

# AN T-OZLAC

OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE IRISH VOLUNTEERS

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## THE WORK BEFORE US.

The Army of Ireland has passed through more than one critical period since its establishment in 1913. It has sustained many severe trials successfully, has faced and conquered tremendous difficulties and dangers, has maintained its organisation intact and efficient in the face of obstacles such as never before confronted any Army or Volunteer Force in any country in the world. The courage, discipline, and efficiency of the members of the Army of Ireland have been put to the most severe tests, and in nearly every case Volunteers have emerged from the tests triumphantly. To-day the Irish Volunteers are stronger, better organised and disciplined than ever before. The efficiency with which any piece of work is carried out when the arrangements are in the hands of Volunteers has become a proverb with the Irish people. The rescue of the President of the Irish Republic from an English prison is the latest and one of the most striking instances of that efficiency on record.

Properly speaking, the maintaining of a large and well-organised army, in a country held by a huge foreign army of occupation, with its strong places in the hands of the enemy, and all the resources of martial law and a powerful military machine employed against us, is a wonderful achievement. All the efforts of the enemy to break up our ranks have failed. The prisons of the enemy have been filled with out officers, but good men have always been forthcoming to take their places. In a sense the conduct of our Volunteers when captured by the enemy and when in prison should be one of our greatest sources of pride. They have behaved like true soldiers; they have shattered the prestige of British law, "civil" or "martial," they have smashed up the British prison system, they have faced the tortures and brutalities of the enemy with an unflinching spirit which again and again has won them the victory. At present Irish Volunteers are lying handcuffed day and night in cells devoid of furniture in Belfast, Mountjoy and Cork prisons. This has gone on for weeks, but there is no sign of surrender on their part. The Volunteers are watching the fate of their imprisoned comrades with the most earnest attention, and are prepared to take the most drastic action should circumstances render it necessary.

We have paid the officers and men of the Volunteers a tribute for the courage, discipline, efficiency

and military spirit displayed by them on so many a trying occasion. We wish, however, to point out that these qualities will be more called for than ever in the service of Ireland in the immediate future. It would be impossible to expect that in so large an Army, many of whose members have only recently "joined up," the same high standard would prevail everywhere. The Conscription danger brought a large accession of strength to our ranks. Many of the newcomers were undoubtedly men whose eyes had been opened to the necessity of the Irish Volunteers by this moment of national peril and who joined to take their part in the defence of the Irish people. Some, it is to be feared, were influenced by most selfish considerations, and were more affected by the sense of personal peril than the danger to the nation. If there are any such who, believing the immediate danger to be past, have relaxed their attention to Volunteer duties, they must be spoken plainly to and made to "get on or get out." We have no time for shirkers or slackers. The period of crisis and danger is *not* over. Never were we at a more critical period in the fate of Ireland than to-day. Never were we facing a time more fraught with possibilities in which the courage and discipline of the Volunteers will be more severely tried, and the fate of Ireland will depend upon their activities.

It is the will of Ireland, expressed by her responsible Government, that the state of war between this country and England shall be perpetuated until the foreign garrison have evacuated our country. It will be the duty of the Volunteers, acting in accordance with the will of our Government and the wishes of the Irish people, to secure the continuance of that state of war by every means at our disposal and in the most vigorous way practicable. Every Volunteer must be prepared for more drastic actions, more strenuous activities, than ever before since Easter, 1916. As has several times been stated before, Volunteer officers must contemplate the possibilities of offensive as well as defensive action. What form our offensive activities will take depends upon the responsible leaders of the Irish Army, acting in consultation with the Irish Ministry, under the direction of the Minister of Defence. It should be recognised that the establishment of a National Government elected by and responsible to the Irish people enormously strengthens the hands of the Irish Volunteers. This Government claims the same power and authority as any other lawfully consti-

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tuted Government; it sanctions the employment by the Irish Volunteers of the most drastic measures against the enemies of Ireland. The soldiers and police of the invader are liable to be treated exactly as invading enemy soldiers would be treated by the native army of any country. England must be given the choice between evacuating this country and holding it by a foreign garrison with a perpetual state of war in existence. She must be made to realise that that state of war is not healthy for her. The agents of England in this country must be made to realise that their occupation is not a healthy one. All those engaged in carrying on the English administration in this country must be made to realise that it is not safe for them to try to "carry on" in opposition to the Irish Republican Government and the declared wishes of the people. In particular, any policeman, soldier, judge, warder, or official, from the English Lord Lieutenant downwards, must be made to understand that it is not wise for him to distinguish himself by undue "zeal" in the service of England in Ireland, nor in his opposition to the Irish Republic. The Irish Volunteers, by their work of the past five years, have brought the cause of Irish liberty to the verge of complete triumph. We are not going to leave it at that. Whatever sacrifices are required, whatever dangers are to be faced, the Irish Volunteers are going to "see the thing through." Our triumph may be an easy one, but whether easy or difficult, bloodless or bloody, we are going to win. It is up to every Volunteer to put every ounce of energy and enthusiasm into his work for the next few months.

### NOTES FROM HEADQUARTERS.

**ORGANIZATION NOTES.**—The Battalion Council.—As is laid down in the Scheme of Organisation the Battalion Council consists of the Battalion Commandant, Battalion Vice-Commandant, Battalion Adjutant, Battalion Quartermaster, and the Captain of each Company. In the Organisation Notes in "An tOglách" (Nos. 6, 7, 8 and 9) the duties of the Battalion Officers are set out in detail. The Battalion Council will provide the Commandant with the readiest means of co-ordinating all these duties and activities. Battalion Councils, over which the Commandant shall preside, will meet at least once a fortnight and at every meeting a report on the work done since the last meeting must be handed in from each Company Captain. Affiliation fees shall be handed in at these meetings to the Battalion Q.M., who shall give a temporary acknowledgment pending the official receipt from H.Q. The same applies to all other monies whether for the Battalion, the Brigade, or H.Q. Similarly all

orders, whether Battalion Orders, Brigade Orders or H.Q. Orders (which shall be transmitted only through the Brigade) are issued at the Battalion Council meeting. All orders must be issued in writing and all orders from Brigade or H.Q. must be issued **PRECISELY** as they are received. No consideration must prevent this being done, and no excuse can be accepted for failing to comply with this order. It has frequently come to the knowledge of H.Q. that orders have been transmitted to the ranks in a very casual and irregular manner, so much so, that often the original order is not recognisable at all. Not infrequently orders have not been transmitted at all, and this arises only from failure to distribute them in a proper manner at Battalion Council meetings. With reference to reports H.Q. has drafted and will shortly issue three standard forms for these:—(a) Brigade Report to H.Q.; (b) Battalion Report to Brigade; (c) Company Report to Battalion.

In addition to the fortnightly meetings of the Battalion Council the Battalion Staff (Commandant, Vice-Commandant and Quartermaster) must constantly be in touch with each other and should meet definitely at least once a week to assist each other in the general work of organising and training a Volunteer Battalion. In the Notes published in No. 7 procedure for the inspection and supervision of Companies was given. It will be found that the most convenient way for the Commandant to arrange this will be through Battalion Staff.

Finally, it is necessary to emphasise that, although the Battalion Council has many responsibilities in Volunteer work and development as generally set out above, its chief function is to act in an advisory capacity on matters submitted to it by the Battalion Commandant. On no account must these Councils be regarded as Committees where orders can be discussed and decided by vote. The Battalion Council has no authority in such things nor in matters of discipline and command for which the Battalion Commandant is solely responsible.

**TRAINING NOTES.**—It was intended that the Training Circular issued with last copy of "An tOglách" should be accompanied by the following notes:—

1. The Training, as outlined, should be brought into force at once in every Brigade area where such has not already been done.
2. Brigade and Battalion Officers must arrange for the Inspection of Companies, with a view of personally being in touch with the work of the various Companies, and they must also inspect

the Time-tables drawn up by the Co. Officers for the month's work.

3. Company Officers will report to their Batt. Officers by the 1st March that such Time-tables are in operation.

4. A report as to the results obtained in the Company will be furnished by the 1st April, and the report will be accompanied by the Co. Officer's remarks and suggestions.

#### HEDGE-FIGHTING FOR SMALL UNITS.

Direction of the fences.—At first sight it might not seem that the direction of the fences could make very much difference to the conduct of a fight, but a closer examination will show that it must have a very big effect. Taking the direction of the defender's front as a standard of classification, we find that fences can be divided into three classes.

1. Those parallel to the defender's front. These obviously favour the defender. They are nothing more nor less than so many successive obstacles to the advance, and so many successive positions to be occupied by the defenders.

2. Those perpendicular to the defender's front. These favour the side that knows how to use them best. They may be used to screen a small party of the attacking force filing along towards a point whence it hopes to enfilade a part of the defender's line. Or, on the other hand, a sniper well posted at the angle may single-handedly punish any such attempt.

3. Those which are neither parallel nor perpendicular to the defender's front, but run diagonally. These to a large extent favour the attacker, because he can advance along his own side of the diagonal—which thus serves the purpose of a covered approach—trench in siege warfare. Of course, a fence of this type equally helps out the defender counter-attacking along his side of the diagonal. The aim should always be to use a diagonal fence leading beyond the section of the line to be attacked.

When firing from behind a wall or bank it will often be found useful to rest the rifle on the parapet, pressing the butt well into the shoulder with the left hand. In this position the soldier can get much closer up to the cover, and his head and shoulders are better protected. The piece is naturally very steady in such a case, and very little training will enable the men to fire comfortably in that manner whether standing or kneeling.

Significance of Roads.—It stands to reason that in enclosed country all movements of large bodies of troops are confined to the roads. This is the case with all artillery and wagons, and with practically all the cavalry and infantry.

Naturally, then, control of the roads would be much more important in Ireland than in a country where large formed bodies could move direct across country. This is equally the case for the defender as for the attacker. The latter must control a road if he seeks to advance along it, but the former must also control it if for his part he wants to prevent the other passing along it. Especially important is the case of a cross-roads. If an advancing enemy can get hold of an important road junction, he secures power to move in any direction he pleases. But if the defender anticipates him at the cross-roads he is absolutely held up on that section of the front; besides the defender has so many choices of direction for his counter-attack.

DEMOLITION OF RAILWAYS AND TELEGRAPHS WITHOUT EXPLOSIVES.—When a demolition is contemplated, all unnecessary rolling stock should first be withdrawn. Simultaneously with this, all reserves of railway plant and the most important technical tools should be removed from the station, as all as all individuals entrusted with the working of the railway; and the signals, first the electric and then the visual, should be destroyed. The permanent way should be attacked, and either destroyed or removed altogether, the most important item being the destruction of as many points and crossings as possible; and the engineering works, such as the bridges, tunnels, embankments, and cuttings would also be important items in the demolition if the abandoned line could be of use to the enemy alone.

Buildings not being indispensable to the traffic are seldom worth destroying.

The different workshop fittings should be taken away altogether, telegraphic apparatus and batteries removed and handed over to the Director of Telegraphs, and stationery engines made unserviceable by taking out the piston, etc.

The water supply of a line should invariably be attacked, and the more complete the destruction of tanks and pumps the better.

The rolling stock, if it cannot be removed to the rear, may be rendered unserviceable by burning; or trains may be run against each other at full speed on the same line, or they may be run over an embankment by turning a rail.

Locomotives may be rendered useless, but still repairable, by taking off the injector, or the connecting rods on each side of the engine, or the piston or safety valve.

In carriages the springs may be removed so as to let the body of the carriage fall on the wheels and axles, or the axles themselves may be cut through by gun cotton.



The method in which the permanent way is attacked must depend greatly on the extent of damage desired, the time at disposal of the demolishing party, and the strength of that party.

A simple method, when explosives are not used, is to remove portions of the line at intervals, especially at curves, remove switches, etc., and carry them away. To remove the rails, unscrew the fish-plate nuts with a spanner, if available, if not, they may generally be broken off by hammering. The enemy will find considerable difficulty in fitting in rails of the right length in the demolished portions, but if this method is adopted on a double line, at least one line of rails must be entirely removed, and the other partially so, otherwise an adversary might renounce the advantages of a double line for a time, and employ the material from one line of way to complete the partially destroyed one.

A second method, used where many men are available, and where the time is short, and the plant not required elsewhere, is to attack the line at several points at once, tear up the permanent way and render it useless on the spot.

Labourers are employed in preparing sleepers in piles for burning, placing rails upon them, and then twisting them. If the rails are only bent they can be bent back and used again, but if twisted they must be sent to regular workshops to be re-rolled before they can be utilised. The chairs should be broken by a sledge-hammer. A variety of this style of demolition is to lift up and turn over whole portions of the railway, together with the attached sleepers. This method is specially useful on high embankments. The men are formed along a rail in single rank, outside of it and facing inwards, the rails at both flanks are disconnected and at a signal they seize the rail, lift it up with the sleepers attached and turn it over. Of course the ballast must be previously removed. Teams of horses or oxen can be hooked on to the rails and used in a like manner.

Another method is to divide the destroying party into squads of ten men each, and to equip each party with two iron hooks, two axes, and two ropes, each six yards long and two levers. The irons are then fixed to the rails. The ropes attached to the ends of the levels are hauled on, the rails twisted and the chairs destroyed, one end of the rail being previously disconnected. Each rail requires about five minutes' work, so that in one hour a squad can destroy twelve lengths of rail.

## GENERAL NOTES.

We have received from a Tipperary Volunteer at present in prison a letter dealing with some comments of the "Tipperary Star" on the shooting of enemy policemen in a raid to capture gelignite in South Tipperary. The "Star" expressed horror of the occurrence. We regret space does not allow us to give our correspondent's letter in full, but we reproduce some extracts. He writes:—

"The Editor of the 'Star' did not howl his horror of the attempt by the police and military to kill young Maher of Inch at Drumbane near Thurles last summer. This boy of 16 was cycling on the roadway when he met with a crowd of the peelers and some English soldiers. When called on to halt the boy either got excited over the unlooked for and blustering order or could not control his cycle, as he was speeding downhill at the time. At any rate the ruffians commenced shooting at him. He was seriously wounded but managed to get out of range of the cowardly bullies and has after months of illness consequent on a dangerous wound come back to health and hope again. Several others have been fired on in the same locality, Seumas Leahy, of Thurles, being the latest to escape such polite attention by murderously inclined peelers. Poor young Maher, Leahy or the others had not weapons to defend themselves with. The 'Star' did not condemn those incidents. . . .

"The men who seized the explosives at Soloheadbeg risked their lives for Ireland in order to get war material to assist and defend Ireland's freedom. In self-defence they had to slay two of the armed enemy, and the true men and women of Ireland are proud of their bravery. By such deeds are tyrants terrified and bullies held in check."

Is dócha gurab iad lucht na Gaedhilge na daoine desna hOglaigh is mó léigheann leabhair agus a dheineann shudeur ar stair na hEireann. Seo rud gur ceart dóibh a dheunamh—mapa na hEireann do scrúdú agus, go mór mór, mapa a gceantair féin. Ba cheart dóibh a dheunamh amach cá bhfuil na pointí is tábhachtaige le linn cogaidh —na bóithre iarainn, na droihid, na junctions, na bóithre eile, na haibhne agus gach áit eile go mbeadh baint aige le troid dá mbeadh an comhrac ar siubhal san cheanntar son. Go mór mór ba cheart dóibh spéis fé leith a chur insna bóithre iarainn agus na sranga electreacha.

