

# The Irish Times

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## Minister sees the Army's new flame throwers.

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The Army's newest weapon, the carrier-mounted flame throwers were demonstrated for the first time yesterday during an official visit by Mr. Liam Cosgrave, Minister for External Affairs and acting Minister for Defence, to the Curragh Training Camp. Mr. Cosgrave also watched a demonstration of high explosive anti-tank "Energa" grenades and in the afternoon motored to the Glen of Imaal, Co. Wicklow, with military officers, to see units of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Curragh Battalion at battle practice, a term used to denote exercises in weapon firing under realistic battle conditions and using live ammunition.

In the morning, on arrival at Ceannt Barracks in the Curragh, Mr. Cosgrave was greeted by the Chief of Staff, Major General P. A. Mulcahy, and the O/C. Curragh Training Camp, Colonel A. T. Lawlor, and inspected a guard of honour from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Curragh Battalion.

The flame throwers which were demonstrated were mounted in two tracked vehicles of the Bren gun carrier type. The charge used was high octane petrol, carried in an 80-gallon tank mounted towards the rear of each carrier. The muzzle or nozzle of the flame thrower poked like an old-fashioned machine gun from the armour shielding at the front of the carrier and could be traversed like a light machine gun. For the purpose of the demonstration, the two carriers "attacked" a fortified bunker embedded in the crest of a hill and from some distance away "wiped out" the bunker in a few seconds.

### **SCORCHED EARTH**

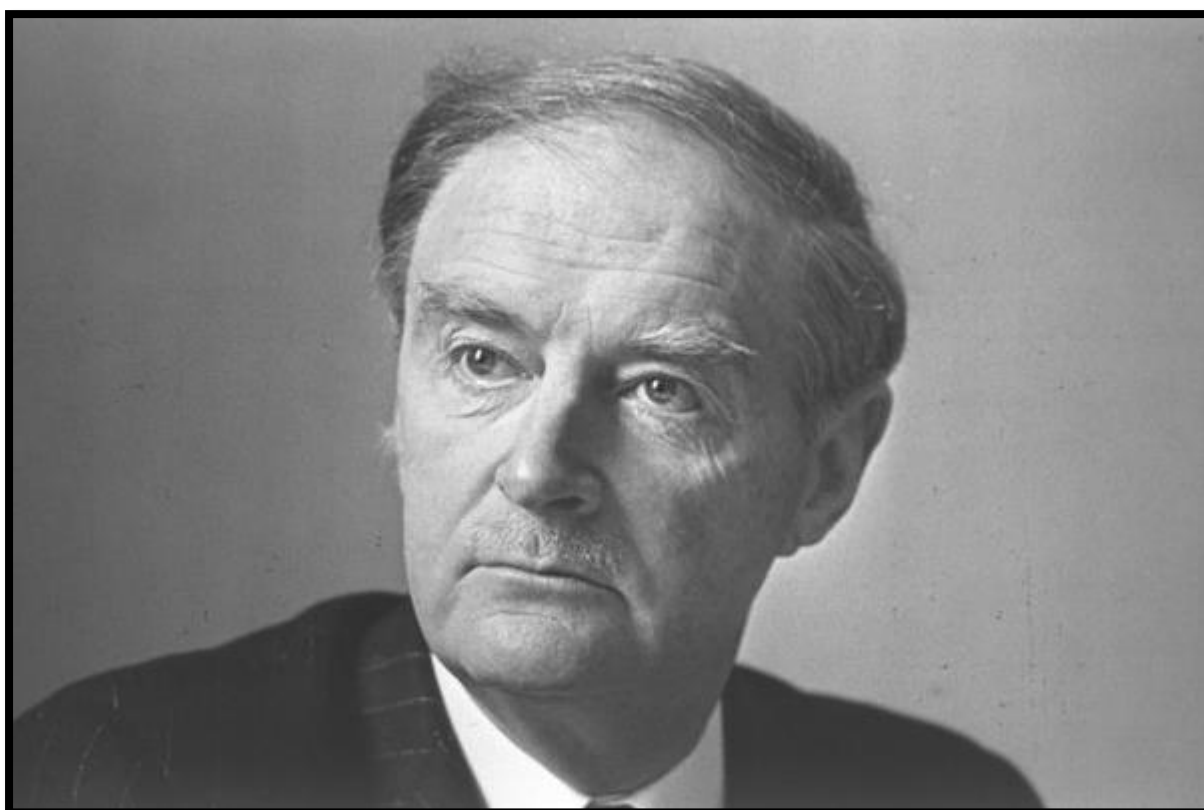
The petrol, which was squirted under very high pressure, seemed to ignite half-way towards the target, where it consumed everything it touched in searing, choking heat. The 80-gallon tanks allow 40 bursts of one second duration each.

After the slightly terrifying demonstration of the flame throwers in action, the minister walked across the charred heath with some officers to inspect the bunker, which was still blazing away inside, conclusive proof of the effectiveness of the weapon.

On the grenade range nearby, the Minister saw the tremendous penetration power of the new “Energia” grenades, which are clipped on to and fired from an ordinary rifle, but which have the knocking-out power of an anti-tank gun. The grenades were fired at dummy tanks and an 18-inch thick concrete wall, inspection of which afterwards showed that the charge had pierced it as it had been cheese.

The outstanding feature of the battle practice in the Glen of Imaal was the marksmanship of the machine-gun and mortar sections, who fired across the valley at dummy targets on the hillside, while infantry, using rifles and automatic weapons, advanced on the target under the barrage. For 20 minutes the valley reverberated to the metallic clacking of the machine-guns and the sharp crackling of the light automatics and rifles against the duller background of the mortar shells exploding on the hillside.

**Irish Times Friday, September 23rd, 1955**  
**Transcribed by Matt McNamara – May 2018**



Mr. Liam Cosgrave (**William Michael Cosgrave**) (13 April 1920 – 4 October 2017) was an Irish Fine Gael politician who served as Taoiseach from 1973 to 1977, Leader of Fine Gael from 1965 to 1977, Leader of the Opposition from 1965 to 1973, Minister for External Affairs from 1954 to 1957, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Industry and Commerce and Government Chief Whip from 1948 to 1951. He served as a Teachta Dála (TD) from 1943 to 1981.



**Universal Carrier or Bren Gun Carrier of the Irish Army at the Curragh Camp. A total of 226 carriers seen service in the Irish Army between 1940 to 1965.**



**Bren Gun Carrier on O'Connell Street, Dublin**

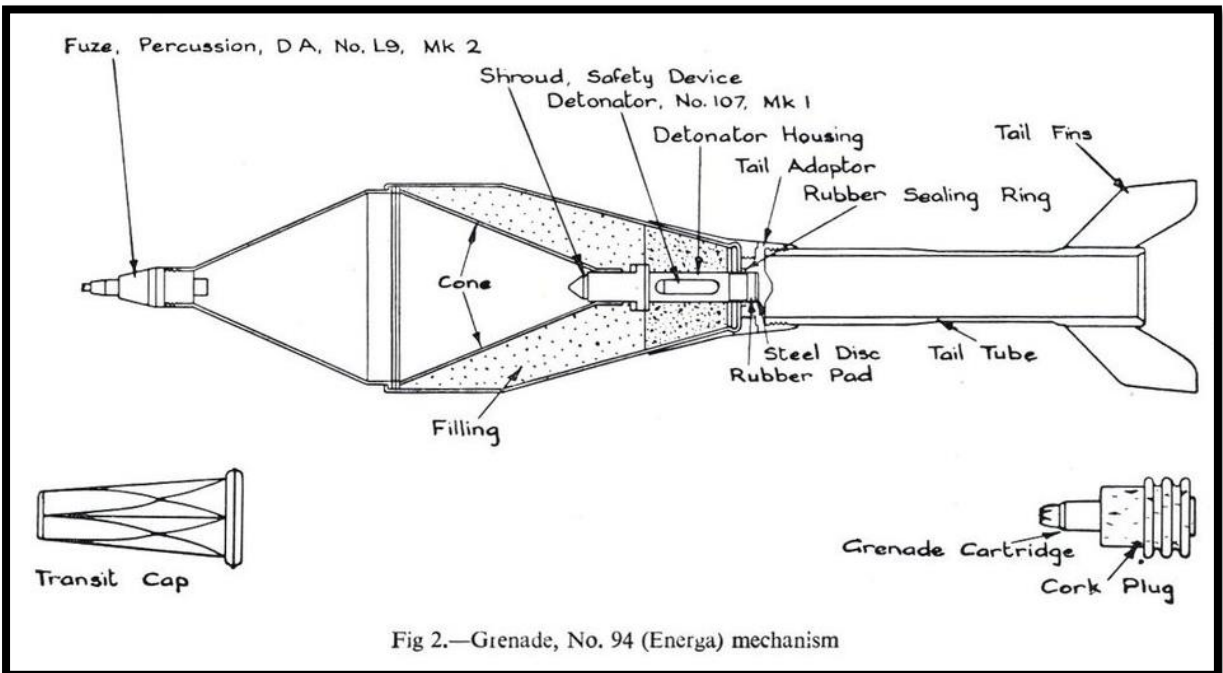




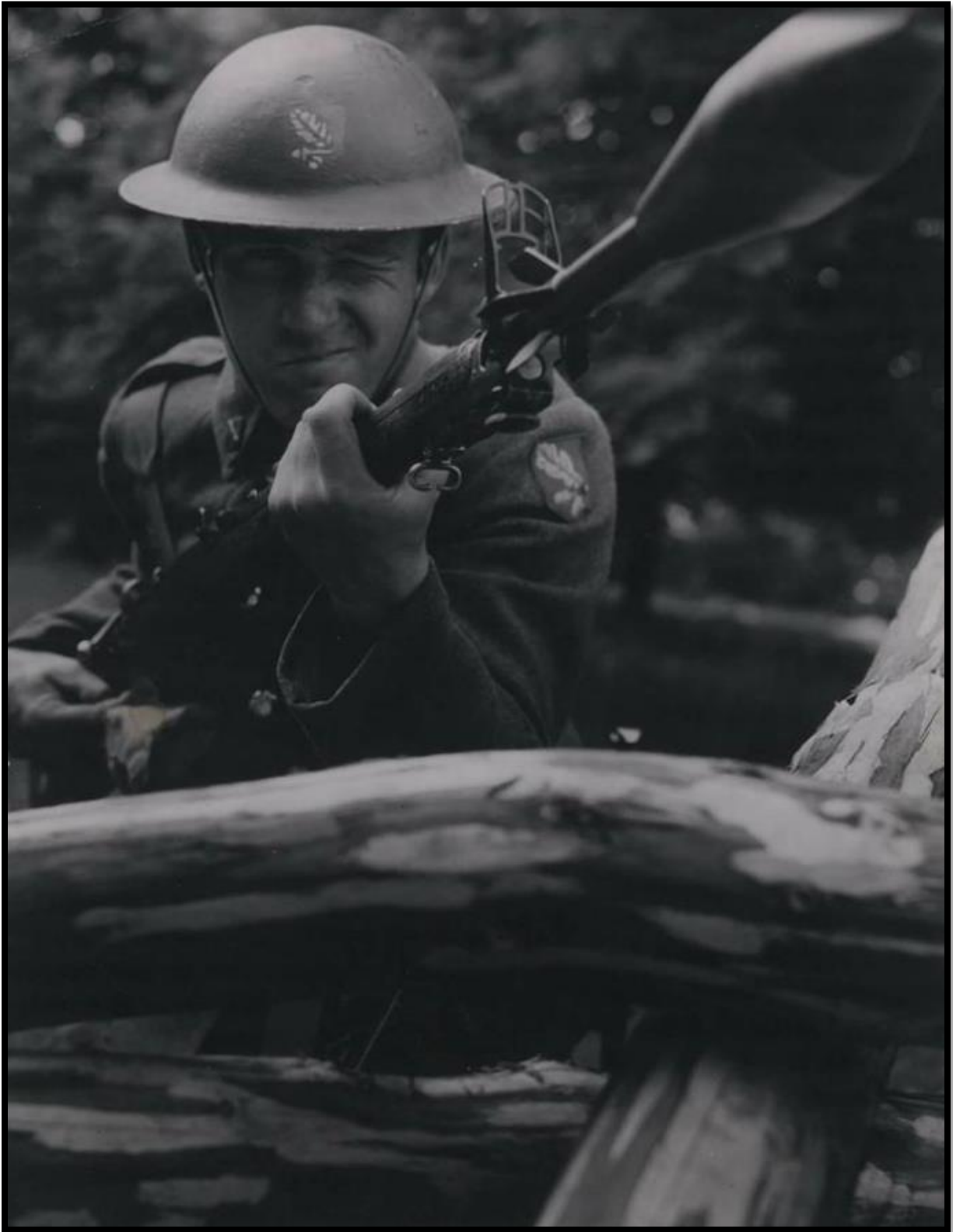
**Soldiers receive training on the Energia Anti-Tank Grenade.**



**A member of the FCA demonstrates the Energa grenade, 1960's**



**The rifle grenade remained in use after the No4 rifle was replaced by the FN and was finally superseded by the Carl Gustav 84mm recoilless rifle in the 1960s.**



**A soldier from the Curragh Command prepares to fire the Energa Anti-Tank Grenade.**



**A Soldier demonstrates a Lee Enfield Rifle with Grenade Cup fitted.**