



SUPPLEMENT

TO

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TUESDAY, 23 JANUARY, 1917.

War Office,
23rd January, 1917.

The Secretary of State for War has received the following Despatch from Field-Marshal Viscount French, G.C.B., Commanding-in-Chief, Home Forces:—

General Headquarters,
Home Forces,
Horse Guards, London, S.W.,
31st December, 1916.

MY LORD,—I have the honour to submit the following report:—

1. When I assumed command of the Forces in the United Kingdom, I was directed to review the situation as it affected Home Defence with a view to deciding whether defensive requirements were met by the system then in force.

According to these instructions I made an exhaustive study of the situation, and came to the conclusion that modification was necessary, in view of the most recent experiences we have gained in the conduct of War under existing conditions.

The Army Council agreed generally to the proposals submitted, and a reorganisation on the new lines has since then been carried into effect.

2. On the 24th April the rebellion broke out in Dublin. I have already referred to this in my despatch of the 29th May, covering a report from the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief in Ireland, which dealt fully with the occurrence. I will only add that both in England and in Ireland the military arrangements for its suppression proved everywhere adequate, and reflect great credit on all concerned.

3. On April 25th, the morning after the outbreak in Dublin, a hostile squadron accompanied by submarines appeared off Lowestoft. No doubt the object of this demonstration was to assist the Irish Rebellion and to distract attention from Ireland. It failed entirely to accomplish its object.

The enemy opened fire at long range on the towns of Yarmouth and Lowestoft, and continued the bombardment for about twenty minutes, after which they were engaged by our Cruisers and Torpedo Boat Destroyers, and they steamed away to the north-east.

In addition to the heavier ships and submarines the squadron was accompanied by a number of Destroyers, but the results of the bombardment were comparatively small, and no damage whatever of military importance was done.

4. At the time of my assumption of command the question of the Anti-Aircraft Defences of the country was under consideration.