

AN T-ÓGLÁC

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CARRY ON!

There is no danger that the officers and men of the Irish Republican Army will mistake the meaning of the present military situation or consider that the suspension of hostilities justifies any slackening of our efforts to keep our Army up to the highest level of organisation, discipline and efficiency. The Army is essential to the Irish nation; it is the safeguard of the peoples rights and liberties; the honour and authority of the Government of the Irish Republic depend in the last resort upon the loyalty, courage and steadfastness of the armed manhood of Ireland. It is the duty of Irish Volunteers not to allow themselves to be distracted in the course of their work by political rumours or gossip. It is their duty to see that they are prepared from the military point of view for every contingency that can arise. The Army of our nation must be in a state of constant and watchful preparedness for action as long as the threat of foreign force hangs over the head of the nation.

The courage and skill of the soldiers of Ireland have achieved wonderful things and brought about results which some years ago few Irish people dared to hope for. It is generally admitted that never in the history of the world has a guerilla warfare against heavy odds been fought with such organisation, discipline, persistence, skill and success as the Irish War of Independence. The perfect organisation and discipline of our troops was shown in the immediate cessation of hostilities on our part in every district in Ireland the moment the truce came into force, and in the observance of the truce everywhere. This observance, however, does not imply any slackening on our part. The work of the different departments of our Army must be carried on with all the energy at our disposal and special attention should be paid at the present time to the question of training.

Whenever and however the Irish nation requires its services the Army of Ireland must be ready. Whatever the future has in store for us the people of Ireland

and the fighting men of Ireland will face it with the same cheerful courage and confidence, the same untiring zeal and energy which have brought us such striking triumphs in the past.

GENERAL NOTES

From a vast quantity of reports of operations during the last few weeks of the recent campaign we are only able at present to publish a limited number, but all reports are being dealt with in due course. Many interesting items of news have to be held over for the present. Statements as to casualties are not given.

A highly successful ambush was carried out at Milltown on June 1st. by troops of the Kerry No. 1 Brigade assisted by troops from the Kerry No. 2. A cycling patrol of the enemy consisting of a D.I., a Sergeant and 12 R.I.C. men was attacked and routed with heavy losses. Our troops captured 7 rifles, 7 revolvers, 2 shot-guns, 162 rounds of ammunition and 14 bicycles.

On the same date a military patrol of 40 men and 4 officers accompanied by an ambulance car was attacked by 4 rifle men of the Kerry No. 2 Brigade near Barraduff (Rathmore area). The car was badly battered. After 3 minutes firing our men retreated. During this time the enemy replied only once. 50 rounds of .303 were picked up by our troops at the scene of the ambush. The Divisional Commandant, in forwarding a report of the operation, remarks:—"This is an example of the serious damage even a few of our snipers can do."

Kerry No. 3 Brigade reports 3 ambushes in Cahirciveen upon the 13th, 16th., and 18th. of May, resulting in serious loss to the enemy. The report adds:—"The road cutting and blocking has been so effective that the enemy was unable to rush his troops into the town and district of Cahirciveen. He was obliged to send them around by sea and then four days after being asked for. He has now to resort to bicycle patrolling and this is confined to a radius of about 2 miles from town. Broken glass has been placed before such patrols and from reports, with effect."

The May Diary of Cork No. 3 Brigade shows that the enemy in that area were so much confined to their barracks and so afraid to stir out that it was difficult for our troops to get in touch with them at all. Most

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A WARNING INCIDENT

The following example of crafty initiative on the part of the enemy is very instructive. The moral of it is that no strangers are to be taken on trust, no matter how innocent they seem to be. Any delay that is necessary to clear up doubts about them is always well worth while.

On 21st. inst. a Volunteer was held up by Military from Skibbereen on road Baldehob—Caheragh. He was returning to Caheragh. He at the time had a parcel which contained clothes addressed to O.C. Flying Column. He was arrested and taken to Skibbereen. Shortly after arrival at Skibbereen a mixed party of 12 R.I.C. and military proceeded on bicycles towards Caheragh. At Madore Station which is 1½ miles at the Skibbereen side of Caheragh, they halted, while one of the party an R.I.C. man in civilian attire proceeded to the village taking with him the parcel captured from the dispatch rider. He then made inquiries at a house for Brigade Headquarters showing the parcel which he wanted to deliver. These people knew that we were in the area but did not know the exact place, however they accepted the genuineness of the R.I.C. man and inquired at the village call house where they were informed of our location, and in turn told the Policeman of same. On receipt of this information, the latter rejoined the remainder of the party at Madore.

SKETCHING

There is no scale to be considered. The sketcher merely selects a suitable position opposite the centre of the tract of country of which he is required to make a sketch. He then holds up at arms length before him his book or the piece of paper upon which he will sketch, with the centre of the paper or book immediately in front of him. The paper will then exactly cover the extent of country which it is possible for him to transfer to his paper. He will then examine the country with a view to finding a natural horizontal line (which may be formed by a road, river or railway, hedge row) and will draw a horizontal line representing this natural line, across his paper.

Beginning on the left hand side, he will select an object such as a hill on the skyline, with which to commence his sketch. By holding his pencil perpendicular at arms length (the same distance at which he held the paper) and measuring the apparent height of this object above the base line already chosen, by pushing his thumb up or down the pencil, and then measuring off this distance on the pencil above the horizontal line on the paper he will get the correct position on the paper of the natural object. Similarly by holding the pencil horizontally at arms length he can measure off the apparent distances of all objects or

features of the landscape either from each other or from the edges of his paper. The details can be sketched in rapidly by eye. At the top of paper the names of all prominent objects should be projected.

FIRE EFFECT

The company commander is responsible for the controlling of the fire of his unit. He decides the time for opening fire, and regulates the supply of ammunition.

In forming a decision as to when fire should be opened, the following considerations must have weight:—

- (i) "*The early opening of fire*" discounts surprise and, whether in attack or defence, often indicates the positions of troops which would otherwise be unnoticed by the enemy. In attack it may unnecessarily delay the advance.
- (ii) Beyond 1,400 yards the fire of even large and well controlled units of infantry has seldom much effect upon the decision of the struggle for superiority of fire.

Exceptional circumstances, such as the appearance of large bodies of enemy presenting big targets may, however, justify the use of long range fire, especially in defence.

- (iii) Between 1,400 and 600 yards, carefully controlled collective fire produces better results than the uncontrolled fire of individual men, which eases to be sufficiently effective beyond the limit of individual fire, which is 600 yards.

THE FIRE UNIT.

Our normal fire unit is the section and therefore the efficiency of section commanders is of paramount importance.

The value of a fire-unit commander depends upon his ability to apply the fire of his unit at the right time and in the right volume to the right target.

In addition to his other duties the fire unit commander is responsible for:—

- (i) Indicating targets
- (ii) Issuing orders for sighting.
- (iii) Regulating the volume of fire.
- (iv) Reporting when ammunition is running short.

PERSONAL INFLUENCE OF OFFICERS

The personal influence and example of the officers are most valuable factors of character training as well as of discipline and efficiency. In order to have this effect officers must make it their business to know and understand their men personally, and they must try to gain their confidence through sympathy and tact. They must remember that our soldier is now

an educated man who understands the importance of his military profession. Officers therefore, can only win and retain the confidence of their men and so be able to influence them if they are themselves efficient and of good character. The efficiency and discipline of a unit largely depends upon the confidence of the men in their leaders.

“METHODS OF PROTECTION”

1. Sounds:—Animal, bottle and other horns; engine and ordinary whistles; bagpipes and chapel bells. Horns should be adopted generally as they have been already tried with great success. They can be heard a distance of four or more miles. It should be impressed on all ranks that they dare not take up a horn signal unless they *actually see the enemy*.
2. Lights:—Verey lights, turf torches and other lights and fires and Morse lamp signalling. A certain number of torches for different required signals from previous arranged and known vantage points can be worked with success.
3. Flages:—Semaphore, Morse and other signalling: Morse takes some time to learn but it should be got on with at once. Semaphore on the other hand can be learned in a short time. A Brigade class should be started at once with men from each battalion attending, who would later train the required number in each company. An O.C. should not place his men in position for action without having previously posted his signallers. Where there are not trained signallers, simple flag signals should be arranged.
4. Cyclists:—Cyclists posted on roads leading from enemy base or on vantage points near roads can be used with effect.
5. Field glasses:—In most areas these can be used from vantage points with great success. The enemy for the summer time will have about 18 hours of daylight, which naturally he will make use of. Daylight will also assist us in this matter of protection.

POINTS ABOUT ROAD CUTTING

It is not enough to cut roads, *they must be kept cut*. And in addition to protecting ourselves by cutting the roads in front of the enemy we must *isolate him by cutting them behind him*. Here is an extract from a recent report that gives a good idea of how to act. “9 lorries of police coming from Longford wired for assistance to remove obstructions off road and one lorry of soldiers and one of police came from Athlone and removed two trees about a quarter of a mile from Tang Chapel, where the police from Longford were removing obstructions. They then proceeded to give the Longford police help and when they returned the

Tang Company had felled three trees.” Of course any other obstruction—a wall of large, loose stones or a hole blown quickly in the road—would meet the case equally well.

SILENT ADVANCES

Surprise is an essential to success in night operations and therefore too much stress cannot be laid upon the importance of training in *silent advances*.

At first individual instruction should be giving to men without arms, later the company should be taken out in marching order and should practise advancing noiselessly on roads, and in various formations over open ground, with whispered words of command. The following rules should be observed:—

- (i) When moving in short grass or on hard ground the toe should touch the ground first and the foot be raised higher than normally.
- (ii) In long grass the pace would be slow and the heel be placed on the ground before the toe.
- (iii) Precaution should be taken to prevent equipment rattling.
- (iv) Arms must not be allowed to clash against those of other men.
- (v) Messages should be passed in a whisper from front to rear or “*vice versa*,” the final message being checked with the original, in order to detect faults.

NOTES FROM REPORTS

“A section of the Flying Column were staying near Milltown and got information that a patrol had left the barracks consisting of 5 R.I.C. men. We immediately rushed out, and found they had gone a good way along the road, and had several ways of coming back, so we had to lie to *within 150 yards of the barracks in order to make sure of getting them on their return*.” This is one way of not lying in vain in ambush.

“Enemy tactics somewhat changed in this area. An extensive system of rounds-up having failed completely he has now tried the effect of sending small parties of troops—25 to 40—to engage us in a district where he believes we are. He attempted something of this nature in a hilly part of our area, *the idea being to drive us across the hills into the arms of two other enemy parties* camped several miles apart on the other side of the hill. Should we attack party sent to engage us *a carrier pigeon is let loose with a message to nearest enemy base—usually 5 or 6 miles away, for reinforcements to overwhelm us*. The only thing in these circumstances—*unless put to it—is to take all possible cover and* COPYRIGHT MILITARY ARCHIVES

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of the operations in the area consisted in entering towns to search for enemy stragglers and attempts to draw the enemy out of barracks. Operations of this kind were carried out in Clonakilty three times, Kilbrittan twice, Dunmanway twice, Inishannon twice, Courmacsherry twice, and Castletownbere.

There were successful ambushes at Rossmacowen and at Skibbereen. Military stores were seized in Bantry on two occasions. The occupation of Dunmanway by our troops on May 14th was described in the Press and Dublin Castle reports as carried out by "hundreds of armed men." The actual number was 28.

A letter has been received in Ireland written on board the S.S. Huntspill on February 3rd 1921 on his way to an English convict prison by Joseph Walsh, of the "Connaught Rangers." He says:—"I am one of the 350 men of the Connaught Rangers who laid down arms at Jallundur, India, on the 28 June, 1920, as a protest against the way the Government was treating Ireland. Out of the 350 who laid down arms, the authorities picked 62 men who they thought were ringleaders and had them tried by *mock court-martial*. The remaining 288 men returned back to Scotland. They tried to get us to surrender. They used every means in their power, so at last they told us it looked terrible bad in the eyes of the natives of India, so they tried force. The South Wales Borderers used both bayonet and ball ammunition, but it was no use. We meant death before surrender. So they tried 62 of us and sentenced us to sentences ranging from death to 12 months' imprisonment. Out of the 62, 14 were condemned to death, simply because we loved Ireland, the land of our birth. Out of the 14 men condemned to death 13 got reprieved, and the one—James Daly from Tyrrellspass—paid the extreme penalty with his life simply because he was a true *Irishman*. By Jove, he was an Irishman, every inch of him. The morning of the 2nd November, 1920, when he walked out to die, the doctor wanted him to take morphia. Daly's own words, I will take nothing of the sort, let me stand up and fall like a brave Irishman. The bandage fell from his eyes and he asked permission for to leave it off. He was told orders were orders, so the priest advised him to let the murderers put it on again. I cooked his food up to the night before he died, and his favourite saying was, 'Revenge for Balbriggan.' The Colonel that carried out the execution said he was the bravest man he ever met.

They are taking us to some English prison to do our sentence which is from 20 years down to two. I, myself, got 5 years penal servitude but they remitted 2 years. Sir, I hope you will let all the boys that love Ireland know that I am with them in their fight. If ever God spares me to get free, I will open

the eyes of the world, as regards what I and my comrades have suffered, but it is all for Erin."

MACHINE GUNS I

A machine gun in action requires a frontage of about two yards. From this narrow front it can deliver a fire equal in volume to that of about 30 men firing rapidly, the frontage required for the latter being at least 15 times as great. It is therefore easier to find a concealed position for a machine gun than for the number of riflemen required to produce an equal volume of fire. When well concealed the gun offers a difficult target, and, as only two men are required for its service, it is not put out of action should these become casualties, provided the remainder of the detachment are trained to take their places,

As regards fire effect:—The effective range of the machine gun may be taken as equal to that of the rifle. It has been found by experiment that the fire of a machine gun is about twice as concentrated as that of riflemen firing an equal number of rounds at the same target.

In the important matter of control of fire the machine gun has several advantages. Once the gun is loaded and laid, fire can be turned on or off instantaneously; it can be directed as readily as required and can be distributed laterally by traversing. On the other hand the machine gun has certain disadvantages as compared with riflemen:—

1. It is more defenceless when on the move, whether carried in the limbered wagon or on pack transport.
2. Owing to the concentrated nature of its fire as compared with a similar amount of rifle fire, the effect of small errors in aiming or elevation is greater. Thus, a comparatively small error at effective or long ranges will cause the fire of a machine gun to miss altogether a target which would probably be struck by several shots from riflemen making the same error in aim or elevation.
3. The mechanism of the gun is liable to temporary interruption.
4. The peculiar noise of the automatic firing attracts attention to the gun, and when steam is given off, owing to the water in the barrel casing boiling, the position of the gun can be readily located unless well concealed.

MENTIONED IN DESPATCHES

"A Company Signaller of VI Battalion Dublin Brigade observed R.I.C. lorry passing at 3 p.m. July 6th. He immediately proceeded to find some men to take up a position. Failing to get in touch with any he proceeded to position by himself armed with two grenades. Lorry returned at 3.30 p.m. After throwing first grenade enemy pulled up and opened fire. He remained in position until he obtained a favourable opportunity of disposing of second grenade."