

AN T-ÓGLÁC

THE OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE IRISH VOLUNTEERS.

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KEEP COOL!

In a recent enemy communique the action of a portion of the enemy's forces in sacking and burning an undefended Irish town is described as "getting out of hand." Whether the wild and aimless shootings, burnings and sackings carried out by many bodies of enemies in different Irish towns recently were carried out with the connivance, with the tacit approval, or by the direct orders of the enemy military or civil authorities, the phrase accurately describes what occurs. Such wild orgies cannot be carried out under any kind of discipline; what is achieved is of no military value to the enemy; and troops accustomed to such disorderly license will be of little value in actual combat from the point of view of discipline or efficiency. It is a symptom of demoralisation, even of panic. If high enemy authorities are really deliberately and in cold blood abetting and encouraging these outrages they are showing a fatuous short-sightedness and lack of military judgment which would seem almost incredible if we had not already encountered so many instances of their military ineptitude and stupidity.

In any case Volunteers, however bitterly they resent the outrages to which their fellow-countrymen are being subjected, are not going in the least to lose their heads on that account. The demoralisation which has come upon the ranks of the enemy has not affected us. We must, and will, keep cool heads and a clear realisation of the situation. The more the enemy's discipline goes to pieces, the more we must draw tight the reins of discipline in our own ranks. He may rage in blind fury, but he will not succeed in goading us into rash, or ill-considered action. We will fight in the way that suits ourselves at the times and places that suit ourselves; we will continue to deal effective blows when and where he least expects it. All our operations must be carefully thought out in every detail and all our arrangements completed before any particular action is taken. While the enemy's forces tend to become more and more bands of armed bandittis and drunken hooligans, our organisation is being improved, our discipline tightened,

and those corps which have been behindhand in the work are being brought up to the mark. Important conferences have been held with Brigade officers from different parts of Ireland in which all the details of the work in their districts, organisation, tactics, strategy and local circumstances have been discussed with G.H.Q. The results of this work will, we trust, be shortly seen in improved organisation in backward places and greater and more effective guerilla activity everywhere. The enemy must, and will, have his hands kept very full.

The latest plan of the enemy indicates an intention to resort himself to guerilla methods. The statement of the late unlamented "Commissioner" Smyth outlined this departure and the order now issued to the R.I.C. which we publish in this issue shows the intention clearly. Apparently all potential enemies to England are to be ambushed and shot. The order makes no distinction between armed or unarmed, old or young men or women. It will be as ineffective as the orgies of burning and looting. The Volunteers will take steps to deal with the marauders and to protect the citizens of the Irish Republic against these armed banditti.

It is the duty of Volunteers, in face of this outrageous provocation, to go on with the work as coolly and as efficiently as ever, with stern discipline, unshaken determination, and even greater energy than before. The enemy's latest outbreaks of pillage and arson are only symptoms of baffled rage and demoralisation, a proof that he realises he is badly hit. His principal weapon of offence and defence, the "R.I.C.," is crumbling to pieces in his hands. We are in possession of facts which show a widespread spirit of revolt in the force. There is a rising demand among them to be relieved from the hateful work of warring on their own fellow-countrymen. Numbers of resignations occur daily and this process is increasing in rapidity. Those who are left are in most parts of the country useless except for raiding and rapine. It is our business to keep up the offensive with all the energy at our command—not with rash bravery, but with intelligence and skill, with carefully thought-

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out operations in which all the details are studied with methodical exactitude.

COMMISSIONER SMYTH'S OPERATION PLAN.

The value of the initiative in war is priceless. See what English Police Commissioner Smyth said to the police in Listowel—that they must recover the initiative at all costs. But we say **they must never recover it.** The statement of the Listowel policemen is valuable, because it shows that the enemy intended to turn to guerilla tactics and how they intended to apply them. Now we are perfectly ready for this method and our counter-measures are well under weigh.

The enemy's design to mass troops at railway centres has broken down; they can never use railway centres in Ireland. Again, they will not be able to ambush our patrols and parties away from the main roads as they had hoped, because henceforward we shall preserve greater precautions than ever before. And at all times our scouting was quite respectable.

But we must not be satisfied to merely ward off the new enemy offensive. We must prepare and put into operation new offensive measures of our own. This is the real reply to the enemy's attempt to recover the initiative. In this journal weeks ago we predicted enemy attempts to force us on to the defensive, and Commissioner Smyth's plan merely gives us extra help by providing full details. But we must take this occasion to emphasise the need of improved organisation in backward districts and intensified training everywhere. We may state officially that steps are being taken to provide for both of these.

FOREIGN COMMENT ON OUR OPERATIONS.

Quite recently two widely different authorities have borne testimony to the success so far attending the policy and operations of the Irish Republican Army. One is the military correspondent of the "Globe," one of the chief organs of the English militarist party. "We are at once impressed," he says, "by the enormous charge which Ireland alone imposes upon the military resources of the Empire since by herself alone she absorbs a quarter of them. And yet it is by no means certain that the force is or will be adequate." The other authority is Commandant Civrieux, military correspondent of the Paris "Matin," who writes: "In order to combat it the English have actually 50,000 soldiers in the country. This figure is increased from day to day with the arrival of cavalry and infantry regi-

ments. Under these conditions it is easy to imagine why Lloyd George wishes to stop the Bolsheviks on the road to India by negotiations instead of force. Everything is linked together to-day in this vast world, and more and more the British Empire transforms itself into one of those clay colossi that we have read of in history."

Taking these two testimonials together we are justified in saying that we are succeeding in our aims. We sought, in the words of General Lettow-Vorbeck, "to grip the enemy by the throat" and thus force him to concentrate in self-defence. During the past few months he has doubled his numbers here and more than doubled his specialist equipment; and yet for all that he has not succeeded in depriving us of the initiative. And on the other hand he is far worse off than ever in his Intelligence Department, because his remaining supporters among the civil population are fast falling away and coming over to our side.

The very natural encouragement we experience from these facts must urge us to expand and develop our successes. On no account must we dream of resting on our oars. For one thing there is still ample scope for improving the organisation of our forces. In some parts of the country we are by no means as well-organised as in others: these are the districts to be developed. The good ones can be trusted to take care of themselves. With reference to training an improvement is possible in every area—we can never be well enough trained. We can fairly claim that our best troops are better than any the invaders possess, but all are not among the best. We have plenty of units that leave a great deal to be desired. In particular, the provision of specialist units is backward in some districts; and in modern warfare specialist training is essential. We must thoroughly realise the fact that training will suggest ways and means of carrying out successful operations on active service.

OUR ARMY ADMINISTRATION.

In Handbook No. 1, "An Introduction to Volunteer Training," the proper standard of efficiency for a Company Officer is set out in Par. 3, Page 2. The first part of the question there asked is "Can he instruct and superintend the discipline and administration of a few score of men?" Observe that this is put **first**; the question of leading in the field comes after. And yet far too many of our officers are apt to put the cart before the horse—pay all their attention to Tactics and none to Administration.

Now Administration deals with the Company as a unit in an Army and is thus an absolutely vital aspect of the question. If the Company is badly administered Gen. Hqrs. can place no reliance upon it. This fact is emphasised in Pars. 16, 17, 18 and 19, page 8, of the same Manual, and again—under the heading Staff Work—in Pars. 49, 50 and 51, page 20.

A Company Officer new to his work is liable to overlook these matters; they are not so outstanding as Tactics, nor so interesting, hence the tendency to underestimate their importance.

In point of fact the Administrative side of the Officer's work is in some ways **the most important of all**. In a Standing Army it is the life's business of the Officer most of the time and it brings habits of Order and Discipline into operation unconsciously. "As a man lives so shall he die," and as a Company is administered in peace so will it die—or rather let us hope **kill**—in war. If the first is done well, so will the second be.

Many of the Companies in country districts—even Companies that have had creditable military successes—are lamentably wanting in respect of good Administration. It does not seem to occur to the Officers in command of these Companies that an improvement in their Administration work would make it far easier to ensure Tactical successes. In the soldiers'—and therefore still more in the Officers' work—there are three branches: Administrative—Theoretical—Practical. All three are needed and each helps to perfect the others. The present is the first of a series of short articles on the Administrative side aimed at simplifying the study of this side of the Officer's duties.

GENERAL NOTES.

"The police have now instructions to leave their Barracks at night in Patrols of six men. They are to leave by a back way, move across fields, and take up positions behind fences on roads where suspects are expected to pass. One man is to be 100 yards in front and one 100 yards in rear of main body of four. Persons coming either way are to be challenged by the advance man, and, if they do not halt, are to be fired on by the main body."

THE BATTLE OF JASSINI.

The battle of Jassini (January, 1915), holds out to us many points of deep interest, and points out lessons which we may well take note of. Fought in the early stages of Lettow Vorbeck's four and a quarter years' guerilla campaign, it presents a parallel to what might be enacted here in Ireland.

Large and reinforced bodies of English troops had approached the German frontier, pushed back the very diligent but small German patrols, and occupied the buildings of the German plantation at Jassini, converting them into a strong blockhouse. It appeared to the Germans that the English intended to push gradually forward in strength, securing the occupied country by a system of blockhouses.

Efficient scouting patrols supplied Von Lettow with accurate and reliable information of the enemy and the country, of which he had not already any map. Jassini, it was evident, was being held as an advanced post, and the main body of the enemy was in fortified camps to the north of and behind Jassini. It was to be assumed that a German attack on Jassini would entice the main body to leave its camps and fight in the open. Von Lettow decided to take advantage of the possibility with the object of engaging the enemy hurrying to the reinforcement of the advanced post, rather than with that of beating back the force engarrisoned in the latter.

Accordingly, he placed his forces in readiness upon the probable lines of the enemy's advance, and, as he says himself, "in such a manner that he (the enemy) would have to run up against them." The whole German force consisted of nine small Infantry Companies, neither well or uniformly armed, but possessing a few machine guns and two field guns of 1873 pattern. Major Kepler, with two Companies, was directed to attack the village of Jassini, working round by the enemy's right. Captain Adler, with another two Companies, was given a like task on the left. The Arab corp—about 200 strong—was posted on the road to the north-west of Jassini. Captain Otto, with one Company, advanced frontally by the main road, followed by the reserve of one European and three Askari Companies, with the two guns, under the direct command of Von Lettow himself.

These advances were made by night, and the attacks on Jassini were to be made simultaneously at daybreak. Great difficulty was encountered in the dense palm forests through which the advance had to pass; communication between the different columns was impossible at times, and it was with the utmost difficulty

that direction was maintained correctly. But pushing on with energy they took the English by surprise; the concentration was so rapid that the enemy gained no idea of the immediate presence of the Germans.

The attacks right, left and frontal fell almost simultaneously against the defence, and were driven forward with speed, vigour and determination. The English defence, disadvantaged by surprise, was unable to meet such assaults with a firm resistance. Captain Otto's force quickly cleared out an entrenched post. Von Lettow, with the reserve, made a circuit to the left, where he threw in two fresh Companies, which, though the Commanders of both had fallen early in the fight, quickly captured the fortified buildings by a brilliant charge, and took up a position close in front of the enemy.

From the north-east strong English reinforcements began to arrive, appearing suddenly and close upon the Germans. Three times these reinforcements attacked, but they did, indeed, "run up against" the Germans, who each time repulsed them. Further reinforcements came from the north and north-west. The Arab corp fought badly and failed to hold them up; but, coming on Captain Adler's two Companies at the left, these English forces were repulsed with heavy losses. The Germans continued to attack with energy, but the English put up a very strong defence, and the last German reserves were thrown in at their own request. The heat of the sun became terrific, and the consequent thirst unbearable. Ammunition began to run short, and portion of the firing line sent back reports that they could hold out no longer; machine guns lay idle; casualties were by no means light. A few wished to break off the attack, as there seemed no prospect of capturing the enemy's position. "But the thought of the unpleasant situation of the enemy, shut up in his works, without water, and having to carry on all the occupations of daily existence in a confined space, in a burning sun, and under hostile fire, made it appear that if we only held on with determination we might well achieve success" (Von Lettow Vorbeck). So they held on. Stragglers and units that had lost themselves were re-organised and sent again into action. Fresh ammunition came up by the railway; machine guns were strapped to the palm trees, and kept incessantly at work; two field guns were pushed up to within 200 yards of the English, but failed to produce a decisive effect.

The English made a sortie, but failed, and soon after hoisted the White Flag. Captured documents showed that the English force had been more than twice the German force in numbers; they had proved themselves excellent marksmen, but much inferior in morale and the determination to win.

Jassini was one of the heaviest engagements Von Lettow entered into. The expenditure of ammunition was huge, and losses of officers too heavy for a force whose professional soldiers were few. "The need to strike great blows only quite exceptionally, and to restrict myself principally to guerilla warfare," writes Von Lettow, "was evidently imperative." But great blows have to be struck occasionally, and then they must be delivered with force and energy, without thought of failure but with the determination to succeed.

GROUND AND FALLING PROJECTILES.

All soldiers should be familiar with the effect of ground on projectiles falling on it—this applies to both bullets and shells. As regards grenades, the case is much the same as shells.

The first thing to consider is the **ricochet** or rebound of a bullet. This occurs when the bullet strikes in a slanting direction; you can understand the thing by considering how a flat stone will "skip" on water or ice. A bullet will do the same when its path is fairly flat. The ricochet of a bullet destroys the aim but does not destroy the force. Ricocheting bullets make a worse wound than a direct hit, and have still enough force to easily kill a man, so precautions should be taken against them. On soft or rough ground, bullets do not ricochet very well; on hard smooth ground they do. This must be remembered in deciding on a position to be taken up. The slope of the ground is another factor to consider; where the bullets strikes a steep face it buries itself, and the effect after striking is usually small.

Similar remarks apply to artillery—both shrapnel and high explosive shells. On hard, smooth, rocky ground, all kinds of shell give best results. On soft marshy ground they often bury themselves without bursting at all, or, if they do burst, the effect is very small. On soft ground it is difficult to correct the fire of guns, and so, too, in a slight dip. Again, a steep face to the ground stops the shell abruptly on burst, and prevents it scattering very widely.