

GRAPHIC STORY OF CLIFDEN FIGHT

TABLES TURNED ON ATTACKERS

TROOPS' CAPTURES

DEFIANT REPLY TO SURRENDER CALL

'COME OUT IN THE OPEN'

A graphic narrative of the fight at Kilmonganbridge, on the railway line 2 miles from Clifden, has reached Galway.

Twenty National soldiers were ambushed by a body of 50 to 70 irregulars, who were in positions completely dominating the road, and kept up heavy fire from a Thompson machine-gun and rifles.

Irregulars' Retreat.

Fighting with all the odds against them, the troops defiantly refused to surrender, and invited the attackers into the open.

Ultimately the ambushers retreated, and in a charge over the positions which they had evacuated the National forces took two prisoners and captured bombs and ammunition.

Several of the men, however, were wounded. The only one wounded was Pte. Gorham, of the Medical Corps.

EXCITED AMBUSHERS

FORGET THE BOMB PINS

The National patrol of 20 men, under Capt. Fallon, had numerous escapes, being pinned to the road for half-an-hour and subjected to the continuous fire of a Thompson machine-gun mounted on a hill commanding the road, whilst musketry fire was also directed upon them, and bombs were thrown from overhanging hills.

One soldier had the heel of his foot ripped off with a bullet; another had his cap riddled; and a third had his uniform torn from his back with bomb splinters.

TO DISCONNECT MINE.

The patrol had gone out from Clifden at 8 p.m. to disconnect a dangerous mine near the bridge a mile further on. They engaged amongst them some of the oldest and most experienced fighters in the 1st

Western Div. As they left it was noticed that a man supposed to be an irregular had preceded the party. Later he was captured when the troops rushed the hill from which they were attacked.

Having disconnected the mine and searched the neighbourhood the patrol were returning to the base marching in extended formation. At a point the road runs to the left of the railway, then there is a sharp turn to the right, a short bridge flanked by rubble walls, and the highway continues to the right of the line, being

dominated by a sheer mass of rock and hill. The place is a regular death-trap. Only the cover of the 4ft. rubble walls was there for the men below. As the advance party of troops swung round the corner a deadly fire rang out from the Thompson gun and from riflemen on the hills. To the din was added the explosions of bombs, but

so excited were the attackers, who are said to have numbered between 50 and 70, that they threw several bombs without removing the pins and the missiles fell harmlessly on the road.

'WILL NOT SURRENDER'

What followed revealed the magnificent spirit of the men of the 1st Western Div. Directed by Capt. Fallon and Sergt. Hodlivan, an old I.R.A. man from Tulla, they sought cover of the walls until the fury of the first onslaught had passed. It was then found that Pte. Gorham, Medical Corps, had been wounded in two places on the right leg.

The little party soon got their rifles trained on the hills, and the peaceful countryside was ablaze with shooting.

The echoes along the valley told a National outpost near Clifden that something was afoot. Presently there came a temporary lull, and a voice overheard called out to the little party to surrender.

'IS THAT YOU?'

"Is that you, —, with the Thompson gun?" called out Capt. Fallon, in reply, referring to the irregular leader. "It is," was the response from the hill.

"This is Fallon," came a shout from the wall. "Come out in the open and fight; we are National forces, and will not surrender till the last man is killed."

After this defiance the fight was resumed with great intensity. In a half-hour a whistle sounded. This was regarded as the signal for the retreat of the irregulars. With a wild shout the section of the National troops rushed the hill, and captured those two prisoners with arms.

The main body of the attackers had vanished into the maze of cover to the east. Const. O'Malley, notified by his outposts, had rushed to the rescue with reinforcements, only to find the fight ended.

Nightfall presented a full search of the surrounding hills, but in the irregulars' vacant positions were found abandoned bombs and ammunition. All the National troops returned to Clifden safely, taking with them their only casualty, the wounded private of the Red Cross Corps.