

AN TÓISLÁC

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THE IRISH VOLUNTEERS.

THE energies of Irish Republicans have for the past fortnight been occupied chiefly by political work. Now that the General Election is over, the road is clear for Volunteers to resume to the full their military activities. They should apply themselves to their duties with a renewed ardour, conscious that the efficient organising and arming of the Army of Ireland is not less essential to the establishment of an Irish Republic than any other work, however important. In fact the creation of a strong, armed, and efficient Army is the one essential element in the work to secure our independence. It is an obvious fact that all the wonderful progress which the Irish Republican Movement has made in recent times owes its origin to the founding of the Irish Volunteers. Without them none of these other things would be possible. In the dark days of 1915, with all the forces of corruption and cowardice at work against Ireland, the Volunteers formed the rallying point of Irish Nationalism, the bulwark that withstood with equal fortitude the foreign enemy and the traitors at home. In Easter Week, 1916, their courage and determination helped to change the history of Ireland. The triumph of Irish Republicanism at the polls simply means an endorsement by the overwhelming majority of the people of Ireland of the action of the Irish Volunteers in Easter, 1916.

The Volunteers have thus played an essential part in the series of events which, during the past few years, have brought Ireland so far on the road to independence. But we have not yet quite reached the end of that road, and the

Volunteers must continue to play their part till we reach it.

The English Government dreads the arming and drilling of the young men of Ireland more than it dreads any appeal by Ireland to any international tribunal. It fears the activities of the Irish Volunteers more than any political activities, however important and effective. It regards with more apprehension the existence of an armed body of Irishmen repudiating British law than the triumph of Irish Republicans in the General Election. The existence of an armed organisation of young Irishmen ready to shed their blood for Ireland's freedom constitutes the one argument that no lies or hypocrisy of the enemy can get over. The presence of the Irish Volunteers is an eternal challenge and menace to British rule in Ireland. While we have the Irish Volunteers England's hold on Ireland can never be secure. Their existence keeps Irish national thought sane and sound. It keeps us in contact with realities—with the fundamental reality that England's rule in Ireland is based exclusively on force, and that all the operations and ramifications of England's rule here would be impossible without their being backed up by force.

It is, in fact, possible for the Irish Volunteers, as has been proved during this war, to defy, frustrate and nullify all operations of British law directed against themselves. The maintaining and strengthening of the Irish Volunteers in the teeth of the enemy, the triumphant carrying on of all its details of organisation and military activity in complete defiance of all efforts of the English enemy during times of

war is a great and wonderful triumph, the like of which has never been seen in Ireland before and hardly in any other country. This successful defiance of and resistance to British law can be carried even further in times of peace. Many things will be easier of performance under peace conditions and the operations of the enemy against us will be correspondingly hampered. The rifles of the Irish Volunteers will prove a formidable obstacle to British rule in this country. They can render British law an impotent absurdity. The Irish Volunteers are now an exceedingly strong body, representing the greater part of the young manhood of Ireland. Their effectiveness depends upon discipline and determination; if these do not fail them, they hold the key of the situation, the key that will unlock the doors of Ireland's prison.

It has been already pointed out in AN tÓGLACH that the changed situation in Ireland may necessitate a change in tactics on the part of the Volunteers. The governing body of the Army of Ireland is fully alive to the situation, and prepared for all contingencies. We are sure that every Volunteer, both officers and members of the rank and file, are equally determined to maintain and practise that spirit of loyalty and discipline which has always characterised the Volunteers. The service of the moment required of each Volunteer may be summed up thus:—Leave nothing undone which can in any way improve your military efficiency. Be prompt and punctual at parade and other duties, obey orders willingly and cheerfully, attend to your training carefully. If you have no rifle do everything in your power to get one. If you have one, take proper care of it and learn how to use it properly. Understand that you and your fellow-Volunteers have an important and honourable part to play in the freeing of Ireland. You belong to a body whose history is one to be proud of. On the fidelity, discipline and determination of its members the fate of Ireland largely depends.

NOTES FROM HEADQUARTERS.

ORGANISATION NOTES—Duties of Battalion Officers (continued).

The Battalion Vice-Commandant shall act as second in command to the Commandant, and shall perform such separate duties as are allotted to him by the Commandant. At all times he must be in very close touch with the Commandant on all matters and activities affecting the Battalion. Particularly, however, the Vice-Commandant, under the Scheme of Organisation, is responsible for (a) Communications (b) the General Supervision of the Special Services.

Communications come under two heads:

- (1) General Headquarters Communications.
- (2) Brigade and Battalion Communications.

Under No. 1 the duty of the Vice-Commandant will be to make the necessary arrangements as directed by the Headquarters Communications Department through Brigade Headquarters.

Under No. 2 the duty will be more detailed, entailing arrangements as required by Brigade Organisation, and more minutely still the Communications Service necessitated by Battalion efficiency. The Vice-Commandant must keep these three separate heads in mind. By doing so it will be found possible to develop a local system in harmony with the wider requirements of the General All-Ireland Communications Routes. In this connection the various directions and instructions issued from the Headquarters Communications Department should be carefully studied. To secure efficiency the Vice-Commandant must know

- (a) The exact situation of the Company in the Battalion.
- (b) The despatch riders for each Company.

For Brigade and Headquarters communications he must know what the Companies surrounding his own area are.

Special Services—When these have been established as provided for in the Organisation Scheme, the Vice-Commandant is responsible for inspecting them and reporting the results of their working to the Commandant. In this respect the duty is largely a matter of co-operation with the Chiefs of the Special Services.

In the absence of the Commandant, either through illness, business requirements, or enemy action, the Vice-Commandant shall be in charge of the Battalion, and his orders shall receive the same obedience as if issued by the Commandant.

TRAINING NOTES—Musketry—As nothing marks out your position to an enemy so

much as movement, nothing should be neglected to overcome this grave error, and as a means to that end firing positions must be practiced.

The standing position, the first and base of all the others is used for firing over walls and from high cover. From the order taking a right incline, carrying the left foot slightly to the left and about ten inches to forward, balance the body equally on both feet, at the same time canting the rifle in the left hand, grasping it at the point of balance (immediately in front of the magazine) but resting on the right hip, muzzle in line with the right shoulder, pointing upwards. This position gives you power to load without removing your eyes off your target—a most essential point. Gripping the knot of the bolt (if bolt action), raise and draw it back to its full extent, placing a clip in the charger guide, press the cartridges into the magazine with the thumb in front of the charger guide and the fingers under the magazine, close the bolt, and button cartridge pouch. Bringing the rifle outwards and upwards, place it firmly in the hollow of the right shoulder, pressing it well in with the left hand. Grasping the small firmly with the thumb and three fingers of the right hand, place the first joint of the forefinger on the lower part of the trigger back sight level, lift elbow well under rifle, right elbow in line with right shoulder, bring cheek on butt and well back; without straining, take aim and press.

The prone position, for use in open country, is the best, and should be thoroughly practiced, presenting the smallest target to the enemy and giving the greatest command over the weapon. Taking a half-right turn, cant the rifle into the left hand, carrying it across and close to the body to prevent it striking the ground; then, going down on the knees, place the right hand on the ground in front of the shoulder, going forward on the chest, and lying obliquely to the line of fire. On the command to fire, the rifle is brought up to the shoulder and pressed firmly in, both elbows resting on the ground the width of the shoulder apart. To load, draw back through the left hand till the right hand reaches the shoulder, then proceed as in the standing position, **NEVER TAKING THE EYES OFF THE TARGET.** This position should be practiced thoroughly on the move, seeing that on the order to halt all men take the correct position, and full advantage of all cover, and avoiding grouping.

Remember, rapid fire does not mean the greater number of bullets in the shortest time, but the greatest **number of hits.** Take deliberate aim, and get your bullet home.

Signalling—Practice on various instruments, Having learned the use of flags in signalling,

we should next turn to the dummy-key. Having obtained a complete mastery in reading and sending on this instrument, we shall find no difficulty in signalling by heliograph, lamp, or telegraph apparatus. When sending on the Morse key, be careful to hold the knob properly, with the thumb and first two fingers, depressing to its full extent for both dots and dashes. Don't take fingers off the knob, just simply relax pressure, when the key will come back to its normal position.

The heliograph, an instrument composed of two mirrors on pivots, both supported on a tripod, is used for reflecting the sun's rays to a distant station, and is worked by means of a key connected with one of the mirrors.

The signalling lamp, for use at night, is just an ordinary lamp with a shutter arrangement, used to expose and cut off the light by means of a key attached. The same method of sending is used as in flag signalling.

Disc signalling, a recent invention, is quite simple, and is worked somewhat on the Venetian blind principle, the pulling of a cord exposing a white surface.

Owing to the limited space at our disposal, we are, at present, unable to give the Morse and semaphore alphabets, special signals, diagrams, particulars of flag drill, etc. We would recommend the text-book on "Signalling," by Capt. E. J. Solano, 1918 edition, to be had at Ponsonby's, Grafton Street, for 1s. 6d. The following pages in this book should receive your careful study: 35 and 36 (Morse alphabet), 43 (flag drill), 72 (special signs), 82 (message forms), 99 (station work).

Demolition of Telegraphs.—The amount of damage that can be done in a short time to a line of telegraph depends chiefly on the number of separate wires running parallel to each other on the same poles in the case of an aerial line, or the number of separate cables contained in the same set of pipes in a subterranean line. These forms are by far the most likely to be encountered on service. The case of a subaqueous line, which may sometimes be met with, will be discussed later.

It is assumed that the line to be destroyed lies in a country occupied by the enemy, to which access has been obtained for a short time by a rail; since if any part of the line lay in a part of a country from which the enemy had been expelled it would be of course easy either to disconnect the wires and appropriate them or leaving the wires intact, to interpose instruments, and thereby read any message sent by the enemy.

The poles can be readily cut or blown down, the easiest and safest poles to attack being those

that have stays.

A rope should first be fixed to the top of the pole or thrown over the wires in order to put on a strain tending to overthrow the pole.

The pole should then be partly cut through at about 4 feet from the ground. All hands should then commence to strain on the rope, except one man, who should cut the stay through with file or pliers. The men on the rope must be sufficiently far from the pole to be well clear of the wires when they fall.

The destructive effect will be increased by previously cutting partly through the adjacent poles on each side, and, if several adjacent poles are also stayed, cutting their stay at same time.

Cast iron poles can easily be broken with sledge. Having brought down as much as possible of the line in this way, the wires should be cut at each end as far as can be reached, and twisted up so as to be rendered useless. The insulators should also be broken. Any damage of this sort, however, can be quickly repaired by the enemy using cable, and even the complete restoration of poles and wires will not take very long to accomplish.

Probably an equal amount of delay could be occasioned with less trouble by skilfully placing what are known as "faults" on the line. Faults consist of "disconnections," "leaks," and "contacts." "Disconnections" are partial or complete breaks in the continuity of the conductor. "Leaks" are partial or complete connections of the conductor to earth. A complete connection is known as "dead earth." "Contacts" are formed by one wire touching another or being put in connection with it by some conductor. They are very troublesome faults, since they affect two lines, and cannot be overcome, as other partial faults can be, by increasing the battery power.

If possession can be obtained of an office, wires can be disconnected. Any papers connected with the working of the line and, if possible, the instruments, should be sent to the officer in charge of the field telegraphs. Records of messages should be sent at once to Headquarters.

A subterranean line is naturally more difficult to discover than an aerial one; for this reason among others, they are now extensively employed in countries liable to invasion. In England they are rarely met with except in large towns, where overhead wires are dangerous. The existence of such a line being known or suspected, marks should be searched for at equal distances apart, indicating the position of test boxes. These marks are usually about 100 yards apart, and generally consist of blocks of wood or stone numbered in succes-

sion. They would very probably, however, have been removed by the enemy.

If not to be found where the line is known to exist, a cross trench should be dug at right angles to the probable direction of the line, about two feet deep, and in this way the pipes may be discovered. These can then be dug up as far as possible, and bent or otherwise destroyed if means are available, the wire being pulled out and cut to pieces. If possible the trench should be carefully filled in and all traces removed.

A submarine line is rarely employed except for crossing seas and big rivers, but in time of war they may be laid along the course of the rivers to connect towns on their banks, as was done at Paris in the Franco-German war.

To destroy such a line it should be grappled for with a grapnel, and when caught, as large a piece as possible cut out of it; the piece should then be cut into smaller pieces and thrown into deep water.

It is quite evident that the English people are in for permanent conscription. The enforced exemption of Ireland remains a thorn in the side of the conscriptionists. The situation in England is full of interesting possibilities.

Released prisoners of war from Germany all agree in attributing the collapse of Germany not to the military situation but to the Revolution. Germany still possesses enormous resources of man-power and could play a formidable part in any future war.

The revolutionary movement which has swept over the two once great Empires of Russia and Germany is bound to have a powerful effect on other European countries. Already its effects have been felt in Holland, Spain and Denmark, and even among the tame and unintelligent British working classes the propaganda of the Bolsheviks has borne some fruit. A situation may arise before long in which the Volunteers can play an important part. The other two great European Empires have ended their career and the collapse of the British Empire may not be far removed.

A useful lesson was taught to the police at Ballincollig, Co. Cork, last month on the occasion of a Volunteer funeral. Shots were fired over the grave of the dead Volunteer, whereupon the policemen present had the audacity to try to seize the weapon. The result was that a policeman "got badly hurt," and was removed to hospital. Firearms are dangerous toys to play with.