

**GUN RUNNING FOR
CASEMENT IN THE
EASTER REBELLION, 1916**

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Gun running for Casement in the Easter rebellion, 1916 by Karl Spindler & W. Montgomery & E. H. McGrath

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KARL SPINDLER & W. MONTGOMERY & E. H. MCGRATH

GUN RUNNING FOR CASEMENT IN THE EASTER REBELLION, 1916

GUN RUNNING FOR CASEMENT

IN THE EASTER REBELLION, 1916

by

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TO JIMM
ABINGDON

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CHAPTER I

A CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

THE date was the 21st of March, 1916.

It was the usual Wilhelmshaven prize weather, blowing great guns, squalls chasing one another across the sea, grim, blue-gray clouds scudding unceasingly across the sky, while the rain battered on the window-panes and threatened at every fiercer gust to burst them in.

I was just in from a spell of outpost duty, and was looking forward to a very comfortable day indoors, when some one hammered at the knockers.

It was an orderly, bringing an urgent message from my chief. I looked a second time at the address; but there was no mistake about it. My chief wished to see me at 5 p.m. As a rule, these formal invitations from the great boded no good to the recipient. 'All the officers have had them, sir,' said the orderly, who perhaps guessed my thoughts. Thank Heaven, then, there was, at any rate, no need to worry as to what crime I had committed. But I could not help wondering what was in the wind. . . .

The long tramp in the streaming rain was well repaid.

Our flotilla had had orders to supply a volunteer

crew—one officer, five warrant and petty officers, and sixteen men—for special service, an expedition about the goal and purpose of which nothing could for the present, for military reasons, be allowed to become known. The utmost despatch had been enjoined.

Every one of the officers, of course, was eager to go. At the end of the interview my chief gave me a searching glance, and said, 'I have proposed you for the command of this expedition. What have you to say to that?' It need hardly be mentioned that I did not say No! It had long been my keenest wish to see some service a little out of the ordinary, and now my chance had come. I thought myself at that moment the luckiest man on earth.

Even yet, however, I could not be told any particulars. But the facts that the expedition was absolutely secret, that all the crew were to be unmarried men, below a certain age, and that those without dependents were to have the preference—all this pointed to an undertaking of a very special nature indeed.

At five o'clock next morning, before taking out my half-flotilla on patrol for the last time, I assembled the men and talked to them. Purposely, though I myself as yet knew nothing definite, I laid the utmost stress upon the dangers of the expedition, that they might not make up their minds too hastily.

Not until I thought they had some idea of what they were in for, did I give the order: 'Volunteers, three paces forward—march!'

It was a pleasure to see with what alacrity the men

stepped forward, to mark how the eager wish to take part in something big was to be read in every eye. Those who held back were all married men, and even among them there were some who took it hard to have to stay behind.

Even so, the choice was difficult enough. Each group of six boats was to furnish so many men; and the whole crew of the 'mystery ship' was not, for certain reasons, to exceed twenty-two.

After much sifting, the choice was at length made. Those chosen were brave, trustworthy, and—a not unimportant point—powerfully built; each one of them a match for two ordinary men.

After four days of uneventful outpost duty, we were back once more. Even before returning I had received by signal the joyful news that my appointment to the command of the *Libau*—that was to be the name of the mystery ship—had been confirmed.

I lost no time, you may be sure, about proceeding in, locking through, making fast in the inner harbour, and reporting on board the leading-ship of the flotilla. The best of the volunteers from the other sections were chosen, and the ship's company finally made up. The C.O. of the flotilla, Commander Forstmann, bade us farewell in a short and pithy speech; and then we set to at our packing, for by midday the next day we were to be in the traif, bound for a destination as yet unknown. That was the sum of our knowledge, for everything was, so far, in Navy phrase, 'extremely hush.' Neither our friends nor our comrades were to know anything of what we had