

AN T-OGLACH

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THE POSITION

The truce still continues and as far as the Army of the Irish Republic is concerned the situation remains unchanged. As far as the Government and Parliament of the Irish Republic is concerned the position also remains unchanged. Dáil Eireann at a full meeting has unanimously approved the attitude of the Government of the Irish Republic in its negotiations with the British Government and the reply sent to the proposals of the latter embodies the views of all members of the Irish Republic's legislative assembly. Until the foreign Army of Occupation is removed and the threat of foreign aggression is withdrawn our army must still regard itself as the chief executive instrument of the Government. We are faced with threats of fresh hostilities, of renewed enemy frightfulness, of attempts to compel the Irish people to consent to an arrangement with England which is not their free choice. These threats leave the Irish people and the soldiers of the Irish Republic undisturbed and unterrified. We have faced the worst excesses of foreign aggression in the past undismayed; we will face them again if need be with the same cheerfulness. It is the courage, zeal and efficiency of the Irish Republican Army that has placed the Republic in its present position, that has lifted the Irish Nation from its state of helpless subjection to the position of a proud, self-reliant nation, claiming its place among the nations of the world, and negotiating with England as one equal with another. It is the courage, zeal and efficiency of the Irish Republican Army that has caused the enemy to abandon, at least temporarily, his campaign of aggression and that, courage, zeal and efficiency will not be found wanting in the future, if and whenever it is required. All units of the Army must

regard themselves as liable to be called out again on active service at any moment. No such necessity may arise; but it is the duty of the defenders of the Irish Republic not to relax their vigilance and to leave nothing to chance. The situation is thoroughly appreciated by the fighting men of Ireland and whatever contingency arises they will act in a manner worthy of the glorious traditions of their Army. The spirit and morale of Volunteers were never higher than to-day. No effort to improve our efficiency should be neglected, and it should be the aim of every individual Volunteer to make himself worthy of the great and lofty duty imposed upon him of safeguarding the rights and liberties of the Irish Nation.

GENERAL NOTES

Owing to a clerical error the two reports published in AN T-OGLACH entitled "Ex-R.I.C. Hero" and "How Volunteers Meet Death" describing actions fought in the East Clare area were stated to have been received from Mid-Clare. They came from the East Clare Brigade.

The following letter has been received by a friend from Mr. Patrick Traynor, 106 Botanic Road, at present a prisoner in Curragh Internment Camp.—
Dear _____

The following account of my treatment with a view to extracting information by British Intelligence Officers whilst I was a prisoner in Dublin Castle should be published. "From March 30th to April 20th, I was a prisoner in the Castle, and in all was interrogated by British Intelligence Officers on 33 occasions "During each interrogation with a view to extracting information, I was treated by these intelligence Officers with the utmost cruelty. My fingers were bent back until they nearly tipped the back of my hands. My

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Óglach
na hÉireann
DEFENCE FORCES IRELAND

THE BANTEER AMBUSH

The following is a report on the ambush of lorries of Auxiliaries on the Millstreet-Banteer Road in the 1st Battalion area which was carried out on the evening of the 17th June 1921.

Since the Auxiliaries took up quarters in Millstreet they have travelled in lorries on this road a couple of times a day as they were nearly getting all their supplies by train to Banteer. The strength of this convoy varied from two to five lorries, but nearly always they had a Ford Car scouting in front. The man power of the convoy varied from 20 to 40 men.

It was decided to attack this convoy and this meant to attack perhaps a Ford Car, 2 Crossley tenders, and two armoured lorries manned by a maximum of 40 men, and it was apparent nothing could be done with such a big convoy without the use of high explosives. It was decided to get the road mined. There were six mines set in one and a half miles of the road. Each mine was covered off by a party of rifle and shot-gun men and there was a flanking party of rifle men a quarter of a mile to the East and West of the minefield, so that our men held a front of $2\frac{1}{4}$ miles. Other men were engaged in barricading the roads leading to the place selected for the ambush. The orders issued to the barricade men were that as soon as they heard the firing they were to start to throw up their barricades. These men carried out their work effectively.

Although the Auxiliaries travelled this road a couple of times a day it was decided not to attack them until they were on their return journey from Banteer in the evening which would be about 6 p.m. to 7.30 p.m. This hour was selected because it would be easier to get away such a large number of men during the night.

All the men were mobilised in a wood overlooking this road, where the different sections were told off and the task of each allotted to them. The movements of the lorries were watched during the day from this wood. They passed on to Banteer again at 3.30 p.m. and it was decided to attack them on the return journey. Four lorries passed to Banteer (one armoured lorry and three Crossley tenders.)

All men moved into their positions at 5 p.m. under their section commanders. The Sections and Mines were numbered off from West to East Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6. It was decided that No. 1 Section attack the first lorry, No. 2 Section the second lorry, No. 5 Section to attack the third lorry No. 6 Section to attack the fourth and last lorry. The 3rd. and 4th. Sections and Mines were supplementary Sections and Mines, and were to attack any of the lorries that would get away from the Mines allotted to them, if they should come in contact with either of these Sections.

The lorries arrived back at 6.30 p.m. on their return journey so the attack commenced at this hour. The first lorry had only got as far as No. 2 position when the last lorry got into No. 6 position where it was

blown up. None of the other lorries had got to the positions where they were to be attacked, and when they heard fire opened on the last lorry they all tried to get back to its assistance. The first lorry got back to No. 3 position and was blown up there. The second lorry stopped between 3 and 4 positions and the 3rd. lorry between 5 and 6 positions. Those opened a heavy fire with rifle and machine guns and rifle grenades on our position.

The men attacking the last lorry had got the order to charge it to disarm the occupants when machine gun fire was opened on them from the third lorry. The enemy having got their machine guns into position were now directing heavy fire on our men in the 5th. and 6th. positions. Our men returned the fire and kept doing so for three quarters of an hour with a hope of capturing the two lorries in this position.

The 3rd lorry did not come up to the Mine but five Auxiliaries who left it and advanced along the road trying to flank our men were blown up on this Mine and are believed to have been killed. The men in 5th. and 6th. positions after keeping the fight for three quarters of an hour had to retreat with difficulty, but all the men got safely away. All our men got away without a scratch.

GUARDS AND SENTRIES

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

- Q. When is ammunition served out to guard?
 A. Before going on duty.
- Q. When should the standing orders of the guard be read and explained to men?
 A. As soon as the guard has mounted.
- Q. When is every relief to be inspected?
 A. Before going out, and also on returning.
- Q. What are the orders with regard to removing any article of clothing or accoutrements by non-commissioned officers and men while on guard?
 A. They are not to take off any article of their clothing, or accoutrements, but the wearing of great coats will be optional.
- Q. How often must the commander visit his sentries at what specified periods, and for what purpose?
 A. At least twice by day and twice by night, to ascertain that they are alert on their posts and acquainted with their orders.
- Q. By whom else will sentries be visited?
 A. By a non-commissioned officer with a file of men.
- Q. Are commanders allowed to quit their guard?
 A. No, except to visit their sentries.
- Q. What are the regulations with regards to non-commissioned officers and men quitting their guard?
 A. They are not allowed to do so without obtaining leave from the commander, which is to be given only for special purposes.

IMAGINATION IN WARFARE

Imagination is an invaluable factor in conducting warfare. The commander has naturally to picture to himself the many situations that might arise, and to decide how he would deal with them. He is in this way prepared for all emergencies, but he has to go further and imagine to himself the ideas that are guiding his enemy, and then to find a plan with which to outwit him. This was one of the secrets of Napoleon's success. When his intelligence officers had ascertained for him the disposition of his enemy, knowing to a T the character of his opposing general, he would figure to himself what his plan of action was likely to be. He would then formulate a plan of his own for counteracting it, and, in the event of this not being entirely practicable, he would make a second alternative plan; either of these plans might be practicable on account of their conformation with the accepted tactical or strategical principles. Then Napoleon would bring his imagination into play and devise yet a third scheme—such as would not probably have been foreseen by his opponent; and this was the one which preferably he would play upon him.

WHERE CUNNING SCORES

That is where cunning comes in. For quick training in cunning, the best school is that of Scouting. The first steps in making a good scout are to teach him Observation and Deduction, noticing every detail about the enemy, and deducing a meaning from the points observed. Then by a little imagination the enemy's movements or intentions are read, and counter-acting steps can be taken with every advantage.

RUSES OF WAR

A scouting officer in a recent campaign saved himself from being captured by exercising his bump of cunning. He had crept out along a dry watercourse to reconnoitre an enemy fort, and he knew when he got back to a certain bush which grew over the bank he would be pretty close up to the work and in a position to study it. He came to the bush all right and put his head up, but could see no sign of the fort to his front. He raised himself higher to have a better look, and suddenly heard a sound behind him. Glancing round he found that he had passed the bush for which he had been aiming; it stood some few feet back from the bank instead of on it, and he had passed the fort. The noise that he had heard was caused by some of the enemy who had been sitting in the rear of the work and who had seen him rise up out of the ditch. They were now all alert and moving as if to capture him. In a moment he turned round as if to a crowd of men behind him in the ditch and signalled with the greatest energy to them to lie down and keep hidden, and then slid down himself, as if to join them below the bank. But as he went he had the satisfaction of seeing the enemy scuttling as hard as they could go

for the shelter of the fort, only dreading lest a volley should catch them before they got there!

THE SECTION COMMANDER

The special duties of the section commander are:—

- i. If time permits before his section advances, to explain clearly the objective of the manoeuvre about to be carried out, and the methods he proposes to adopt.
- ii. To adopt the best method of advance.
- iii. To select the successive halting places and fire positions of his section.
- iv. To see that the general direction is maintained.
- v. To control the fire of the section.
- vi. To co-operate with neighbouring sections and to use the fire of his section to support them to the best advantage.
- vii. To indicate the way from fire position to fire position.
- viii. To discover as much as possible of the course of the action around him, and to send intelligence to his company commander and to neighbouring units.
- ix. To control the expenditure of ammunition, cause that of disabled men to be collected, report when ammunition is running short, and take steps to secure a further supply.
- x. To re-organize his section at every suitable opportunity, if its order has become deranged either by casualties or by the addition of men of other sections.

THE ACTIVE DEFENCE

"Every position should be strengthened as far as time admits, with the object of reducing the number of men required to hold it, and of thereby adding to the strength of the general reserve."

A company detailed to furnish a portion of the firing line will usually keep a part in support.

The duties of the company commander are generally similar to his duties in the attack, but he must arrange also for the occupation and preparation for defence of the ground allotted to him to the best advantage.

In addition to their general duties, the duties of the half-company and section commanders are to see:—

- i. That every man can use his rifle effectively.
- ii. That the cover is good.
- iii. That the entrenchments constructed are concealed from the enemy.
- iv. That ranges are taken and the men.
- v. That ample ammunition and

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arms were twisted, a red hot poker was held to my eyes, and threats to destroy my sight were made. I was kicked and threatened with shooting. On several occasions I was taken to a dark passage under the canteen, which leads to the cells, and badly beaten. The doctors here can testify to my condition on arrival. On one occasion an officer asked me if I would care to see a priest, and upon my saying yes, a 'priest' was sent to see me. This 'priest' I afterwards discovered was a member of the Intelligence Staff in Dublin Castle and an ordinary civilian."

Volunteers should pay strict attention to the instruction that they must not leave their operations area without the permission of their superior officer. All ranks should be in a position to link up with their units at the shortest possible notice. It has of course been arranged that reasonable notice of the conclusion of the truce should be given by both sides.

The enemy's objection to releasing Commandant Mac Eoin elicited from the President a tribute to this officer which all Volunteers will appreciate. "We, the Irish Government and the Headquarter Staff of the Irish Army, are proud of him as a splendid representative of the type of Irish soldier this fight has developed, and as a living model of what we want our army officers to be."

Commandant Mac Eoin's public statement following his release merits re-publication here as a concise exposition of the position of our Army. He said:—

"My release is an acceptance of my attitude that my act was an act of war, and it is therefore, clear that my release is a final abandonment of any claim by the enemy that the Irish War is murder.

"The Irish War *was* War—War waged in accordance with the prevailing conditions.

"I am released as a representative or the people to attend a meeting of the Parliament of my Nation. If I had not been a soldier of my Nation I should not have been chosen as a representative of the people.

"That situation makes it clear that all my fellow-soldiers in jails and camps must be similarly recognised."

A NEWRY "AMBUSH"

NOTE: On Friday, June 10th 1921, Dublin Castle issue the official following report:—

"At 8.30 p.m. on Wednesday, (June 8th.) an R.I.C. patrol was fired on at Newry. One constable was hit in the heel. The R.I.C. returned the fire and it is believed two of their assailants were wounded. A reinforcing party were attacked soon afterwards and one Special Constable, 'B' Class, was shot dead. Two of the attackers also were shot dead and one is believed to have been wounded."

The manner in which "two of the attackers were also shot dead" is described in the following sworn statement, published in the "Irish Bulletin":—

"I, Mary Ellen Magee, of Corrogs, Newry, Co Down do hereby solemnly declare that the statements made herein are the truth, so help me God.

"On Wednesday, June the 8th, at or about the hour of 8 o'clock in the evening I heard voices (which I afterwards found to be those of Special Constabulary) speaking to my brother, Stephen Magill, at the door of our house. They were asking him was his brother in the house. Before he could reply, my brother, Owen Magill, walked out to the side of Stephen. They were only a few feet from the door when I heard the order 'Hands up,' and the next thing I heard was a volley of shots. I ran to the door and saw my brother Stephen falling, and my brother Owen ran to me and said to me, 'I'm done.' I took my brother Owen round to the back of the house and helped to bandage his wound, which was in his right side. He was quite conscious and did not appear to be seriously wounded. My brother "Stephen was shot through the heart and died in a few minutes. His wound appeared to be caused by an explosive bullet as the gash in his breast was almost two inches in diameter.

"When the Specials left we took my brother, Owen, into the house and he undressed himself and went to bed. At about 10 p.m. the specials returned and inquired for my brother Owen, who was wounded. They told him they were going to take him to hospital and they told me the same. My father was in the room with my brother at the time; the Specials kicked him from the room and abused him badly. My father is aged 78. Then my brother Owen walked out of the house with the Specials, and as far as I know, walked over 200 yards to the military lorry which was in waiting. They did not allow my brother to put on his coat but took him away in his shirt and trousers. As far as can be ascertained my brother was dead when he arrived at the hospital.

"The Specials returned on June 10th and raided our house. They knocked down a stack of hay, and threw-clothes and other things on the yard. On Sunday, June 12th, they again returned. Neither my father nor myself were in the house at the time. They broke open the door and tossed everything over the house, pitching beds, clothes and everything here there and everywhere. They again returned on June 18th.

"On the occasion of their visit on June 8th, they followed me through the fields, and threatened to shoot me if I did not tell them where my wounded brother was, he having hid himself under the bed when he heard they were coming the second time. This is a true statement of all the main facts of the case.

(Signed) Mary Ellen Magee