

# AN T-OGLÁC

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## ONWARD!

The steady increase in activity and effectiveness of the Irish Republican Army throughout Ireland continues in a manner which even enemy propaganda, lying reports and suppressions cannot conceal from the people of Ireland. Hardly a day passes that does not see some striking military success and further heavy losses inflicted on the enemy, besides a number of minor successful operations; and these operations, large and small, are now being carried out in almost every Brigade Area in Ireland. The Dublin Brigade has followed up the successful destruction of the Custom House by the destruction of the principal enemy motor repair depot in Ireland, known as the "National Shell Factory," an operation involving enormous loss and inconvenience to the enemy. The place was guarded by a large number of armed sentries, but a small and daring squad of Volunteers succeeded in evading their vigilance. To cover up the damage to their prestige the enemy circulated reports suggesting that the fire was accidental. In Youghal, in Mayo and in Tipperary within a few days of one another successful ambushes were brought off involving a loss to the enemy of 18 killed and 30 wounded. These incidents illustrate strikingly the enormous advance in activity and effectiveness of the Army of the Irish Republic and its unbroken spirit and morale in face of all the organisation of enemy military frightfulness, the cowardly enemy war upon the unarmed population and the savage and uncivilised expedients which the enemy is resorting to in his vain efforts to beat the Irish people. The threats of fresh enemy reinforcements of still more drastic enemy action, of operations against us on a still larger scale leave us unmoved. The value of these threats was dealt with in an article in our last issue and it was shown that the enemy was not in a position with such reinforcements as he has at his disposal to do very much more against us than he has already done. We had occasion a little over a year ago to quote from the "Constabulary Gazette" a

number of articles in which the writers lamented the failure of the enemy Government to realise that "there was a war on" and employ all the resources of military ingenuity, against "an armed and daring enemy." Since then the enemy has realised that there is a war on and has employed every device of perverted ingenuity, every instrument of savage terrorism to cow the Irish people and to defeat the Irish Republican Army; and the result of all his efforts is that the national spirit of the Irish people was never higher, and the Army of the Irish Republic is immensely stronger, more active and more effective than ever before. The state of affairs bewailed by the "Constabulary Gazette" was a heaven for the R.I.C. compared with what they are up against to-day. All that the Army of the Irish Republic had done up to that time would compare unfavourably with what has been done by our Army in any single week in the past month. And it is not a little satisfaction to us to reflect that the enemy in trying to "do his damndest" against us has contributed in no small measure to that great advance on which we have to congratulate ourselves. He has concentrated the thoughts and desires of all the people of Ireland upon the one topic—to be rid of the enemy murderers and robbers who are devastating our country and slaying our kindred. He has concentrated the thoughts and energies of the young manhood of Ireland on the one sacred task—to strike the hardest blows in their power, for God's sake and Ireland's sake against his ruffianly hirelings. A campaign of frightfulness and terrorism if it is to succeed at all must succeed at once. Against a brave and hardy race like the Irish, trained in endurance and in combat against odds, it cannot succeed. The consciousness of having endured so much so bravely and risen so finely to the occasion has had a strengthening and elevating effect upon the national morale; so that the enemy's futile ferocity has recoiled on himself. The people of Ireland to-day are prepared to endure anything in un molested possession of our country by the O'Connell

which has let its hired murderers and robbers loose in the land. Never while life lasts us shall we tolerate the pollution of their presence in our country without waging war against them to the utmost of our ability.

It is because the national will is so hardened, so concentrated on the effort of this sacred war, that every day sees us increasing in effectiveness. The forces of the enemy have no incentives beyond their hire, the chance of loot, the opportunities of lawless outrage and the lust of blood—and in some cases the incentive of racial hatred. The enemy for all his gold cannot purchase such service as the free young citizens of the Irish Republic freely give to the service of their Motherland, with no hope of reward save the proud consciousness of doing their duty by their country. Like the men of Sparta who died at Thermopylae against hopeless odds, the Volunteers who have perished in the field or in the prison for Ireland send the message to their fellow-countrymen:—"We have obeyed the decree of our country." Each of our dead heroes is in himself a sublime and concentrated expression of the unbroken national will. The humblest private soldier of them fully typified the nation's heroic resistance as the most intellectual leader. Terence Mac Swiney and Thomas Traynor speak the same message to their comrades of the Irish Republican Army. Not one jot of the sacrifice is wasted; there is not one drop of blood shed by a young man for Ireland but helps the fight for freedom. Those who were faithful to death have shown us how to be faithful to victory.

## GENERAL NOTES

The Diary of the Dublin Brigade for May shows that during that month 97 distinct operations were carried out including the destruction by fire of the enemy Custom House. There were 27 armed attacks on enemy forces in lorries and 7 armed conflicts with enemy forces. There were 23 captures of enemy military stores and other enemy goods, bicycles, telegraphic and telephone apparatus etc. by means of raids and holds up. In addition to this a quantity of enemy goods were captured and destroyed including a number of motor tyres and tubes valued at £40,000, an aeroplane valued at £3,000, a wagon laden with military goods valued at £350, a motor engine and 5 lorries. As the destruction of the Custom House is included in this month's list, it is quite impossible to give an estimate of the monetary value of the losses inflicted on the enemy but it must run into millions. There were 12 attacks on enemy barracks and fortified forts; enemy mails were captured 6 times.

Excluding the Custom House operation our casualties for the month in Dublin were one seriously wounded and two slightly wounded. Enemy casualties as far as can be ascertained were 25 killed and 58 wounded, though they have officially admitted only 12 killed and 18 wounded. The two outstanding events of the month were the capture and destruction of the Custom House and the daring capture of an enemy armoured car at the Dublin abattoir and the subsequent attempt to rescue a Republican Prisoner from Mountjoy Prison, in which 7 Volunteers had to fight their way out against heavy odds and got away safely with the car.

In the ambush of a troop train at Killurin North Wexford on the 11th. ult., the enemy had three soldiers wounded, one seriously. This attack was carried out to draw the military from Gorey where they were concentrated in large numbers and thereby relieve the pressure on the Flying Column. In this it was completely successful. The night before, Enniscorthy R.I.C Barracks was sniped with the result that the police and military were afraid to stir out.

A report from the Mid Limerick Brigade states that on May 1st. 17 men were whipped up at a moment's notice to attack an enemy cycling patrol who were in the vicinity. "Headed by Brigade Adjutant we were brought at the double, about a mile and a half across country. Having got on to the road near Sraherlo Chapel, we were surprised by 5 lorries (65 or 70 enemy soldiers) who opened fire on us at a range of 600 yards. We rushed into position and returned the fire. At this stage in the fight I believed that there were only two lorries of military to be dealt with. Because of a turn in the road only two were visible. The fight dragged on for about a half an hour until our position became untenable. We retreated in absolute order, during which two of our men who left the main body were respectively one wounded and captured, the other killed and the body taken by the enemy. The man who was captured was shot the following day."

The report of the Offaly No. 2 Brigade for April shows that the blockading and trenching of roads was vigorously carried out in most of the Company Areas, The wires were cut in many places. The report states that broken glass and tacks were strewn on all roads leading from the enemy Camp Hunston, with the object of counteracting great enemy Cyclist patrol activity, and that the results were satisfactory. As the result of heavy and continuous road blockading and trenching in the Ferbane Area all supplies from Athlone military H.Q. to Hunston Camp by this route were completely cut off. The goods train from Clara to Athlone was held up twice and enemy stores seized and destroyed. A strong railway bridge on the main road from Hunston to Athlone was destroyed by explosives.

Twenty-five murders committed by the British forces in Ireland were reported in the period of May 15th to May 31st. This includes 18 assassinations (one of a priest, the Rev James O'Callaghan of Cork) and the murder of a prisoner of war. In several cases Dublin Castle issued official reports suggesting that the victims were "executed by the I.R.A." and in some instances the murderers attached labels to this effect to the corpses of their victims. Instances of one or both of these were the assassinations of Thomas Mac Ever at Dunmore, Co. Galway on May 20th; of John Murphy B.A., at Ballinalee, Co. Longford on May 26th; and of Thomas Murphy I.R.A. at Foxrock Co. Dublin on May 30th.

## AN UNPARDONABLE FAILURE

The reverse sustained by a Column of our troops at — on May 8th will serve as a useful warning for the prevention of similar surprises in the future. Many mistakes were made, and we shall take these one at a time and see how they could have been avoided.

1. "Base was not prepared for our reception . . . As there was much work to be done in connection with house and supplies no parades were held." This was all very slovenly and unsoldierly. Before an A.S.U. is established anywhere the first essential is for the local Quartermaster to have arrangements made for billeting or camping them and feeding them. If the area is not sufficiently organised for this, then it is not an area in which any serious military results can be expected from a Flying Column.

2. "Expected six local men to arrive with some equipment for us; they did not arrive." More bad organisation, leading to lack of co-operation with local units and hence to inadequate numerical strength. Also the column was left without local scouts who would have intimate knowledge of the country.

3. "I had all the roads leading to base cut so as to guard against surprise from lorries. These were, however, refilled by the enemy." Apparently there was no systematic road-cutting; no observation of trenches to know in time of their being re-filled. In fact no intelligent co-operation from local units or from inhabitants if friendly.

4. "Under cover of darkness the enemy poured troops into the area." This was only what might have been expected. The Column apparently was too tired, too weak, and too much out of touch with locality to provide properly for its own security.

5. "From the start no discipline was maintained." This was in the actual combat. The men fought without unified control—with a bright morning sun in their faces to make matters worse. Moral—in early morning fighting see that you leave the enemy with his back to the sun if you can.

In short in this fight and its previous movements nothing was done right that could have been done wrong. There was one redeeming feature—the stubborn fighting of the little force against hugely superior numbers until actually surrounded. Even this surrounding could have been avoided if our force had deployed on a suitable wide front: they might have retreated as a long thin skirmish line without very serious mishap.

The fact is that an area must grow up to—as well as down from—an A.S.U.

## "MENTIONED IN DESPACHES"

A letter received by the Commandant of the Third Battalion Dublin Brigade from their company officer bears striking tribute to the courage and devotion of Volunteers Terance McGlinn and Dan Carew who were killed in action in Dublin in April. He says "Dan Carew, before his transfer to our Company had a very good record, having taking part in a few affairs in Mid-Tipperary. I cannot speak too highly of both of them. Good men, who died fighting a brave fight. The families of both had a fine record—both had two brothers also active and efficient Volunteers. If their comrades of the company follow their example and emulate their deeds, the company will have reason to be proud."

## INFORMATION TO THE ENEMY

The enemy exercises a rigid censorship over the correspondence of Irish troops who are taken prisoners. Casual conversations also receive attention. Officers and men of our army should note this, and take the necessary precautions.

## NOTES FROM REPORTS

It was reported that a touring car with four passengers had come to the top of the hill and examined the trenches that had been cut in the road already. On receipt of this report the O.C.—Battalion gave orders to O.C.—Company to cut a trench 18 feet wide.

The scouts immediately got out all "wanted" men. All wanted men and men likely to be arrested were warned to be on the alert during the night.

Some of the roads in F. Company area were further obstructed and special scouts placed on them as it was thought that in a round-up of the district the enemy would try to enter the Battalion at this point.

The party occupying the house where they were first noticed was only a decoy party to draw fire while others moved up the mountain from different

When the enemy does get through, after a certain amount of trouble, he is prevented from getting back to his base by felled trees and temporary barricades etc.

## CUTTING OFF STRAGGLERS

The Enemy Propaganda seeks to stigmatise as murders the intensified policy of cutting off his stragglers in different parts of the country which is being carried out by our troops. Driven into his strong centres, and unwilling to send out small detachments, he hopes to obtain useful results by means of isolated officers, police and soldiers. If these are permitted to move freely about the country they constitute an invaluable Information Service. In this way the enemy hopes to recover the advantages he has been forced to relinquish. In short, he hopes to undermine our armed strength while remaining himself as safe from attack as if he were at peace. The English alone are capable of such colossal insolence as this.

There have been instances of enemy soldiers pretending to desert in order to secure knowledge about our forces, but now we have learned to distinguish between these spies and men in the enemy service who really wish to leave it. Again, all the enemy officers have instructions to act as Intelligence Officers, wearing civilian dress where that is advisable for the purpose. Latterly they have even been base enough to bring ladies on their reconnoitring expeditions in hopes of escaping the recognised penalties of espionage.

We do not intend to allow ourselves to be put about by these enemy methods and outeries. It is absolutely sound military policy for us to cut off the English stragglers and we intend to do so whenever a possible opportunity arises. This form of warfare has always been recognised—the most noteworthy example of its systematic application was throughout the Spanish War of Independence against Napoleon in 1808-14. So great was the strain imposed by this in Spain that each French Officer carrying a despatch had to have the best part of a cavalry regiment for an escort.

This cutting off of stragglers is always easy; there is no area where opportunities for it do not present themselves in abundance. The aim in war is to destroy the enemy as an effective military force; this is quite as well achieved by numerous small losses inflicted on him as by a smaller number of larger losses. Take for example the week-end of May 14th-16th: in the aggregate cutting-off of those days the enemy lost more than in any ambush up to date. And more, he was hit at everywhere and not merely in one place.

In cutting off stragglers the aim should be to deprive the enemy of valuable members of his forces: Officers

and N.C.O.'s. of both police and soldiers are the most suitable. They are his skilled men, they are hardest to replace, and they—especially officers—make the English Government face realities. Skilled troops such as motor drivers, signallers, despatch riders, clerks etc. are also more suitable objects of attack than unskilled troops.

Too much stress cannot be laid on the effect of this cutting-off action on the morale of the enemy. Never to move out of barracks without prospect of attack—that is the standard we should seek to arrive at. Utter demoralisation of the enemy will be the result.

## ENEMY TRAPS

A reference has already been made in these columns to a new device of the enemy in connection with the trenching of roads—when filling in the trenches to leave grenades arranged in such a way as to explode when the trench is opened again. In at least one case some civilians who were assisting Volunteers at the work of re-trenching were injured, by a bomb explosion. The following extract from a report from the Cork No 3 Brigade with regard to the re-opening of a bridge on the Skibbereen—Ballydehob Road will provide useful hints to Volunteers in dealing with this danger:—

“Twelve men proceeded to open the bridge. After getting off some 2 feet of surface they came on a large flag stone about 2'6" by 1'6". They left this undisturbed and excavated the materials at the sides of the flag.

“Immediately under the flag was a square pit built around with dry masonry and on removing one side of this masonry they found a wooden box packed tightly and with the top close up against the covering flag. The packing was then removed from the sides and from underneath the box, care being taken that the top of the box retained contact with the covering flag, this done, the box was removed by sliding along the bottom of flag until about two inches of the box was clear of the flag. Then it was seen that the lid was laid loosely on the box, and kept in position by the weight of the flag stone.

“The box was found to measure about 6' square by 3½" high (outside measurements). On examination were found a hole about 1½" in diameter bored through each end. On looking through these holes the box was seen to contain two bombs with pins withdrawn, levers facing upwards in a position to fly on removal of loose lid.

“The improvised pins were inserted through the holes and sides. The lid was then removed and the bombs were seen to be two ordinary Mills grenades.”

This action shows great intelligence and skill. We understand a letter was despatched to the enemy O.C. thanking him for the present of the