

IRISH ARMY MANOEUVRES.

705 D

As part of their training, the Corps of Engineers of the Irish Army shows how a bridge may be mined and effectively demolished in the face of advancing enemy columns.

Suddenly out of the shaded roadway above the Blessington Valley, lorry-loads of sappers appear, thundering towards the Bridge which is the object of the operation.

Without a hitch the men quickly dismount, unload the lorries and rush their gear towards the scene of this practical demonstration.

In a position that commands the approach from the other side of the bridge a light automatic gun is quickly placed in position. Down below, the men, well trained, each assigned to his particular task, go to work on the buttresses of the bridge.

It would be no joke to come under the sledge hammer of this husky fellow.

Here's a man that reckoned without the water that separated him from the ~~buttrax~~ buttress assigned him. But no matter; There's always a friend to give him a helping hand.

And now as the approaching enemy is only an imaginary one, we can have a break for a meal-- and judging by the attitudes of these brawny customers, bridge demolition is hungry work. Back at the bridge again, the men complete the work of the sledge hammers and jumpers with the aid of pneumatic tools. ~~These~~ ^{These} hungry tools, as they bite into the buttresses, are operated from the throbbing compressor on the
 205 above.

705 D

The holes have all been bored and it now remains for them to be loaded with gelignite that will blow these supports to fragments. ~~the~~ The preliminaries are now completed and all that remains is the priming of the detonators which are now inserted in sticks of gelignite and maintained in position in the bore-holes by means of lumps of clay. The ~~bridge~~ bridge is now effectively mined and ready for the final inspection.

After their hard work under adverse conditions, the sappers fall-in in orderly fashion and retreat from the scene of their operations. The rearguard commander receives a last-minute message from a despatch rider; it is now decided that the bridge is to be demolished immediately.

The Commanding Officer satisfies himself that his men are at a safe distance from the mined bridge. There is a pause and his hand drops: ~~it is the signal for the firing of the bridge.~~ The plunger is depressed. ~~A terrific explosion echoes across the valley.~~ Blessington Bridge is demolished amid a shower of stones and a cloud of dark smoke shooting a hundred feet into the sky.

The near side of the bridge has yet to be destroyed and now it is utilised as a lesson in the ~~preparation~~ preparation of a chambered bridge. Sacks of gelignite are slipped down the prepared pipes and connected to detonators. By this method demolition can be readily effected.

~~again the plunger is depressed, and is answered by a cloud of smoke and bursting rocks as~~

705



IRISH ARMY MANG^uYRES. --3--

Again the plunger is depressed, and is answered by a cloud of smoke and bursting rocks as the abutment of the bridge is completely blown up.

Heaps of scattered masonry-- all that the Corps of Engineers left of Blessington Bridge.

→ Same level as river which is under-voiced.