

AN TÓGLACH

THE OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE IRISH VOLUNTEERS.



Vol. II. No. 9.]

APRIL 15, 1920.

[Price Twopence.

OUR WORK

Since the last issue of AN TÓGLACH appeared a number of important operations have been carried out by the Irish Republican Army throughout the country. The perfect secrecy and general efficiency with which plans were carried out simultaneously throughout the country has startled and perturbed the enemy greatly. It has also given us a clear indication of the ease and success with which even bigger operations can be carried out, provided always that the essentials are attended to—strict secrecy, accurate intelligence and the surprise tactics which constitute one of the principal elements of guerilla warfare. On Saturday, April 3rd, some 250 strongholds of the enemy were raided and destroyed by soldiers of the Irish Republic. The work was carried out for the most part with great skill and efficiency. The importance of secrecy and surprise tactics was shown by the fact that at the time in question the enemy had taken elaborate military precautions all over the country, which in every case proved futile. His Intelligence Department is almost entirely ineffective; his spies have proved a hopeless failure.

The lessons of recent proceedings should not be lost on Volunteers. One of the most important branches of our work at the present time is the proper organisation of our own Intelligence Department. An accurate knowledge of the forces, machinery and resources of the enemy, both military and civilian, in each district should be acquired. All information throwing any light upon the means by which he carries on his operations in this country may be of use to us. Every branch of his machinery, even in what is called "civil administration" should be observed and studied. All details of the working of enemy "Government Departments" throughout the country should be noted and reported on. Those persons friendly to the enemy, and those in constant intercourse with his

officials in each district should be duly taken note of. Each Brigade and Battalion Commandant should have the fullest information at his disposal with regard to all these matters in the district under his command. It is the possession of such knowledge that will render us in a position to strike many another formidable and unexpected blow against the enemy. It will also enable us to break up the criminal conspiracy amongst enemy police to murder Irish Republicans.

The Headquarters Staff of the Irish Republican Army is in possession of a great deal of important information with regard to the secret organisation of murders by members of the "Royal Irish Constabulary." Some important things have been done and further steps are now being taken to deal effectively with the situation. This latest conspiracy of murder has proved too much even for some of those who joined the service of the enemy police; they prefer to obey the moral law in this matter rather than the orders of their employers. The Irish Republican Government will clearly distinguish between these men and the criminal conspirators; but the latter may rest assured that they will be brought to justice.

Not only has the moral and discipline of the enemy police broken down; but their loyalty to one another has been put to too severe a strain by this new campaign of assassination initiated among them; and the information in our possession will enable us to discriminate between the criminals and those unfortunate men who joined the force without a proper appreciation of what they were doing.

Apart from the question of the criminals it is easy to identify those "policemen" who have distinguished themselves by special activity against the Irish Republic. Information bearing on this can and should be collected in every district and anything of importance reported to H.Q.

While due attention should be paid to this department of our work, that should be no reason for



neglecting other activities. No opportunity of improving the armament and equipment of our force should be neglected. We want all the weapons, all the explosives, all the tools and implements of military value which we can lay our hands on. The raiding of private houses for arms or the commandeering of the private property of Irish citizens is in general strictly forbidden; but any opportunity of securing arms, explosives, ammunition or implements of military value which are under enemy control should not be neglected.

There are many points, furthermore, in which the Irish Volunteer can make himself fit and efficient for any emergency. For instance every Volunteer should be able to ride a bicycle; every Volunteer who can get an opportunity should get some knowledge of how to drive a motor or ride a motor bicycle; every Volunteer should learn the Morse code, which may prove useful in a hundred ways. One never knows when these or similar accomplishments may prove of vital importance to us in a moment of crisis.

Headquarters are determined to insist on a higher standard of efficiency on the part of officers in every part of the country. The examination scheme when it is in full working form will ensure a supply of competent officers with sufficient military knowledge. But even more important than military knowledge, is the possession of the military spirit. A willingness to work will cover up many defects. Slackness or negligence either in carrying out orders or in making subordinates work is the *worst* of all possible defects. An officer who has no military knowledge whatever, but who is active, alert, intelligent, tactful and assiduous in the work of his command can be a most valuable asset under present circumstances; such a man can be trusted to acquire as much military knowledge as his work necessitates. But an officer who has all the qualifications of an experienced soldier is of no use to us if he is negligent or unreliable in his work. Failure or undue delay to transmit orders or acknowledge their receipt may have serious consequences. In the present stage of our war we cannot afford to tolerate anything of the kind.

Headquarters are determined to insist on the appointment only of officers who are able and willing to do the work. Officers who are not prepared to work will have to make place for those who will. In some parts of the country the state of organisation of

the Volunteers is still in an unsatisfactory condition, and in such cases it is entirely the fault of the officers. It is true that the work has been hampered in some cases by casualties and the loss of valuable men. None the less, the work has got to go on and there should always be suitable men available everywhere to fill up the gaps.

A series of Manuals dealing with the training of Irish Volunteers are being specially prepared and the first of these is now available. It has been drawn up by men in close touch with the realities of Volunteer work and the necessities of the present time. It will prove of great assistance in the training of both officers and men.

The work of the various Departments is now running more and more smoothly; no effort will be spared to perfect our machinery. Every Volunteer should remember that he is a link in the chain, and that his efficiency or slackness in any work he has to do contributes to or detracts from the effective working of the whole machine. While the present war lasts, the Irish Republican Army must necessarily remain the chief executive arm of the Irish Republican Government. A solemn duty devolves on us all and it is for every one of us to understand our responsibilities and prove worthy of them.

DEVELOPING THE FIRST SUCCESSSES

In the conduct of a battle the first operation of all is quite naturally and inevitably the driving in of the enemy's outposts. When this has been done the commander of the advancing troops secures space and time for further operations. In Ireland at the present time the preliminary operation—driving in the outposts—has been systematically developed and has progressed to a considerable extent. The enemy outposts in Ireland were the small rural police barracks—the small strong points from which a few men kept watch over each area and kept it under control.

Now, however, the rural police barrack is fast disappearing in Ireland. Systematic attacks all over the country have resulted in the capture of large numbers and the voluntary evacuation of many more. The empty shells are fittingly called by the *Irish Times* "tombstones of British prestige in Ireland." The garrisons have been distributed in the larger posts and wide areas of territory have thus been cleared of the

invaders. This is a distinct advantage of a purely military sort that must be turned to the fullest account.

In developing this success regard must be had to the nature of the new larger posts in which the police are now concentrated. These are not watch posts or patrol stations like the small posts were—they are strongly fortified stations with considerable garrisons and considerable war material. For all that they are *purely defensive* in principle whereas the small posts were in their nature *offensive*. In other words *the initiative has passed to the Republican troops*—an enormous advantage in all military operations.

The recovery of large areas of territory means in the first instance that Training can now be proceeded with systematically and uninterrupted. While the enemy could maintain numerous observation posts Training could only be carried out with difficulty and on a restricted scale; in all other cases the enemy used to assemble overwhelming forces at the particular points. Now, however, freedom of manoeuvre has been secured again and extended Training can and must be resumed—more especially in Night Operations on a large scale. With respect to this it must be noted in country districts that Old Time is often still observed—whereas the enemy has adopted New Time. To prevent surprise by large hostile forces precautions must be taken to have sound protective measures taken at all times and all the time.

NOTES FROM HEADQUARTERS.

THE OFFICER—HIS RESPONSIBILITY AND TRAINING, II.

There is nobody more contemptible than the officer who betrays his trust. Captain Buchanan says (Three Years War in East Africa): "Perhaps thirty per cent of young officers are in part ignorant or forgetful of their trust and its bearing on good or bad organisation. They are sometimes inclined to imagine themselves set on a pedestal above the rank and file, spending more thought than should be on rivalling one another for rank, and stylishness, and a well-catered mess, while their men go forgotten, and left to look after themselves. One may truly say that one does not always find strong men in large majorities down the list of young officers of a battalion—men who have a prolonged determination and ambition to endure the hard fight for a complete, wholesome, and wholly dangerous and united force. Here and there one may pick out the strong men, who never lose their military interest and who will brave anything."

In those sentences we have a conception of the standard the good officer should reach, and a confession that many English officers fell short of it. Nor was this surprising when we reflect that the English were an unmilitary people suddenly called upon to follow a calling unsuited to them. In such a case it is not remarkable to find officers taking a civilian attitude towards their men and considering themselves a superior class. It is as if there were something dishonourable in the word 'soldier.' And yet the exact opposite is the case: the word 'soldier' applies equally to all. The young awkward recruit once he takes the Oath of Allegiance is a soldier: the General in command of an army is no more and no less—he, too, is a soldier. It is equally the business of each to defend his country.

Moltke's general, Prince Frederick Charles, very well sets forth the true relationship between the commander and the commanded: "He is pleasant and friendly with all his subordinates, and the more so according as they are the farther removed from him in rank. He has always a friendly word and a sympathetic greeting for the man in the ranks." This is a sure guide; always invite the confidence and trust of the common soldier. Make it easy for him to approach you and consult you about anything that puzzles him—never choke off an advance made by him. You need not be afraid that this will undermine discipline—it is easy enough to uphold your superior rank without advertising it. The officer who must advertise his superiority is always the one who isn't too confident about it—it is as if he had an inward feeling that he was not fit for his post.

If the private soldier asks you anything it is a good sign. It means two things: first, that he is anxious to learn; and second, that he has trust in your ability to teach. All this is "for the good of the service" as the old phrase goes; it tends to bring about a feeling of mutual confidence, and professional pride, and a recognition of one, single, common interest.

But there is one sense in which the officer differs from his men—and only one. This is responsibility: more is asked of the officer, and if he fails in his duty there is less excuse. The officer's part is harder, and he fails in his duty unless this is so. His duty is never really accomplished, because there will always remain something more that he can do. There will be always something he can learn, or some room for improvement in what he already knows, or some little detail that will make his unit more efficient than any other unit. "The military art demands continual study if one wishes to attain a thorough mastery of it. I am far from flattering myself that I have exhausted it. I am even of opinion that a human lifetime is not long enough in order to pursue it to the very end." And it was Frederick the Great who said that.

LESSONS FROM EAST AFRICA, I.

General Lettow-Vorbeck's campaign in East Africa affords perhaps more valuable instruction for the employment of the Irish Republican Army in its present circumstances than any other campaign that was ever fought. The headway made by him for four years against all but incredible odds will always remain as an inspiration to men struggling against lesser odds. But his campaign is instructive not merely as a fight against great odds—it also provides numerous instructive details.

For example take Captain Buchanan's description (Three Years of War in East Africa) of the posts on the Anglo-German border: "limited enclosures built up of sharp-spiked, tangled, thorn-tree bushes. The enclosures were called 'bomas' and were against an enemy surprise as complete a protection as barbed wire." That description will apply to much of the country that is quite familiar to our own troops. The same writer describes a critical part of the engagement at Tandamuti in August, 1917, where two English companies "found themselves ultimately against a dense, thorn-built, boma fence, through which they could not break, and under telling fire they swung off to the left flank and withdrew."

The nature of the fighting also went far to nullify the advantage possessed by the English in their aeroplanes. More often than not the aeroplanes failed to achieve any result: when there was a large encampment or accumulation of stores they were able to locate them and use bombs to some effect, but not otherwise. In thickly wooded country even large bodies and stations escaped without much damage; and where it was a case of small bodies it was impossible to locate them at all. A great part of the time the aeroplanes simply dropped bombs "on speck" hoping for a likely target. The Germans had no aeroplanes at all, and yet they never seriously felt the loss of them.

The great secret of Lettow-Vorbeck's success was that he never allowed himself to be forced to fight on ground that favoured the enemy. On the other hand, when the ground and other circumstances favoured himself he never hesitated not only to fight but to attack vigorously even with very inferior numbers. From first to last his troops—Europeans and Africans—never totalled 20,000, and the English employed 300,000 against him. The dead alone on the English side amounted to about three times the German strength.

GENERAL NOTES

It may be useful to remind Volunteers that any weapons supplied to them must only be used for

Volunteer purposes. It is the duty of each company commander to keep strict supervision over the arms of his men, to see that they are properly cared for, in safe keeping and kept in proper condition. All ammunition should be strictly accounted for, and should only be used by men with their officers' permission and for the purposes of their work. The company officer who does not keep proper supervision over the arms and ammunition of his men will be held responsible for any abuse or mishap that may occur.

The latest issue of the *Constabulary Gazette* reproduces without a word of comment the charge made by Mr. MacVeagh in the English Parliament against the police of murdering Commandant Tomas Mac Curtain; also evidence to that effect at the inquest; and the statement of the *Daily Mail* that a secret murder society had been formed to assassinate "leading Sinn Feiners." As the *Constabulary Gazette* is only intended to be read by peelers it does not make even a pretence of repudiating the charge. This conduct is instructive, though perhaps a little unwise. No doubt this was what the *Gazette* meant when some weeks ago it howled for "new methods" of "fighting the enemy." The adoption of the "new methods" will prove a disastrous day for the creatures who resort to it.

Any Irishman who joins the service of his enemy in the R.I.C. at the present time must be regarded and dealt with as the worst type of traitor. We have no desire to be harsh to those who in older and more peaceful time joined through ignorance, not understanding what they did, and who, in these days, have shown no special malevolence in the work they are compelled to do against the Irish Republic; but there is no excuse for the Irishman who dons the uniform of the enemy for active service against his countrymen at the present time.

Nobody can read of the heroic fight put up by our comrades in Mountjoy Prison for prisoner of war treatment without a thrill of pride. Their triumph, in face of the menace of what seemed inevitable death, was wonderful. While such a spirit animates the rank and file, Headquarters can rely on brave and loyal service and prompt execution of commands from them. It is for the officers who command these men to make themselves fit to handle such splendid material to the best possible advantage.

FOGRA DO GHAEDHILGEOIRI

Ma chastar Gaedhilgeoir oraibh na fuil aithne agaibh air, na biodh an iomad ionntaobhe agaibh as ach chomh beag is a bheadh agaibh as Beurloir. Is mo pleir agus bleachtaire go bhuil Gaedhilg aige. Chuailamair gur ghoid bleachtaire airithe "fainne" i mBaile an Roba agus go mbionn se ag dul timpal agus an fainne ar a chasoig aige.