

# AN T-ÓGLACH

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## FORWARD!

The Army of the Irish Republic has every reason to be satisfied with the military position in Ireland and the successive steps of development in the guerilla warfare. To those who have been in close touch with the organisation, training and equipment of the Republican forces during the past three years the progress made in all these directions, the steady growth of military efficiency, the development of an intelligent military outlook, the translation of the courage and enthusiasm that were always there into terms of military value has been simply extraordinary. Few armies have made such amazing progress in face of such difficulties. One of the most striking symbols of our progress has been the development of officers. Three years ago the Volunteers possessed lamentably few men who had any claim to the title of trained officers. To-day she has a large supply of first-class officers absolutely suited for the class of warfare which we are carrying out. These officers have received their training in the best of all schools—that of practical experience. The activities of guerilla warfare have kept them in close contact with realities. They have acquired the Active Service mind—which, while realising the value and importance of method and regularity, does not depend upon rigid routine but adapts itself rapidly to the circumstances of the moment. The best officers and the best troops have set a standard which is a source of encouragement and instruction to G.H.Q. and the rest of the Army and should be a matter of emulation to all other Volunteers.

The statement by the President of the Irish Republic which appeared in the last issue of AN T-ÓGLACH should receive the widest circulation everywhere. The President lays down clearly the principle which should be recognised by all that it is the *moral duty* of the Volunteers to wage war against the forces of England in this country with all the energy and efficiency at their command and that it is the *moral*

*duty* of the people of Ireland to give them every assistance and encouragement in their power. Volunteers need assume no timid or apologetic attitude with any person or persons in Ireland who express disapproval of their activities. Those activities are carried out by the lawful Army of the Irish Republic by the orders of their responsible leaders acting under the direct authority of the Parliament, Ministry and President of the Irish Republic, elected by the whole people of Ireland. No Army in the world ever had a clearer moral and legal sanction for their acts of warfare than the Army of the Irish Republic. No Army in the world was ever faced by a more obviously unjust and brutal aggression by a foreign enemy, carried out under conditions which set all the rules of civilised warfare at defiance. The enemy has admitted and declared a state of warfare in Ireland. We take up his challenge and promise that never while life lasts us shall his hirelings be tolerated unmolested in this country. We will give the best service of our head and hands in striking every possible blow against the aggression of a brutal enemy, and it is the duty of every Irish citizen to aid and abet us in this holy work. It is a war between Ireland and England and the only question to ask any Irishman is: "Are you for Ireland or for England." If he is not for the victory of Ireland, then he is a traitor to his country and deserves to be regarded as was a Belgian "pro-German" in Belgium during the European War.

That Ireland has suffered in the war is true; but not much more than she has suffered under the "peaceful" rule of England during her unchecked regime of robbery in this country and we would be more cowardly than any other nation in Europe if we were deterred from fighting for our freedom by the prospect of bloodshed and loss of property. The man who emigrates from Ireland is a far greater loss to this country than the man who dies at home fighting for freedom. There

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DEFENCE FORCES IRELAND

## THE ROSCARBERRY TRIUMPH

This is in many respects the most instructive operation recently carried out by our troops. The complete destruction of a large and strong fort has had a marked effect on the enemy in the adjoining areas. "Very lights have been sent up by all barracks in Battins 1, 2, 3 & 4, also bomb and rifle fire at intervals of one hour" It is only a question of time until the nerves of these garrisons give way under such a strain.

Tactically the operation serves as a model for a Night Attack on a Strong Post. "The barracks was a detached building, three storied, of a frontage of about 45 feet and a width of about 50 feet. It was a stone building fortified in the usual way—steel shutters, sandbags, and barbed wire. It had a flat roof also sandbagged on which were mounted 2 Lewis guns and a punt gun able to fire fifty pellets a long distance. There were three houses in front of the building about 20 yards away. The nearest house to a flank was the Post Office about 30 yards to the West. The barracks faced South and a wall about 5 feet high extended from the Post Office to within three yards of the barrack door." The garrison consisted of 22 R.I.C.

The attack was carried out by an Active Service Unit of 28 men. The operation was covered in the outlying zone by three companies—each guarding its own sector towards East, North, and West. The fighting lasted about two hours and three-quarters, and about another half-hour was occupied in posting the troops in their Action Stations and laying the charge. All details of the plan of attack were carefully thought out beforehand, and there was no unnecessary delay.

The design was to make a stormable breach by blowing in the door with 50lbs of guncotton and sending forward a Storming Party. Suitably-posted riflemen covered the assault. It looks as if 50lbs of guncotton was an excessive charge, but perhaps there were technical Engineering difficulties to explain this). The detail of parties was as follows:

**Storming Party**—ten men with revolvers and bombs.

"Four of these men were to carry torches made with sacking tied on top of sticks about 18 inches in length, the sacking being previously soaked in paraffin. These torches were to be thrown at intervals in front of the Storming Party."

**Covering Party (Direct)**—"Six riflemen posted in front of the barracks in fortified houses were to cover the advance of the storming party by firing three rounds each at the shuttered windows and thus keeping the enemy occupied." (Note—No wasteful firing away of ammunition—only 18 rounds.)

**Flanking Parties**—"Three parties of four men were to cover the rear and flanks of the building." All parties had boots off.

The charge was laid and the fuses—(two time-fuses, a single fuse might have failed)—lit. The Storming Party lay flat on the ground 30 yards away. After the explosion the Party waited five seconds to escape falling splinters etc. On arriving at the breach it was found to be partly blocked by wreckage making a rush impossible. With admirable promptness and resource the method of attack was changed. It was now decided to destroy the barracks by bombing attacks directed against the breach and shutters. Here too the torches came in handy showing up the points of attack when thrown in front of them. Covering rifle fire was opened from each party in reply to fire from the garrison. After a time the garrison was bombed out of the front of the building, and adopted a treacherous ruse—feigning to surrender and then opening fire again.

Eventually with help of the petrol and paraffin the building was fired, the attacking parties closing in to 30 yards and finally 10 yards. "In future it would be more convenient to have a supply of pint bottles with petrol or paraffin as they could easily be thrown into the building."

The action was finished by 5 a.m. when the roof fell in leaving the barracks a mere shell. The enemy losses must have been nineteen only, three escaping from a rear window and getting lost in the darkness and tumult. Our troops suffered no casualties—a fact in itself proving the carefulness of the planning and the efficiency of the carrying out.

Points to Note: Use of local companies to cover Operation.

Careful previous thinking-out of details.

Equipment and Instructions for Storming Party.

Economy of cartridges by Direct Covering Party.

Stockinged feet to ensure silence.

Precautions to escape splinters.

Readiness to adopt an alternative plan.

Co-operation of covering riflemen.

Need for petrol or paraffin bottles.

## FROM LORRY TO BICYCLE

The following is an extract from a recently-captured enemy instruction: "Now that we have so many Motor Cars, there is a danger of our thinking we can do nothing without them. We must recognise that they are assistants, and we must not become slaves to them." Now when we were little boys we had to spell out the fable of the Fox and the Sour Grapes: in the schools of Republican Ireland the little boys will learn a new form of the fable—the Black-and-Tan Crossley and the Broken Road.

U. With their lorries now steadily being rendered useless the English forces—especially the Police—are being compelled to make an increasing use of the bicycle. The same Instruction says: "Bicycles are also very useful—being silent—but a patrol must be strong to



guard against surprise, and the advance party with its scouts must be really active in guarding against surprise by invariably examining all cover for an ambush before the main body is allowed to approach." Following up this it is now the intention of the Enemy to commandeer bicycles and an order to this effect has been issued to all their police of all brands. Measures should be taken, therefore to safeguard bicycles with increased care—on the same principles as those used for arms and other war material

At the same time increased study must be devoted to anti-cyclist tactics. Roads around enemy centres must be made impassable for cyclists as well as lorries. Patches of road should be liberally sown with broken glass at night; trip wires and alarms must be widely resorted to; small mines—much smaller than for lorries—can be used with advantage on the main body of a patrol; slight barricades quite useless against the Engineer equipment carried in lorries will bring a cyclist column to a halt—when they may profitably be sniped by suitably posted riflemen. In brief, this new development need not disturb us unduly.

## A MODEL HARRASSING WEEK

- Feb. 15. 11.30 train held up between Ferbane and Clara; 14 cwt provisions, beer, parcel of stationery for R.I.C. all destroyed.
- 15 Mullingar—Clara train held up; Officer's kit and equipment taken.
- 16 Moat—Clara mail car raided; Enemy mails seized.
- 17 Moat—Clara mails again raided.
- 19 Portarlinton—Athlone train held up; R.I.C. pay taken from Officer also equipment.
- 20 50 tons of hay consigned to military burned.
- 21 Portarlinton—Athlone train held up; 75 bags of bread for military and 8 mail bags captured; Equipment of 4 soldiers taken also.

We reproduce the above **Diary** of the work of a battalion. There is nothing desperately heroic about it—just inflicting on the enemy a thousand pounds worth of damage in one week at no loss to ourselves. In fact its an example of how to win a war. Just calculate how the English Command would be punished if every battalion of the I.R.A. did as much per week.

This minor raiding activity is not as spectacular as a big ambush, but it is a real and valuable help to the units who are fighting in the big ambushes. It means that the Enemy can transfer no forces from Offaly to Cork. Every unit has chances like these of minor enterprises; it is up to every unit to seize the chances that come its way. It cannot be too forcibly pointed out that the added value of numerous small "jobs" is enormous, and rots the Enemy like anything.

## THE VALUE OF "SMALL JOBS"

We far too often hear the story—"We have very few men": not even yet is there a proper grasp of the military value of a few men if they know their business. And if they don't know their business it doesn't matter whether they are few or many. Some recent affairs in Dublin have very forcibly shown the value of "a few men."

The first case was the smashing of a searchlight by a picked marksman with a Howth Mauser one night at some 400 yards range—a complex lens and silvered reflecting mirror worth together about twelve hundred pounds.

The second case was that of a cyclist scout on Rathmines Road who jumped off his machine, drew an automatic pistol while pretending to adjust the gear of his bicycle, and shot dead the Auxiliary sentry at Lissonfield House, wounding another.

The third case was where three of our men attacked two enemy despatch bearers, shot one of them, and captured a fine motor-cycle, a Webley revolver, and five rounds in it.

These three examples show how quite important losses can be inflicted on the enemy by small effort—but the effort must be well-directed. Practically all over the country opportunities for minor activity of this kind present themselves: every one of these should be seized on with eagerness. It is satisfactory to note that "small jobs" as they are termed are very much on the increase in different parts of the country. "Take care of the pence, and the pounds will take care of themselves."

A big haul of enemy weapons and ammunition was made in the successful ambush at Keadue on March 22nd.

The attack on the building on the North Wall Dublin, occupied by a party of 100 Auxiliaries on April 11th was a daring and well-planned feat, in some respects one of the most remarkable enterprises to the credit of the Dublin Brigade. The work was carried out by a small party of men, the actual attack being delivered by a mere handful.

An attempt has been made by the enemy to represent the slaughter of British Army horses and mules in Dublin by Volunteers as mere acts of wanton cruelty to animals. It should be pointed out that every effort was used to put the animals to death painlessly; and that the material loss inflicted on the enemy by these proceedings is considerable. A considerable number of enemy lorries have also been captured in Dublin and destroyed by fire and loads of coal, flour etc consigned to enemy military and Black-and-Tans have been seized and destroyed.

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is a fable that the Genius of Switzerland appeared to William Tell just before the insurrection which resulted in the expulsion of the foreign tyrants and said weeping: "I see dead patriots and hear orphans wailing." Tell replied: "The tyrant kills us with his prisons, robs us with his taxes, and poisons our air with his presence. Death in war is better." "Yes, it is better," she said and the cloud passed from her brow, and she gave him a sword and foretold his victory. This fable is peculiarly appropriate to Irishmen at the present day. The men and women of Ireland have suffered much and made many sacrifices; but considering the enormous advance that our country has made towards triumph, considering the immense and wonderful lifting of the national morale and spirit under the influence of these years of battle, the sacrifice has not been excessive. The fruits of these sacrifices must be assured to us; and that can be only done by pursuing the fight in the most vigorous and unrelenting manner. We are stronger and more efficient to-day than ever before; on the enemy's side there is a marked deterioration in morale; his financial and military embarrassments increase daily; and the little tin Cromwells who came to Ireland with visions of another swift and short Cromwellian campaign in which the "mere Irish rebels" would be subdued by fire and sword have been taught a sharp and bitter lesson. To-day there is no more arrogant boasting in their ranks, no inclination to treat the Irish Republican Army as a trifling matter. They realise they are "up against it;" they have resorted to every device of civilised and uncivilised warfare and have failed. The offensive still remains with the Irish Republican Army. That offensive must be kept up, with ever-increasing intensity until the last English mercenary is expelled from our shores.

### GENERAL NOTES

In the French journal "Le Progrès Civique" for March 19th appears an article from M. Maurice Bourgeois, the well-known French journalist who has been in this country studying the war situation. The article contains the following passage which is interesting as showing how the situation strikes a foreign observer:—

"Possessing adequate financial resources, and—in spite of Martial Law—still in possession of arms, the Republican Army is going stronger than ever. The frequency and importance of its exploits continue to increase. Its activities are hitting England herself. The official organ of the Volunteers (an ultra seditious journal) displays in all its recent numbers an unshakeable and lofty morale."

The following "General Orders" issued by the enemy last September, captured by our troops, will be read with interest:—

"Periodical patrols will be sent out by officers commanding Detachments, including at least one 'circuit' on long distance patrol per month. Patrols will be sent out with a definite object or task, and will function by night as well as by day. Patrols should always be told to stop and search suspicious individuals or vehicles for arms or ammunition, and should on some occasions be given the definite task of establishing one or more search posts on selected roads, or of searching suspected premises. The general object of these patrols is to make the civil inhabitants aware of the presence of troops and to give ill-effected persons a feeling of uncertainty owing to a constant expectation of the arrival of troops."

"Care must be taken that the days of the week, times, routes, objects, and method of patrolling are continuously varied, and that the soldiers are always on the alert, so as to minimise the dangers of ambush"

"If it comes to the notice of the officer or N.C.O. in charge of a party that hostile action on the part of the Rebels is in progress within reach of his party, it will be his duty, firstly to deal with such hostile action at once, and subsequently, if possible, to carry out his original mission. The officer concerned must use his own discretion as to the relative importance of his mission and the new information which happens to come to his notice, but it must be realised that the intervention in such a way as to inflict punishment on rebels engaged in hostile action is at present an important object of military policy."

The "important object" does not seem to have been very effectively achieved since September!

During the month of March there were 14 attacks on lorries occupied by armed enemy forces in the Dublin Brigade area, two successful attacks on cyclist patrols and one attack on an R.I.C. patrol. The enemy losses, as far as could be ascertained, were 19 killed and 34 wounded. Ours were 4 killed and 7 wounded. Several enemy lorries were seized and burned and goods consigned to the enemy destroyed. Many raids resulted in the capture of quantities of arms and valuable war material. 40 raids were made in enforcement of the Belfast boycott.