing to him: "If the military reprisals go on there will soon be no loyalists' houses left," and again "The Government (i.e. the enemy) CANNOT PROTECT ANYONE" (i.e. any friend of theirs.) Fight on. We are winning!

GENERAL NOTES

A section of seven men of the Longford Brigade successfully ambushed an enemy cycling patrol of fifteen men between Ballymahon and Lanesboro' on the 17th. May. The enemy had three killed and eight wounded and our men captured two rifles and three bicycles. Our men sustained no casualties.

Many incidents in Dublin illustrate the "morale" of enemy troops. Two soldiers one of whom was armed were held up by four unarmed men at the Tramway Terminus Inchicore on the 14th. May and deprived of a .45 Colt revolver and 49 rounds of .303. A soldier was deprived of his bicycle by an unarmed Volunteer near Portobello Bridge a few days later.

The report of the fight between a column of the South Mayo Brigade and enemy forces at Turmakeady

on the 3rd. May shows that one Police car was captured three rifles and some ammunition and holders. The enemy casualties were five killed and four wounded. Huge reinforcements came in 24 lorries to the relief of the ambushed party and our troops numbering 30 men after a prolonged battle with 400 enemies got away safely, their casualties being one killed and two wounded. In the second fight on the hills the enemy lost one officer and one policeman killed and one officer and two soldiers wounded. A boy named Feeney who was caught near the points of the ambush was murdered by R.I.C. and his house in Ballinrobe destroyed. As the result of this engagement three Barracks have been evacuated.

A report from the East Connemara Brigade states that on the 17th. May, an enemy sergeant and 6 constables left Spiddal to commandeered turf on its way to Galway Markets. They were attacked by 9 Volunteers about 80 yards from the Barracks. They fled back wildly to the Barracks. Two of them were slightly wounded. The police did not stir out of Barracks for over an hour after,

In operations carried out by Cork No. 3 Brigade simultaneously at several centres in their Area, the enemy sustained a loss of 2 soldiers and 2 Black-and-Tans killed, a Major, a soldier and 4 Black-and-Tans wounded.

The following is a report from I.O. Cork No. 3 dated 13th May:—

"On 9th inst Captain John Francis Hurley, "K" Company, Mountpleasant, was arrested near Bandon with two others and taken to Bandon Military Barracks. The body of Captain Hurley was found in Castle Bernard Park next day.

"On 11th inst. the 1st Lieutenant "D" Company, Barryree, while in company with two other men and unarmed, was fired on by enemy forces. The 1st. Lieutenant was killed by an explosive bullet fired by Major Percival, Essex Regt. An old man named Mahony was commandeered to convey the body into Bandon and was then placed under arrest. A workman of his was also arrested. The official report in the press states that a conflict took place. This is false, the men were unarmed."

A report from the Kerry No. 2 Brigade states that on May 1st. Military, Police, Auxiliaries and Black and Tans were raiding in Kenmare district and a mixed body of Auxiliaries and Black and Tans arrested Denis Tuohy, Intelligence Officer, Cross Roads Company No 3 Battalion, (Kenmare) They tortured him to get information. He seized a bomb and flung it at his torturers wounding four of them. He then attempted to escape and would have succeeded but got entangled in some barbed wire. He was re-arrested after over-coming four of the enemy.

to Kenmare barracks and again subjected to brutal treatment with a view to obtaining information. He was kicked and bayoneted, one of his sides being a mass of bayonet wounds. He was then made to face the wall and all the back of his head was blown away by rifle fire. Tuohy was an ex-policeman having resigned after the Rising 1916, he had since been an energetic worker in the I.R.A.

The O.C. of the Tuam Brigade reports that the enemy on May 20th shot a young man named Thomas McEver at Dunmore and labelled him a "Convicted spy" "Executed by I.R.A." He was a Chemist in Dunmore and a native of Cork and had no connection with the I.R.A. in the Tuam area.

ENEMY REINFORCEMENTS

The enemy is stated to be about to send 50,000 troops into Ireland in addition to those already here. It is necessary to examine this carefully. We know they can increase materially their forces, the important point is to calculate the amount of the increase.

To begin with we may say that they can only bring troops from England: the units in Germany and the East will be left there. That leaves a force at present of about 40 Infantry Battalions and 11 Cavalry regiments—one of the latter having started for Ireland, already. As regards the rest they are not likely to withdraw large numbers right off the reel, while their industrial troubles are on. In any event they cannot completely strip England of troops. We may, however, suppose that 10 or 12 extra battalions of Infantry and 3 or 4 Cavalry regiments can be drafted in.

At the same time they can enlist further Auxiliaries, Black-and-Tans, and Ulster specials, and are doubtless preparing to do so. But all these matters take time and already it is June, and the summer is the enemy's best campaigning season. There is no prospect of his getting the better of us by any reinforcements he is likely to have available.

On the contrary, the enemy despite his already enormous forces has been losing ground steadily. Take this from one of our recent Reports: "So nervy are the enemy that they have evacuated 3 outpost barracks, viz. Cullmore, Coolnabin, and Kincurry"—in a former "quiet area." And take this from the English "Daily Express": "Further troops are also being sent, because the forces of the Crown already there are reported to be feeling the strain caused by recent fighting." In short the enemy forces now coming must be considered *not as reinforcements* in any strict sense, *but as reliefs*. At the beginning of the present year the English increased their forces in Ireland by about one quarter: they are likely in the near future again to make a one-quarter increase. But just as the former increase had no favourable result,

so we can reasonably expect that the present one will not be any more successful.

We met the former increase by intensified Training, developed Organisation, and extended Offensive Operations: we propose to meet the new enemy departure by the same methods. Many most important lessons have been learnt during the past spring which we hope to be able to apply from now on with good effect.

In particular we must again refer to the blow delivered at the enemy's mobility by our attacks on his transport and our road-cutting measures. By these we have ensured that a large force is now far less useful to him than a much smaller force was a year ago. Never once this year has he held the initiative.

THE MAAM FIGHT AGAIN

In last week's Oglach there appeared an examination of the fight at Maam on May 2nd. Since that was written our own official report has come in and certain details in it make it advisable to refer again to that engagement. The criticism then made holds good very largely as will be seen from what follows.

The O.C. reports that he did not try to rush the enemy because: (a) His force numbered only 7 rifles in all—i.e. half the enemy strength, (b) The ammunition supply was limited and so heavy covering bursts were not possible, (c) The intervening ground was very open for the most part. These reasons must be pronounced sound.

At the same time the O.C. *did* try to work forward and get closer to the enemy: "I sent two men to out-flank them on the left, and two more on the right, while the three in front covered their advance. As there was a lot of open ground between the positions a big detour had to be made by the flankers and it took about two hours for them to get the rear of the R.I.C. position." In this too there is nothing to quarrel with.

Still there was one point that calls for criticism. The whole fight was carried on by 7 riflemen. There were present in addition a party of shot-gun men who never came into action at all. The addition of these might have done the trick: they could have been used for outflanking and closing in, leaving all 7 rifles to keep up a covering fire. Shotgun men creeping up and giving an effective fire might possibly have blasted the enemy out of their cover. Even though the ground may not be what one would select for shotguns it is always well to try whether their use is not possible.

A detachment of the Gloucester Regt. arrived in the battalion area and took up quarters in a farm house in I Company. Outpost area. During the evening they were visited by a patrol of the local Police and it was apparent that a round-up was being prepared (Example of an Intelligence Service.)



ENGLISH FORCES IN IRELAND II

When we come to make a more detailed examination of the English Disposition in Ireland it is natural to begin with the left or Southern Wing, consisting of the 6th Division with Cork as Divisional Headquarters. We shall begin with this flank because it is the flank on which the enemy is putting forth his strongest effort at the present time and it is advisable to grasp the meaning of this effort.

The Area in question includes the province of Munster together with the counties of Kilkenny and Wexford. For direct entry of stores etc. from England the enemy has the harbours of Wexford—Rosslare, Waterford, and Cork. His main railway lines are Dublin—Limerick junction—Cork, and Rosslare—Waterford—Fermoy—Mallow. The main lateral lines joining up these are Limerick—Clonmel—Waterford, and Limerick—Charleville—Mallow. The principal roads follow much the same lines as the railways, and the enemy uses both roads and railways according as each suits him best.

Since these are his great communication routes it follows naturally that he should be attacked on these or as near them as possible. It is a very big network of road and rail for 4 Brigades to guard if the attacks are well-directed and systematic, and in this respect it is to be pointed out that attacks on transport are attacks on communications. Because we act in guerilla fashion and don't worry about communications, we must not make the mistake of thinking the enemy doesn't worry either. He does, because a regular army cannot live without communications and plenty of them. Every man he uses for guard or escort duty on his communications is a man less in his attacking strength.

The 4 Brigade Headquarters of the enemy 6th Division are as follows:

17th Brigade, Cork (Battalion centres: Cork, Cove, Ballincollig, Kinsale, Bere Island)

16th Brigade, Fermoy, (Battalion centres: Fermoy, Kilworth, Buttevant, Tipperary, Waterford)

18th Brigade, Limerick, (Battalion centres: Limerick, Newcastle West, Ennistymon, Templemore.)

Kerry Brigade, Buttevant (Battalion centres: Tralee, Killarney, Bantry) These are the

Infantry: the enemy has also Artillery, Engineers, and Transport which are mostly concentrated at Brigade Headquarters. Artillery units are also posted at Kilkenny, Fethard, Cahir, Clonmel. Of course, even the Battalions are sub-divided and small detachments made from them, but for the moment we are not concerned with these.

Each enemy Brigade Headquarters, and to a smaller extent each Battalion is a different objective for attack. Every possible means should be thought

out for harrassing the enemy centres of occupation and making them untenable. All our existing methods should be practised and new methods devised if possible. Our methods of operation have been proved absolutely sound time and again; the thing is to push home our operations right up against the enemy bases. If the enemy's Southern Wing is numerically his strong sector it is also numerically your strong sector, and he must be made to feel this numerical strength to the full.

AN ENEMY TRAP

Our units in all areas must be on the look out for traps set by the enemy and be ready to pay them back in kind. One common form of trap is thus described: "The enemy place live bombs in filled-in road trenches. The pin is extracted and the spring is kept in position by a large stone." This means that the filling-in of trenches must be carefully investigated: if civilian labour is commandeered for the purpose it will usually be possible to know whether any traps are to be expected by questioning the workmen. If the enemy has filled in the roads himself we can assume that he has laid traps, and must act accordingly—for example, by breaking the road at some other point.

A very neat example of turning this device against the enemy was recently tried in Longford. A grenade was fastened to a Republican Flag insolently flown from a chimney, with the result that four enemies were badly injured in removing it. Another device would be to fasten a grenade to the butt of a gun that was useless and leave the butt projecting where it would be certain to be pulled up. A pile of "seditious literature" might be another way of keeping the spring of a grenade in place. A few wholesome lessons of this kind would leave the enemy very much more reluctant to embark on raids and seizures. Of course bombs should not be used wholesale in this manner! It would be sufficient to try it now and again

NOTES FROM REPORTS

"Encircling areas just at dawn, rounding-up all the male inhabitants and making a general search of the area encircled is the latest form of activity."

"Nine rifle-men and five revolver-men entered Courtmacshery. The Riflemen were holding the Military Station while five Revolver-men searched the village. . . . Dunmanway was entered by three sections of men, one from the North side, one from the Southern side, and one from the Western side, the total strength being sixteen Riflemen, six Shotgun-men and six Revolver-men. All three parties proceeded towards the Market Square and searched publichouses and hotels on their way."