

AN T-ÓGLÁC

THE OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE IRISH VOLUNTEERS.

Vol. III. No. 28.]

SEPTEMBER 30 1921.

[Price Twopence.

FOCAL i dTRATH.

It was no doubt inevitable that during the stress and strain of the incessant warfare of the past two years, those Volunteers who were actively engaged in so engrossing a struggle were only able to give scanty attention to other work of national importance. Other branches of the work of nation-building suffered from this concentration of the energies of the most earnest, enthusiastic and vigorous young men of Ireland on purely military activities. The need for this concentration on military activities has not yet passed and Volunteers cannot afford in any way to relax their vigilance nor to neglect the opportunities for improved training and organisation provided by the cessation of hostilities. At the same time we would like to ask the fighting men of Ireland for a hearty co-operation with the non-combatants who also have been "doing their bit" in the work of keeping the Irish Nation alive and vigorous. In particular we would ask all Volunteers to give their hearty support to the work of the Irish Language movement. It is not too much to say that the work of reviving the Irish language and the work of the Irish Republican Army are and have always been closely connected with each other. The one fights to keep the nation alive spiritually and intellectually; the other fights to keep the Irish nation alive physically. In the history of the establishment of the Irish Volunteers prominent workers in the Language Movement loom large. It was that movement which gave to us the O'Rahilly and others who first originated the idea of establishing the Irish Volunteers, who gave to us the first commander-in-Chief of the Irish Republican Army, Padraic Mac Piarais, who gave to us our present President

of the Republic; and who gave to us most of those now at the head of our Army. Nothing can more clearly show the close connection between militant young Ireland and the language movement than these facts. We trust that there will always be the most cordial co-operation between fighting men of Ireland and those who are working to keep the national language of Ireland alive and spread its use.

It has been suggested that some Volunteers particularly in those parts of the country where Irish is largely spoken, have shown a marked indifference to the claims of the national language. How far this is so it is not possible for us to decide, but if the statement is true it shows a regrettable state of affairs. In purely English speaking districts some Officers (and these among our most efficient) have trained their men to obey all the words of command in Irish and the enemy had to report that in several attacks on barracks and ambushes in parts of the North of Ireland where little or no Irish is spoken "the words of command were all given in Irish". On the other hand it has been complained that in certain districts where Irish is spoken sports and aeriochtanna have been held under the auspices of the Irish Republican Army in which the Irish Language was practically ignored. A case has been reported to us where in a very Irish-Speaking district a sports meeting organised by Volunteers was extensively advertised by means of posters which did not contain a word of Irish. If this be the case then those responsible for the omission showed a curious lack of appreciation of the Situation. They were undoing with one hand what they were fighting for with the other—the security of Ire-

(Continued on page 4)

CLOTHES AT INSPECTION.

As Sunday is a very usual day for Inspections and Parades, it is not uncommon to see men—and officers even—appear on duty in their Sunday Clothes with light boots etc. A little thought will make it clear to everybody that this habit is altogether unsound. Far from being smart it is quite the reverse, and it makes for half-hearted Training. When a man has only one decent suit of clothes he is reluctant to kneel or lie down in mud as he would have to do on service and should be ready to do in Training; nor is an Officer anxious to compel him. Accordingly for parades of any kind men, if not in uniform, should wear clothes about which they will not lament if they get dirty.

The fact is the ordinary garb of men in this country for ordinary walking etc, is essentially an English arrangement designed for wearing in towns, and was never meant to be worn in field good, bad, or indifferent. Other countries have some sort of national dress suitable for out-door wear and quite suitable for military wear if necessary. The Frenchman's blue blouse and wooden shoes, or the Russian's high boots into which the trousers are tucked, are not ruined by walking through mud—they were designed for that purpose.

Our Inspections and parades will have far more reality and greater military value when serviceable clothes are worn by everybody—the same clothes as are worn in camp by everybody—knee breeches strong boots and leggings or puttees.

THE BATTALION.

General Organization:

1. The Battalion shall normally comprise 4 or more (but not exceeding 7) Companies. (This rule is not rigid, but any departure from it whether allowed as a temporary arrangement or made because of special conditions, can only be allowed with the sanction of General Headquarters).

2. The Battalion Staff shall consist of: The Commandant, the Vice-Commandant, the Adjutant, and the Quartermaster.

3. The Battalion Chiefs of Special Services are as follows:—

- (a) Chief of Engineering (ranks as Lieutenant).
- (b) Chief of Scouting and
Despatch Riding "
- (c) Chief of Medical Service "
- (d) Chief of Signalling "
- (e) Chief of Transport and
Supply "

(f) Any other Officer or non-commissioned Officer who may be required for an additional Special Service. (Such Special Service may be established by the Commandant, subject to the approval of his Brigade Commandant, it may, of course also be established by the Brigade Commandant.

THE BATTALION COUNCIL.

1. (a) Composition. The Battalion Commandant, the Battalion Vice-Commandant, the Battalion Adjutant, the Battalion Quartermaster, and the Captains of all Companies comprising the Battalion shall be the Battalion Council. The Council shall be presided over by the Battalion Commandant.

(b) Meetings. This Council shall meet at least fortnightly.

(c) Attendances. No Officers of the Council may be absent without excuse, and no Officer may send a substitute to fill his place, but a Company Captain who cannot attend must send his First Lieutenant to offer his excuse of absence, to hand in the Company Report and to receive any orders issued.

(d) Attendances of Chiefs of Special Services. The Lieutenant in charge of each Service may be summoned to any meeting by the Commandant to report on the state of his Command. He shall previously be given due notice. In actual practice it is suggested that the Lieutenant of each Service be present at a Battalion Council Meeting at least once a month to hand in his report and to answer Questions on same, etc

(e) Duties. The Battalion Council shall act in an advisory capacity on matters submitted for its recommendations by the Commandant or Brigade Council or by General Headquarters.

N.B.—It is to be clearly understood that except as above set out the Battalion Council shall have no authority over matters of discipline, efficiency and command for which the Battalion Commandant is solely responsible.

(a) Territorial extent of area covered, and number of Companies in existence within its borders.

(b) Strategic and tactical suitability.

For the routine of training and development as well as for active service, it is essential that the extent of the Battalion Area should be such as to enable the Battalion Commandant and his Officers to keep in constant close touch with all Companies in the Battalion so that due supervision may be exercised and proper attention given. It will be found, except in populous areas where men live in close proximity, that a

ion Commandant with his Officers is unable to carry out his duties efficiently in a Battalion which consists of more than 5 or 6 Companies.

From an organisation aspect, (b) has to be considered principally from the point of view of unity of action. Officers and men who have been trained together in peace are better together in action. It will be of great advantage if in time of action a unit will be able to use the organisation, lines of communications, facilities for transport and supply, mobilisation points, etc., that it has established and perfected in peace time.

The Battalion Commandant must arrange that every Company in his Battalion be inspected on parade by an Officer of the Battalion Staff at least once a month. The visit will merely be in the nature of an inspection and it will not be necessary for the visiting Officers to remain for the whole time the Company is on parade. The Battalion Commandant himself must visit at least one Company each week and will arrange his visits in rotation so as to cover all Companies.

DISCIPLINE.

Discipline is a line of vital equality which enables a military force, or any similar-body of men, to cope efficiently with the situations of warfare which are abnormal to the ordinary conditions and habits of life. Its moral value is illustrated in other crises than those which arise in warfare, as for instance, when a few cavalry and police clear the streets of hundreds of armed rioters, or school children are marshalled and marched in orderly fashion out of a burning building.

The subject will be understood more easily if it is treated under the following headings:—

- (a) The meaning of discipline.
- (b) Mistaken ideas on the subject.
- (c) The foundations of discipline.
- (d) The necessity for discipline in the soldier and finally
- (e) The best methods to inculcate and maintain it.

The following illustration, appealing to a man's sporting instinct will give a clear conception of what discipline really means.

Every one understands what is meant by "playing the game" in football or hurling, as opposed to playing to the gallery—that is, playing for the side and not self-glorification. In football a chance of personal distinction frequently comes to a player. If he does not take it because there is another to whom he considers better placed to forward the interests of the side, it is discipline that makes him sink self and act solely for the good of his team

Spectators at a football match are the first to recognise if a man plays a selfish game, yet, if civilians, they often do not realise that they are insisting on a strict sense of that discipline which they abuse in the Army. War is also a game, but a more serious one, for men's lives, as well as the honour and glory of a country, are at stake.

Discipline, therefore, from a collective point of view, may be understood as "playing the game" opposed to a personal interest.

Individual discipline, on the other hand, is built up mainly from self-control. It is a factor of discipline which must be acquired by each one for himself, and everyman has to work hard to obtain it. Everybody has something to fight against in his nature—one is born selfish, a vice intensified by the struggle for existence nowadays; another has a violent temper; a third when the word "work" is mentioned "comes over all of a tremble"; then there is over-indulgence in smoking and drinking. A man who wants to attain true discipline must overcome such difficulties and get control of himself; this accomplished, he is more likely, to be a valuable asset to the army, as the effects of personal discipline extend beyond the individual, and have, indeed a powerful influence on those around him.

It is difficult to understand the objection of the man in the street to military discipline, which as before mentioned, he allows as being essential to the winning of a mere game. This objection may be taken to be due entirely to the mistaken notions so many people in civil life hold on the subject. In many cases they look upon discipline simply as a system of punishment for military offences. This is a hopeless misconception. A British recruiting Officer, questioning mill hands on their objection to enlisting in the Army, received similar replies. These factory workers had a hatred of discipline, about which they held most distorted ideas. They spoke of fourteen days to cells for trivial offences, and utterly neglected to realise the stern discipline they had to face at the factory. Insolence to the foreman or one or two cases of unpunctuality, laid them open to instant dismissal. In such cases they were often sent into the streets at a moment's notice, perhaps to face starvation. Such discipline is surely much more severe than that which obtains in an Army.

There is another false idea held by a certain class of people. It would seem that there is a class of people who think that the discipline of an Army destroys a man's individuality, that it degrades him or that it interferes with the liberty of the subject so much that a man cannot call his soul his own; whereas in reality, discipline is a thing to be proud of; it raises a man above the level of those who have no discipline, just as law and order raises a nation above the level of a nation of savages.

(Continued from page 1)

land's political, spiritual and intellectual independence of England. Volunteers are now well accustomed to being lectured on their military duties. It should be remembered that their doing their duty to the nation in the military sense does not absolve them of their duty to the nation in other ways. We hope that Volunteers everywhere will show their appreciation of this fact by cultivating the friendliest relations and the most active co-operation with those who are striving to make Ireland Irish-speaking and spiritually independent of England.

JUDGING DISTANCES.

PART I.

1. THEIR IMPORTANCE.

In the ordinary target practice the soldier *knows* where the target is and usually experiences little if any difficulty in discerning it. He has also the additional advantage of being able to tell the range to a yard, so that he is working under what might be termed ideal conditions, and will in time become a first class shot *on the range*.

Now if he were to be satisfied with the training alone, absolutely ignoring Visual Training and Judging Distance would he prove an efficient soldier in action? He would not. Because the conditions which obtained in peace are reversed in wars. The target will be almost invisible, as the enemy's business will be to make use of all available cover etc., and this, coupled with open formations and neutral tinted uniforms, would make observation practically impossible to the untrained man.

Then again collective fire at long ranges is controlled by a fire unit commander whose duty it is to estimate the range, indicate targets etc; and the soldier must be able to recognise the targets described to him. The result of his inability to do so can be better imagined than described. So much for the importance of Visual Training.

As for judging distance it is sufficient to say that the marksmanship of the individual soldier would be of very little use if he were unable to pick out his own targets, at close range, and estimate the distance accordingly.

Hence it will be seen that marksmanship, visual training and judging distance are absolutely inseparable if a man is to attain a high standard of efficiency as a soldier. Ignore any one of them, and the other two are rendered useless.

Much could be written about Visual Training and Judging distance but the only way to become proficient is to carry out the practical work in the open country, as it is simply a matter of practise and nothing else. At the same time it must be remembered that all results must be based on some form of calculation, *and not on guesswork*.

Greater difficulty may be experienced in training town bred men than those bred in the country. In towns the vision of the man is restricted, as streets are never of any great length or width. Consequently the eye becomes accustomed to very short distances; whereas the country man's vision is to all intents and purposes unrestricted. In our Army Visual Training will have to be adapted to circumstances, but at the same time the system of teaching must be progressive. Men should be taught to notice things around them, to locate fatigue men in the various firing positions in the open country, and to study ground particularly from cover.

Using fatigue men at points from 200 yards to 1200 yards the instructor will demonstrate the following points until the soldier can estimate up to 800 yards with but a small per centage of error. In addition non-commissioned officers will require to study longer ranges.

At 200 Yards. All parts of the body are clearly visible. The buttons of the tunic will be easily seen and the features will also be quite easy to distinguish.

At 300 Yards. The face is not so clearly seen, and the features will not be distinguishable. The buttons will appear to be a white line down the centre of the tunic.

At 400 Yards. The outline of the body is easily seen, and

At 500 Yards. The head and shoulders appear to taper down to the body. All the movements of the arms or legs are clearly seen.

At 600 Yards. The head is hardly visible. And the indistinctness of the head and shoulders is more noticeable.

From 700 Yards to 800 Yards. The head cannot usually be seen.

From 800 Yards to 1200 Yards. A man standing up appears to be a mere stump; no movement of any sort of the arms or legs could be seen.

