

# AN T-OGLACh

THE OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE IRISH VOLUNTEERS.

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## PRESENT CONDITIONS.

A great responsibility lies on the Irish Republican Army at this fateful moment in our country's history. In some respects a truce is even a severer test of the discipline and morale of such a citizen army as ours than even the horrors of such a war as we have gone through. The pressure of immediate and obvious necessity, the bracing tonic effect of war conditions are removed.

The complications and ramifications of ordinary civilian life under peaceful conditions enter into the relations of the soldier with his fellow citizens. The attitude of the Volunteer under present conditions requires to be clearly defined. Two extremes are equally to be avoided. On the one hand he must remember that he has no reason whatever to regard the war as over. He must consider himself as liable to be called back to service at any time at a moment's notice. He must keep before his mind the possibilities and probabilities of the next campaign and that should enter into all his calculations. He must not be influenced by the foolish talk and confident predictions of civilian fireside politicians. Up to the present moment nothing whatever has occurred to justify the reckless optimism with which many non-combatants regard the situation. The Chief of Staff in addressing a parade of Volunteers in the Dublin Mountains recently uttered a timely warning. He warned them not to be distracted from their work by newspaper rumours, misrepresentations, or misinterpretations, which were circulated with an obvious purpose. The situation as far as the Army and as far as the Republic is concerned is clear enough. Our business as an Army is to be ready and in a position to strike the heaviest blows in our power if and when we have to fight again.

But while the Volunteer must remember that he is still a soldier and that until Irish freedom is ensured against aggression the soldier must remain the right arm of the Irish Republic, he must not allow himself

to be carried away by an overweening sense of his own importance. Volunteers should never assume an aggressive or intolerant attitude towards civilians and the non-combatant elements of the nation. It is not for the Army they are fighting, but for the nation. They derive their sanction from the Republican Government which derives its sanction from the people. They must never forget that they are only a part of the nation, a necessary part of the machinery of the Republic. They must not forget that there are other parts of the machinery of the Republic also important and also essential. They should not underrate the services of non-combatants. Much good work has been done for the Republic by men and women who did not handle guns, and no persons who gave loyal service to the Republic are to be despised, even though that service was not given in the ranks of the Irish Republican Army. The people of Ireland love and trust the soldiers of the Irish Republican Army who have fought and bled for them. It is the duty of every soldier of Ireland not to alienate that sympathy by adopting a superior or aggressive attitude towards civilians. Furthermore the forceful methods necessitated by war conditions should as far as possible be laid aside during the time of the truce.

The Army of the Irish Republic may have stern and perilous work before it and that before very long. When that time comes there must be no sign that the discipline or morale of the Volunteers has been lowered by present conditions. On the country they must return to the field with their organisation, training and equipment vastly improved and their discipline and morale as sound and unbreakable as ever.

## FIRING EXERCISES

Positions used.—The positions used are the lying, kneeling, standing and sitting.

Lying.—Always lie down to fire, unless by doing so you lose sight of the object.

(a) You present a smaller mark to the enemy,

(Continued on page 4)

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## BRIGADE ADMINISTRATION.

### Special Services.

1. The Captain in charge of each of these shall be responsible to the Commandant for the establishment, training and efficiency of his particular service. He shall supervise the working of the service at its monthly meeting as a Battalion Company and receive reports from, and confer with the Lieutenants in charge of the Service within each Battalion. Generally he shall be responsible through his Commandant for the satisfaction of General Headquarters' needs and requirements.

### 2. The Brigade Council.

(a) Composition: The Brigade Commandant, the Brigade Vice-Commandant, the Brigade Adjutant, the Quartermaster, and the Commandant of each Battalion comprising the Brigade, shall constitute the Brigade Council. The Brigade Commandant shall preside over the council.

(b) Meetings: The Council shall meet at least monthly in country districts and at least fortnightly in the populous centres. In all cases the Brigade Staff shall meet weekly.

(c) Attendances: No Officer of the Council may be absent without excuse, and no Officer may send a substitute to fill his place. A Battalion Commandant who cannot attend must send his Vice-Commandant to present his excuse of absence, and to hand in the Battalion Report and to receive the orders issued.

(d) Attendances of Chiefs of Special Services. The Captain in charge of each of these may be summoned to any meeting by the Brigade Commandant to report on the state of the Service in his charge. He shall previously be given due notice. In actual working it is suggested that the Chiefs of all the Special Services be summoned to the Brigade Council once a month to make their regular reports, answer questions, etc.

(e) Duties: The Brigade Council shall act in an advisory capacity to the Commandant on matters submitted for its recommendations by him or by General Headquarters. It shall fulfill such functions and discharge such duties as are required of it in connection with Courts Martial and such other matters as may arise under general administration of the Brigade.

It is to be clearly understood that, except as above set out, the Brigade Council shall have no authority over matters of discipline, efficiency and command, for which the Brigade Commandant is solely responsible.

### 3. General note on Brigade Organisation and Work.

(a) Through the Brigade Organisation the purposes of General Headquarters are circulated to the troops. The easy and successful transmission of these purposes and aims depend upon the energy and devotion to duty of the Officer in charge of the Brigade. His work must be an inspiration to his Battalion Commandants, and his example generally must act as an incentive to them. The Brigade Commandant will

invariably find that his efforts and his exertions are the measure of the efforts and exertions of his Officers.

(b) The Brigade Commandant should see that an Officer of the Brigade Staff is present at one meeting of each Battalion Council in the Brigade every month. The visit should be one of inspection merely, and the visiting Officer should not interfere in the procedure of the Council or preside thereat, but should report on his visit at the next meeting of the Brigade Staff. The Brigade Commandant should himself visit the Battalion Councils in rotation, so as to cover all the Battalion Councils.

## PRESERVATION OF HEALTH.

Formerly very little was known about diseases and few precautions were taken against them. When a man got ill, if he was a strong man he recovered, if not he died. No one could help him, because no one knew quite what was wrong. Nowadays all diseases of a preventative and contagious kind are found to be caused by microbes, that is, insects so small that they cannot be seen except through a microscope. These microbes float about in the air rest on food, fall into water. They are like the seeds of the thistle, blown about by the wind and take root and grow wherever they alight; and as a farmer will cut his thistles before they are ripe and the seed has time to scatter, so by taking certain sanitary precautions; principally cleanliness, microbes can be prevented from scattering and increasing in the human body and in human food. Act on the old saying that prevention is better than cure. In cities and towns, the corporations and Town Councils look after the health of the people. They see that the water supply is good, that the streets are cleaned and refuse removed, etc. The health of the people is cared for, they have little to do for themselves. But on active service things are very different. Here, if we don't look after ourselves, there is no one else to do so.

Little attention was paid to these matters in former days, and the armies suffered accordingly, as the following examples mentioned in "The Manual of Sanitation" bear witness:—

"During the Peninsular War three times as many were lost by sickness as by wounds, and more than twice the strength of the whole army passed through the hospitals on account of disease . . . the United States army was decimated by sickness before it ever sailed for the area of operations during the recent war with Spain. In the recent campaign in South Africa 69 men per 1,000 died of disease and 746 per 1,000 of strength were at one time or other non-effective from sickness. In the year 1802 a French expedition to San Domingo lost 50,000 men out of 58,000 men, from it (Yellow Fever), in the course of four months."

Men who were present during the Russo-Japanese War estimate that the Japanese lost 60,000 men by disease. The diseases most likely to attack an army are, Enteric Fever, Dysentery, Diarrhoea, Cholera, Malaria, Yellow Fever, Scurvy, Consumption.

Certain diseases occur more often in one country than in another. India is the home of Cholera, South Africa of enteric fever, West Coast of Africa of malaria fever, the West Indies and South America of yellow fever. Scurvy is liable to attack troops in a besieged place where fresh food supplies cannot be obtained. Typhus fever may occur in any place where dirt abounds. Consumption while very much on the decrease in England since the passing of several health acts, is still on the increase in Ireland. There is no necessity in this lecture to describe these diseases in detail. It will be sufficient to point out that the same preventative or sanitary measures apply to all.

1. Foul air, impure water, uncleanliness of any kind is a sure breeding place for disease. Wherever these conditions are found, there will microbes breed, and the disease most common to the locality break out.

Dirt therefore is the commencement of all diseases, and to fight against dirt wherever met is the duty of every Volunteer.

Water.—The drinking of impure water is a very easy way of contracting disease.

2. Generally speaking, the deeper the source of supply, the better will the water be. Therefore, water from a deep well is much safer than from one that is shallow. Again, always try and get the purest supply available.

3. Water in the centre of a river or lake is much purer than near the banks. River water is very uncertain; it is liable to be contaminated while passing through towns situated on its banks.

4. Mountain streams give good water, and rain water caught in *clean* vessels is quite safe.

5. The responsibility of deciding if water is fit for use, only falls on the individual Volunteer when on detachment duty. Then he must decide for himself.

6. The best way out of the difficulty is to get as pure water as possible and boil it. Keep it at the boil for five minutes. First, rinse out your water-bottle with the boiling water to make sure it is clean. There is no use boiling the water if the bottle is dirty. Next fill the bottle straight from the tin in which it was boiled. If you do this you need not be afraid to drink it.

7. Water that tastes sweet is often bad. This kind of water is frequently found in a well, in a farmyard, because impure matter has soaked into it. Good water is generally insipid and tasteless. Men must learn to control their thirst. If not, they must only take consequences. Don't rush and drink the first water you see. I remember one day in South Africa stopping at a dam to water the horses; the order was

given not to drink the water, but before they could be stopped, two men had dipped their water-bottles and were drinking. They were ordered to stop before they had taken more than a mouthful, but both got enteric fever and one died in a little over a week.

8. A warm drink is much better for quenching thirst than a cold drink. It is not so pleasant to swallow but it is much safer.

9. Never eat snow, it gives fever at once and also an unquenchable thirst. You may boil snow, but if possible find a spring and use it instead.

10. Food should be kept covered from dust and insects, in a clean cool place, where there are no smells and plenty of fresh air. A clean box covered with gauze and hung in the shade would do very well.

11. Food in a state of decomposition is very dangerous. If on opening a tin it is found to smell badly, bury it. It is a case of burying the tin or being buried yourself. No amount of cooking will make it safe. You may kill the microbes that caused the trouble, but such a tin is poisoned and it is the poison that will kill you.

12. Tinned food must be examined carefully before being used and any tins badly dented, rusty, etc., should be rejected.

13. Air.—Fresh air is an essential to health. Rooms in which there is no ventilation become loaded with gases and vapours given off from the lungs and bodies of the occupants.

14. The best way to ventilate a room is to leave the top of the windows open, as bad air always rises to the top and will thus pass out.

Overcrowded, badly ventilated rooms are sure places for spreading diseases like consumption.

15. If on coming in from the fresh air, a room feels stuffy, it is a sign that it is not properly ventilated, and you must look for the cause and remedy it.

16. Personal cleanliness, clothing.—At all times, even on active service, one ought to cultivate habits of personal cleanliness. It helps very much to keep one in health. One feels as well again after a good bath.

17. The feet must receive particular attention, as dirt leads to sore feet, the worst enemy of a soldier.

18. Clean hands and finger nails are important, as they touch the food you eat.

19. Clothing should be kept clean. It is not much use taking a bath if you put on a dirty shirt. Keep your clothing sweet and clean, particularly your under garments, keep them in repair, especially socks. Holes in socks give sore feet, and socks badly darned are almost worse.

20. If vermin get into clothes on active service, they are easiest destroyed by boiling the articles infected.

21. The use of a comrade's mess tin, drinking from his water bottle, etc., are very common methods of spreading disease.

22. Spitting and the use of other

very common way of spreading consumption. In the one case the spittal dries and the microbes float about in the air, in the other the microbes are sucked in straight from the pipe. Spitting is at all times a dirty and objectional habit.

### FIRING EXERCISES (Continued from page 1)

which gives you confidence and steadies your aim.

(From figures prepared at the School of Musketry, Hythe, it appears that whether extended or not, men standing are from three to four times as vulnerable as when lying down, and men kneeling, twice as vulnerable as when lying. The difference is more marked at the shorter ranges.) To be vulnerable means that one can be wounded.

(b) It is the most comfortable and accurate position for firing.

(c) The nearer your rifle is to the ground, the lower will your bullet keep, and the better chance you have of hitting the object aimed at.

**Kneeling.**—Fire kneeling when you cannot see the object lying; for example, firing over low walls, in meadows, over low hedges, etc.

**Standing.**—The standing position is used when the object cannot be seen kneeling, as in firing over high walls, in very long grass, rushes, etc. It is also very useful for imparting instruction in the rifle exercises. In long grass, or undulating country, men should not open fire in standing or kneeling positions unless required by the tactical situation. The cover should rather be used to get forward to a favourable fire position.

**Sitting.**—When firing down hill this position will be adopted. It is very difficult to locate a man sitting on the slope of a hill if the background is similar to his uniform. He does not show up. His movements that is, loading and bringing the rifle to his shoulder, are almost imperceptible and by the report of his rifle alone can he be discovered.

Common faults in position and the results:—

(1) *F.* Not facing the object and not keeping your eyes fixed on it while getting into position.

*R.* (a) Loss of time in aiming; your rifle will not be pointing straight at the object.

This is especially the case in the lying position, because as you lie down, oblique or crosswise to the line of fire, your rifle may be pointing more towards the next man's head than the object. It then requires much shuffling to get into position, once down badly it is hard to get comfortable, which means a man quickly tires if firing has to be sustained for any length of time.

(b) Loss of object.

A man drops down in long grass and finds he is

unable to see over it. He ought to be kneeling.

(2) *F.* Failing to make the half turn.

*R.* Uncomfortable position.

(3) *F.* Loading position standing; small of the butt not far enough forward.

*R.* Difficulty in working the bolt, and also loss of time, when coming to the aiming position.

(4) *F.* Failure to draw back bolt to full extent.

*R.* A jam, and the loss of two rounds.

(5) *F.* Carelessness or slowness in adjusting sight.

*R.* Bad shooting.

(6) *F.* Shifting the grasp of the left hand when coming to the aiming position.

*R.* Loss of time in getting aim

(7) *F.* Failure to grasp the small firmly, with the thumb and three fingers of the right hand.

*R.* Loss of power and a tendency to jerk trigger fingers, instead of firmly diagonally across the hand with the wrist kept well up.

(8) *F.* Holding the rifle with the tips of the fingers, instead of firmly diagonally across the hand with the wrist kept well up.

*R.* Loss of time and power.

(9) *F.* Standing position, left elbow not well under the rifle.

*R.* Lack of support.

(10) *F.* Right elbow lowered below the level of the shoulder.

*R.* Sights inclined to the right, and there is a tendency to jerk the trigger. The bullets will fall to the right and low.

(11) *F.* Right elbow raised above the level of the shoulder.

*R.* Sights inclined to the left. The bullets will fall to the left and low.

(12) *F.* Eye too near the cocking piece.

*R.* Increase of blur and less accurate aim.

(13) *F.* Failure to restrain your breathing at the moment of pressing the trigger.

*R.* Unsteadiness.

(14) *F.* Inability to press trigger when sights are on the object.

*R.* The trigger finger or first finger of your right hand has probably slipped up too high on the trigger. Have your rifle tested to see the pull off is not too strong.

(15) *F.* Careless position of the butt in shoulder or holding it ther loosely.

*R.* Probable bruising of collar bone and consequent flinching when firing.

(16) *F.* Taking the eyes off the mark when loading.

*R.* Loss of time; especially in rapid fire. A moving object may be completely lost to sight

(17) *F.* Looking at sights last instead of the object aimed at.

*R.* The object is blurred and the shot goes wild.