

# AN T-ÓSLÁC

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## THE CAMPAIGN

The Army of the Irish Republic has scored a number of brilliant victories inside the past few weeks. Two outstanding events have been the victories of Ballyvourney and Kanturk in which strong enemy forces with superior armament and equipment have been crushingly defeated with heavy losses, after a fierce struggle, by comparatively small bodies of Volunteers. The Cork Brigades have proved themselves to have reached a level of military efficiency which would make them a match for the most highly-trained soldiers in the world. An example has been set which every Brigade in Ireland should strive to emulate. Other Brigades have also done fine work and generally speaking the situation from the military point of view is excellent. Our troops are better organised and armed and more efficient than ever before and among those on active service the morale is admirable. The events of the past two months have immensely raised the spirits of the Army and people of Ireland and done irreparable damage to the prestige of the enemy. Already the state of affairs was causing the enemy General Strickland gave concern two months ago, as shown in the captured letter from him which we reproduce in this issue. Since then the "unfortunate occurrences" that "lower the moral" of British troops have been numerous and on a larger scale than ever before.

Realising the effect of this state of affairs the enemy is concentrating his attention on propaganda, hushing up the facts of his defeats, concealing his casualties and making lying statements about Irish Republican casualties and about "captures of arms and ammunition." It is important that we should be in a position to contradict the enemy's lies at the earliest possible date, and therefore it is essential that every engagement or event of military or propagandist importance should be immediately reported to G.H.Q. At present there is a great deal of unnecessary delay in the transmission of reports and some officers other-

wise most zealous and efficient are somewhat remiss in this matter, perhaps because they do not realise its importance. At a time when the enemy is concentrating his energies on an attempt to break the spirit of the Irish people by a combination of frightfulness and propaganda, it is most important that we should be in a position to promptly counter his lies with our truth.

To emphasise the importance of this we will give some interesting facts in cases where the enemy official statements and the reports in an intimidated Press were entirely at variance with the truth.

The newspapers described a "battle of Roscarbery" in which "hundreds" of Volunteers took part and were "routed" with "heavy casualties." What really happened was that twenty-eight Volunteers, surrounded in a house by a vastly larger enemy force, fought their way out and got off without any casualty.

*No official bulletin* has been issued by G.H.Q. on the battle of Ballyvourney. This is the only time such a thing has occurred and is very significant. The "official" report sent to the papers was from Dublin Castle Press Bureau, the enemy propagandist department. This report admitted two dead, one of them the officer in command, and four wounded. It is an ascertained fact that the enemy casualties in the fight were twenty six.

The details of the fight at Kanturk in which the enemy Kerry Brigade Commander was killed were not available at the time this issue went to press, but it is quite certain that the enemy casualties were very much heavier than is acknowledged.

At Clonmult a body of fifteen Volunteers were surprised and surrounded in a house by a large body of enemy troops—Soldiers and "Black and Tans." The roof caught fire and after holding out for two and a half hours the men surrendered on terms, being promised by the enemy officer that they should receive proper treatment as prisoners. As soon as they emerged from the house with their

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screens, and God knows what that they are helpless as far as any counter-attack or offensive section of any kind is concerned.

The troops in their cages are too cooped up to have any chance of coming out speedily to counter-attack. They have not even room to effectively use their fire-arms in self-defence. The unfortunate men are helpless and can only try to keep alive behind their armour-plating until the lorries are blown up.

The bursting of a grenade inside an armoured lorry means that the lorry becomes a death-trap for every man inside it. The high armoured sides, so to speak, "save up" the force of the explosion and allow none of it to go to waste.

For dealing with armoured lorries in the country the surest method is the road-mine. It is imperative, therefore, that all Engineer units should at once master the laying and operating of such mines. This must be seen to immediately.

In addition to the bad effect on the morale of the men inside them, armouring the lorries adds considerably to their weight and consequently to the strain on their engines. Thus an ever-increasing burden is imposed on the enemy. The systematic destruction of the roads patrolled by the enemy greatly intensifies the strain imposed on him in this respect. The strain must be increased to breaking point.

## TRAIN ATTACK IN DONEGAL

Some valuable hints can be gained from the train fight in Donegal on the night of January 11th-12th. Our Officer in charge says in his report: "This train was notified as a fish train but being suspicious we instituted enquiries which revealed the fact that troops were coming." In addition the hour of departure from Derry and of probable arrival in Burtonport were found out." Point one to note—*early and accurate information.*

Then came the selection of position and disposal of troops in their action stations. These would vary according to local circumstances and need not be emphasised; but "two large boulders were placed on the rails and the wire fences on each side were pulled up to afford a safe exit." Again: "The station building a short distance away was taken possession of and a green light displayed. A telegraphist called up a station along the line asking the nature of the train but the head-office earthed the whole system before a reply could be received. Point two to note—*endeavour to make all the use possible of skilled mechanical and technical knowledge.*

"There were seven carriages on the train and it was travelling at a great speed when it struck the stores. The bogie-wheels were smashed and the tender was derailed." This helps us to estimate the probable

stopping power of railway barricades. Later on "Fire was returned from the cab of the engine where a Lewis Gun was in position." This gives an insight into possible enemy defensive arrangements—using the engine as an armoured train.

"In the retreat one of our two parties was surrounded twice but fought its way through on each occasion. Point three to note—*enormous value and stamina of really good troops* no matter what difficulties they meet.

This particular operation was not a complete success. "The operation was an exceedingly risky one as we were half the enemy strength." That explains a lot; but it should be observed that the attack was by no means a failure, because it inflicted considerable loss and delay on the enemy and constituted a formidable threat to his communications. The enemy is very uneasy about Donegal, on account of his naval bases at Lough Swilly and, Killybegs, to which the activity of our forces in the mountainous inland parts greatly hampers his movements. Increased activity on our part in this and the adjoining areas will still further annoy the enemy and compel him to alter the disposition of his forces in the country as a whole. Consequently we must use all our endeavours to produce this increased activity.

## COVERING ARMOURD CARS

Recently we have had experience of some of the methods followed by the enemy Armoured Cars in action at night. The enemy seems to consider these cars of some value for Night Operations, so definite information on this point may be useful. On one occasion the enemy car was in rear of a motor lorry as rearguard and carried a searchlight. The searchlight was played on the field bordering the road, and thus served a double purpose—it illuminated the fields and kept the roads in complete darkness. Under cover of this screen of darkness the lorry moved forward, in the hope of surprising any parties in the neighbourhood of the road. The point to remark about this manoeuvre is that it may not always be enough to fix attention on the car which carries the searchlight; there may be other enemy vehicles either before this one or behind it. By exercising a little care in this respect there is no possibility of being surprised by enemy motors at night.

The second incident, although it occurred at night might quite as easily have happened in the daytime. A party of our troops fired into an enemy motor column from behind a wall; the rearguard armoured car moved inside a gate and up an avenue in the hope of enveloping our men. A useful precaution which would have prevented this would be to barricade the gate strongly or, better still, place a mine on the avenue to explode it when the armoured car forced in the gate.