

# AN T-ÓGLÁC

THE OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE IRISH VOLUNTEERS.

Vol. II. No. 14.]

JULY 1, 1920.

[Price Twopence.

## STILL FORWARD!

That the present time is one of the most fateful in the history of our country and that the triumph of the Republican cause depends upon the courage, energy and determination of the armed manhood of Ireland being put into the most efficient and effective operation at once are facts which are not clearly enough perceived by the majority of the people of Ireland. If they were it is inconceivable that any young citizen of the Republic of military age, would remain outside the ranks of the Volunteers. If it were, it is inconceivable that the Volunteers should remain so comparatively inactive in certain parts of the country, and that in those places their organisation should still be imperfect and their discipline unsatisfactory. The military problem is thus made an unnecessarily simple one for the enemy. He is able to flood with troops those counties in which the soldiers of the Irish Republic are carrying on guerilla warfare with the greatest intensity. Large parts of Ireland remain almost inactive, some entirely so. Meanwhile the enemy pursues his military preparations for what he terms "re-conquest," and in the North is arming and instigating rebels with the intention of fomenting civil war.

The number of English soldiers available for service in Ireland is not by any means as great as is imagined, indeed it may be safely assumed that an increased and widespread guerilla activity on the part of Volunteers throughout Ireland would strain the enemy resources to the utmost.

The time has come when the organisation of the Volunteers must be brought up to the highest pitch

of strength and efficiency everywhere. A vigorous recruiting campaign would be timely at the present juncture. Each individual Volunteer should endeavour to secure at least one recruit for the Republican Army, of course using his judgment to secure a man of the right type and one about whom he knows sufficient to guarantee his trustworthiness. There are undoubtedly big reserves of suitable man-power untapped throughout the country. There are many young men, sound Republicans physically fit, who are not in the Volunteers but who should be, and who would make good soldiers of Ireland. In many cases they are not in because they were never asked and did not know how to get in touch. But apart altogether from that, the Republic has a right to demand the services of the young men of Ireland in defence of their lawfully constituted Government. Young men who, through apathy, timidity or from selfish motives remain outside the ranks should be shamed into "doing their bit." At a time when young men are facing prison and death, and many have shed their blood fighting for the Republic, the other young men who cheer their exploits but keep themselves safely out of the firing line should be made to feel themselves the selfish "slackers" they are.

The machinery of the Volunteer organisation is being steadily improved and most of its departments are working smoothly and effectively, but in some parts of the country a great deal remains to be done in the way of speeding up the work. The safety of the Irish Republic, the safety of the people of Ireland, threatened by foreign mercenaries, and armed traitors at home, depends upon the Irish Volunteers, and it is our duty to push forward our work with an energy, speed and decisiveness which will anticipate and defeat the military preparations of the enemy.

The programme of guerilla warfare laid down in these columns at the end of last year has been developed with remarkable skill, courage and success in some parts of the country. It must be made more widespread, frequent, persistent and menacing. The enemy must be harassed day and night. Officers and men must use their ingenuity and inventiveness in devising new methods of harassing the enemy and obstructing his operations. The day has definitely gone when he can even pretend to function as a "Government" in the greater part of Ireland. The Irish Republican Government is now the de facto as well as de jure authority in the greater part of this country. The enemy has to rely altogether on his armed forces and, even so, is not able to use them effectively. A thousand ways will present themselves to Volunteer Corps from time to time of thwarting his designs. If the officers are alert and efficient and the organisation and discipline of their Corps is satisfactory, such opportunities will never be overlooked or neglected.

The war must be pushed on with vigour and determination. The slightest sign of a slackening off of our offensive would have an encouraging effect on the enemy. We must retain the offensive which we have secured; we must push it forward with all conceivable vigour; we must not spare ourselves in the work. Every soldier of Ireland should deem it a privilege to share in the work; should give ungrudgingly his best efforts in the work. We want all the good men we can get at the present time, and we want them organised and trained up to the highest possible pitch of efficiency. The time has come for a determined effort to get recruits; the time has also come for a severe scrutiny into the fitness and activity of those holding important offices in the Volunteers. We would recommend each Volunteer officer to have constantly two maps before him—the map of Ireland and a map of his own district. Let him consult the former continually in the light of the information available from newspapers and other sources; let him note each new development of the military situation; let him note the progress of our offensive in different parts of the country; let him note what is being done or what is being left undone in his own area; and let him ask himself: "What could we do to

help in the fight?" Then with the aid of the local map let him study the military importance and the possibilities of his own district, the enemy centres and means of operation and what could be done to thwart the enemy designs, in accordance with the general plan. By this means all Volunteer officers will get a clear view of the situation, a keen sense of the responsibility devolving upon them in the fight and of its relation to the whole. If they would all envisage the situation in that way, there would be no slackness to complain of anywhere. All the parts of Ireland are claimed by us, and all of them are or should be links in our chain of operations against the enemy just as truly as every enemy centre is a link in his chain of operations against us. The enemy has been driven in from his outposts in most parts of the country; it is for us to consolidate the positions now, but it is not for us to rest on our guns. Our cry must be still "Forward." All that has been gained so far has been won at the price of hard work, intelligence, discipline and self-sacrifice. "Those Volunteer officers who are not working hard had better speed themselves up, before H.Q. finds it necessary to dispense with their services. Those Volunteers, either officers or men, who are not living up to the general high standard of conduct, zeal, efficiency, sobriety, loyalty and discipline set in the force we are all so proud of, must be dealt with sternly. Abuses must be suppressed with an iron hand. We cannot allow our glorious cause and lofty record to be stained by the faults or delinquencies of any individuals heedless of their responsibilities. Up to this, with a very few slight exceptions, we have been happily free from any cases of the kind referred to. We must not allow them to creep in. The basis of all abuses is slackness. Those who are not able to practice self-discipline, are not suited to enforce discipline on others. Those who neglect duties for which they have made themselves responsible, are contributing in their way to a lowering of moral standards. The Army of Ireland has a stern and urgent task before it in confronting a numerous and well-armed, though not very courageous, enemy bent on the reconquest of our country. We require every bit of our energy and intelligence to carry on the fight to its final triumph.

## NOTES FROM HEADQUARTERS.

### LESSONS FROM EAST AFRICA.—IV.

General Letton-Vorbeck's description of the state of affairs resulting from his systematic attacks on the Uganda Railway is very instructive for the Irish Republican troops. The General says: "The continual menace to the railway had obliged the enemy to take extensive measures for its protection. Wide clearings had been made along it, of which the outer edges had been closed by thick zarebas (abattis of thorns). Every couple of miles there were strong blockhouses, or entrenchments with obstacles, from which the line was constantly patrolled. Mobile supports, of the strength of a company or more, were held in readiness, so that, whenever the railway was reported to be in danger, they could at once go off by special train. In addition, protecting detachments were pushed out in our direction, who tried to cut off our patrols on their way back on receiving reports from spies or from observation posts on the high ground."

All this has to us a very familiar ring, for our own persistent attacks on the R.I.C. have brought about a parallel state of affairs in Ireland. The German General dictated the course of the whole campaign by his menace to the Uganda Railway; he compelled the English to concentrate their main forces there instead of attacking the coast towns. His aim was, in his own words, "to grip the enemy by the throat and force him to employ his forces for self-defence." So, too, our own troops are similarly dictating the course of events by never-ending minor successes over the R.I.C. For thereby all the enemy forces are compelled to concentrate for defence—abandoning the initiative. They are now like the Austrian officer in Napoleon's famous jest—the officer who could never make up his mind whether the battalion should defend the hill or the hill should defend the battalion.

While maintaining the present system of unremitting offensive tactics we must at the same time take measures to forestal any hostile attempt to recover the lost initiative. This at the moment can be best accomplished by developing our Intelligence Department, and still more varied training.

### GRADING AND SPECIALISATION.

Warfare is to-day a complicated business—and this is the case whether we are concerned with large or small forces. The soldier to-day must be a specialist, because it is too much to expect any single man to master all the different aspects of

the work. The weapons and equipment are so varied, the conditions vary so much that the man who does not concentrate his efforts in one definite direction will merely end by being "Jack of all trades, master of none."

This being the case it is necessary for all Captains of Companies to see about carrying out a definite grading of their men by means of which each man may be allotted to the work for which he is best suited. In this way the best results may be expected from the work of the whole—for the efficiency of the whole depends directly on the efficiency of the parts.

With reference to grading his men the Captain of a Company must be fully acquainted with two things—he must be aware of the different divisions into which it is sought to divide his men, and he must have a thorough knowledge of every man under his command. Without this last he cannot possibly hope to grade his men successfully. What specialists he requires and how many of each kind he may find out from Orders and Instructions from Headquarters; but the characters of his men he can only get to know by personal experience and careful study. Accordingly all Company Captains are required forthwith to get clear about the aptitudes and capacities of their own men—this is the first step, and it is a step with which an immediate start can be made.

As regards the other matter each Captain will in any event require snipers, grenadiers, engineers, and first-aid men and must see about getting preliminary instruction in these branches. There are the most urgent points—especially the three last. Grading requires time and care, but the fundamental points can be gone ahead with at once without further delay.

## ENGINEERING NOTES.

### PETROL.

A few casualties have occurred in the demolition of enemy works owing to the improper use of petrol.

That any Volunteer should be injured in handling this material is deplorable, and suggests grave carelessness on the part of the officer in charge. A plea of ignorance of the nature of this fuel on the part of the officer is not admissable. An officer of Volunteers should realise that it is his duty to acquaint himself with the properties and possibilities of everything he handles. I have stated in former

issues that these Notes cannot cover everything and that they must be supplemented or modified by local officers according to local needs. Let the following be remembered.

Petrol should never be used for incendiary purposes if paraffin is available. It has three main characteristics which distinguish it from other oils.

- 1—Its fluidity.
- 2—Its ability to evaporate quickly.
- 3—Its ability to burn itself out rapidly.

1—Owing to its fluidity it runs over a large area and is consequently difficult to control.

2—Petrol evaporates very rapidly at almost any temperature, and this is intensified by its fluidity. If a tin be emptied on a room, the air is immediately filled with the vapour which takes fire and explodes with considerable violence, communicating the fire to the petrol itself, whether on the floor of a room or in tins which have been opened. (In one case as a result of this the doors of a room were slammed by the explosion, and the occupants confined to the burning room).

3—Petrol burns out rapidly in some cases, so quickly that it may only burn the surface of the object with which it is in contact.

Paraffin does not evaporate so rapidly, and though more difficult to ignite it burns longer and hence affords a better chance of setting fire to the object to be destroyed. I should be used with some solid substance, such as wood shavings, straw or cotton waste which might be helped with small sticks, broken up furniture or the like, the whole being placed where it will get a good hold. In the case of a building the fire should be started at a staircase, or wooden partition or even a few planks placed near the rafters of the roof.

The windows of the building should be opened to ensure a good stream of air, and also to allow the heavy smoke of the burning oil to escape. This is most necessary for good results as the smoke, having no means of escape, may smother the flames and extinguish the fire.

In future operations petrol is only to be used by those who understand its nature and action, and who realize that it is an explosive, or where adequate safeguards have been taken to ensure the safety of men of the Republican Army. If paraffin be not available turpentine may be used.

## GENERAL NOTES.

The enemy is generally able to secure the publication in the Press of lying accounts of attacks on barracks and other military activities of Volunteers. In one case recently where the garrison surrendered and the barracks were entirely destroyed, the newspapers all stated that "the raiders were routed." A large number of successes have been described as failures, and the public, unable to read between the lines is often deceived. It should be pointed out that if a barrack is so far destroyed that the garrison has to evacuate it, the main object of the attack has been secured. Steps will be taken to prevent the publishing of lying and seditious reports, inspired by enemy sources, in the Irish Press.

The Volunteer Executive has decided to establish a scheme for the recognition of valour in action on the part of Volunteers. Decorations and other testimonials will be devised for those who distinguish themselves in action, for those who are wounded and memorials for any who may be killed. The casualties of the Army so far have fortunately been very few; but if the fight is to be waged, as we intend it to be waged, with ever-increasing intensity, a few casualties are unavoidable. Steps are being taken to secure machinery for providing the quickest and most efficient succour to any who may be wounded in action.

At Tipperary recently a British patrol gave a fine proof of their mettle. Having captured some prisoners, a *single* Volunteer appeared in their midst and fired a revolver, whereupon they all turned and ran. The prisoners escaped and none have been recaptured.

The armed cyclist patrol of 12 English soldiers which was disarmed at Carrigtwohill surrendered to *nine* Volunteers, of whom only seven were armed. Altogether, Macready's "military measures" seem a great success.

The English "Morning Post" has said many unkind things of us, but we do not know whether a compliment or insult is intended by the following statement of its "special correspondent":—"It may be here remarked that the Irish Republican Volunteers are a fine body of men, very many of their battalions being in physique equal to the best British troops." English humour!

Tá sé ró-luath fós chun éin nídh a rádh i dtuobh Dhoiré Cholmcille. Ach beidh rud éigin aguinn le rádh mar gheall air sara fada.