

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

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No. W.S. 380

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

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Witness

Identity

Mr. David Neligan,
15 St. Helen's Road,
Boosterstown,
Dublin.

Subject

- (a) Intelligence Branch I.R.A. 1920;
- (b) Detective Branch D.M.P. 1920;
- (c) Secret Service Branch - British Gov't.

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Nil

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Statement by Mr. David Neligan,

15, St. Helen's Road, Booterstown, Dublin.

I joined the D.M.P. in April 1918. I was then 18½ years of age. After the period of training in Kevin Street, which was prolonged owing to the terrible flu epidemic, I was transferred to College Street Station. This was in 1919. I was in the uniformed police for about six months and then I applied to get into the 'G' Division just to get a 'soft' job. I had no interest in politics, nor was I interested in prolonging Dublin Castle rule. I was transferred to the 'G' Division some time in that year. Things were fairly hot and revolutionary at the time. Marked members of the police were getting shot. The Superintendent was a man named Brien and the Chief Inspector was a man named Johnnie Bruton. I was engaged escorting 'G' men who were in danger of being shot by the 'Sinn Feiners', as they were called in the Castle. When I got a close view of the 'G' men and what they were doing my eyes were opened. I made up my mind to clear out and was urged to do so by my brothers.

In March 1920, I resigned from the 'G' Division and went home to the country. I had offered my services to Sinn Fein through a friend but he took it on himself to tell me to resign instead. I spent some time in Tralee with my brother where I became acquainted with Tim Kennedy, the Accountant of the Kerry County Council. He was an Intelligence Officer attached to the Volunteers, being I.O., Kerry No. 1, Brigade. In June 1920 he sent word to me that he had just heard from Austin Stack that Collins wanted to see me. I was to go to Dublin immediately. Collins wanted me to go back to the police. Kennedy and myself arranged that some threatening letters would be sent to me telling me to clear out of the country. Broy, McNamara and Kavanagh, who were 'G' men, were

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working for Michael Collins. Inspector Bruton had taken over a special wing of the 'G' Division which was engaged in warring against Volunteer activities. As Broy and Kavanagh were attached to what was then known as Brunswick Street Detective Office and McNamara to the Assistant Commissioner's Office, this left the Castle Squad without any agent working for Collins. This was the vacancy I was intended to fill. I came to Dublin where I met Austin Stack at the Clarence Hotel. He reported to Collins who sent Joe Reilly to meet me next day. Liam Tobin came along also to have a chat. The object of this was perhaps to see if I were a genuine helper as some false friends had appeared. By adroit questioning Tobin endeavoured to find out what was at the back of my mind and what were my views on the struggle. His report must have been favourable because I was brought by Joe Reilly next day to see Michael Collins upstairs in Bannon's public-house, Middle Abbey Street. This was some time in July 1920 as far as I can make out. Collins asked me to go back to the Castle. He was dressed in an old tweed suit. An ancient dust-coat was slung on an adjoining chair. He said he heard my brother and I were friendly and that my earlier offer to help had not been conveyed to him; that it was a mistake to let me resign. I had, in fact, made an offer to P. Sheehan before I resigned to help the Volunteers and he said he thought it better for me to go home. Collins said to me: "We need you at the Castle. You will have to go back. You are a man they trust. We also trust you". He persuaded me to try and rejoin. I consented to do so. When I went back to my hotel I applied to the Commissioner of the D.M.P., Colonel Johnstone (who was a good type of man though hostile to Sinn Fein) for permission to rejoin the police. Next day he sent a letter to me by a 'G' man named Lynch, making an

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appointment in the Castle. He wanted me to come back because of the fact that police had resigned wholesale and maybe I was a straw that showed how the wind blew. I went to see him in the Castle. Johnstone's face was troubled. He questioned me about conditions in the South. I exhibited the threatening letters. I told him the truth: that the Castle no longer governed. I was sworn in as a member of the D.M.P. He kindly said I could have a transfer to any station I desired. I asked to be sent back to my old job, that is the 'G' Division. I reported to Bruton who said, with a quizzical glance: "So you came back to us. You will want to lie low for a while". Later I saw Collins in Bannon's public-house. We used to meet there regularly until the landlord grew nervous for his own safety. The foreman also got frightened and hinted we should transfer our custom elsewhere, which we did. I met Broy, MacNamara and Kavanagh, fellow 'G' men, on a new footing because they were working for Michael Collins. They told me so themselves and I was accepted with the same status. They had known for some time that I was friendly to the cause. The three of them and myself used to meet Collins every week after that at Tommy Gay's house, Haddon Road, Clontarf. Gay was librarian in Capel Street Public Library and his office was also used by us. He was a staunch friend of Collins and so was his wife who was a noble woman. MacNamara, at this time, was attached to the same section as myself though working in an office as distinct from street duty and we made it our business to sift every piece of information we could lay our hands on and convey it to Collins or some of his Lieutenants, such as Bill Tobin, Frank Thornton, Joe Guilfoyle, Tom Cullen, Frank Saurin, C. Dalton and others. Most of these appointments were kept at dark street-corners such as Jervis Street Hospital or in public-houses here and there around the

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city. One night when MacNamara, Collins, Broy and myself were returning from Gay's house in an old taxi driven by Joe Hyland (who was Collins's confidential driver), we drove right into a cordon of British Tommies across the road. Collins got out of the car for a moment. He thought it was a trap but we persuaded him to get back in again. A young English Lieutenant came over to talk to us and we told him we were 'G' men. He told us to go by a roundabout way because a bomb had just been thrown at their lorry and he thought that it was us they were out to attack.

One night we got a report in the Castle that a Volunteer Officer had escaped from the British. MacNamara and I discussed the matter. This report was sent out by the British Military Command to the Dublin Police. We thought it highly suspicious that this man should have escaped in broad daylight from an escort consisting of British Intelligence Officers who fired no shots. We conveyed our suspicions to Collins. The escaped prisoner was a man named Fouvargue. Collins afterwards told us that he had recently joined the Volunteers and on being arrested betrayed his comrades and volunteered to work for the English. He was shot in England afterwards by the I.R.A. over there. Joe Shanahan and Reggie Dunne executed him at some golf course outside London. Shanahan told me this. Every 'G' man kept a journal in which he entered the names of political suspects he had seen that day and other relevant data in connection with his work of watching the revolutionaries. MacNamara or myself examined these diaries every night where they were kept in a room in the Castle and took all the details from them. We used to convey this information to Collins which served as a warning to those political suspects to watch themselves, that they were being seen by the police or under observation with a view to being picked up later.

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The 'G' Division had slowed down operations against the Volunteers who had made several attacks on them. The British decided to end this state of affairs by bringing in a new head. They brought down from Belfast a District Inspector named Redmund who was a 'live wire'. He told the assembled 'G' men one night (including myself) that it was very strange that they could not catch Michael Collins because a man who was only over from England a couple of days had met him several times. Collins, on hearing this from MacNamara, knew that this man over from England was a fellow named Burns or Jameson who, under the pretext of being a delegate of the British Sailors' and Soldiers' and Airmen's Union (a fictitious body), was pretending to be anxious to help the revolution in Ireland. Collins had met Burns several times and was to meet him again soon in Batt O'Connors house. Redmund actually went out there at night, with MacNamara, listening outside the door. Redmund was afterwards shot in Harcourt Street by the Volunteers, Collins saying, "If we don't get him he'll get us". Burns, after being warned by Collins, persisted and was shot in Glesnevin.

Before I came up from Kerry I told Tim Kennedy that one of the most dangerous men in the British regime in Ireland, according to an old 'G' man who had said so to me, not once, but several times, was Alan Bell, an ex-D.I. and ex-R.M., a clever fellow, who, to my certain knowledge, was conducting an investigation into Volunteers' funds, and that he was running a kind of star-chamber court in the Castle where he was interrogating Bank Managers and others as to the finances supporting Sinn Fein. The "Squad" would not believe that Bell was daily escorted by R.I.C. to the tram in Dalkey and met in College Green by 'G' men. Collins had him taken out of the tram and shot out in Merrion and that ended that investigation.

/Collins

Collins had Sinn Fein funds and proceeds of the Dail Loan - the "sinews of war" - banked in various banks under the names of private "respectable", that is, non-political citizens such as secret sympathisers like Liam Devlin. It was to these accounts and to the worming out of such secret nest-eggs that Bell set himself. It is possible, of course, that Collins had information from other sources about him. In any case his death was urgently necessary merely as a defence measure and a warning to others. It is curious that the British never started up such an investigation again. Bell's death must have severely frightened the Bank Managers too: plenty of them would "stag" if they had not been afraid of a similar fate. Some of them had put the British on to these accounts and plenty of them were Freemasons or otherwise hostile.

Brooks, a member of the Privy Council who had advocated bringing over Royal Engineers to run the trains, was shot about this time, also on information got from a similar source.

One of my jobs in these days was escorting the Recorder of Dublin, one Tommy O'Shaughnessy. Owing to some decision the Judges had made backing up a British Military Courtmartial verdict sentencing a Volunteer to death, Collins decided to have several of the Judges kidnapped. This never happened, but it was my job to investigate all their movements so that the kidnapping could be carried out.

The British Secret Service was active in Dublin about this time as the 'G' Division had been rendered impotent. A man named Lynch from East Limerick had come to Dublin with a large sum of money, proceeds of the Dail Loan, which he turned over to Michael Collins. He stayed at the Exchange Hotel

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quite close to the Castle. Another man, Liam Lynch, was a very active Volunteer leader in the South. Whether the British thought that the Exchange Hotel man was Liam Lynch, I do not know, but several men in civilian clothes called to the hotel one night and shot the Limerick man dead. Collins was most anxious to have the assassins identified and I was told to get busy. I visited College Police Station where I found a friend on duty. He allowed me to look through the Occurrence Book, a huge volume which contained all messages and incidents reported. In it was a copy of a 'phone message from a certain British military officer stating that he and others, including Captain Bagally, with certain R.I.C. officers had gone to arrest a Sinn Feiner at the hotel, that he had fired at them and that they had replied, killing him. I copied the message and gave it to Collins. He and Griffith tried to get an inquiry into the shooting, but the British Government would not budge. The same British officer figured in another murder, a fact I knew from a description of him given to Volunteers by the Carroll family, and from other clues at the time. An old man named Carroll kept a locksmith's shop in Stoneybatter, a working-class quarter of the city. He had two sons, active Volunteers. Carroll had a visit from a British Army officer who warned him that if his sons did not surrender at the Castle before a given date he would be shot. Carroll was found shot dead in his shop later. On his body was pinned a card: "Spies beware, I.R.A.". Tobin brought me a slip of paper and on it was written in Collins' writing: "Concentrate on Hardy". That was the name of the killer. MacNamara and myself knew this man well. He was an Orangeman, with an artificial leg, on the Castle garrison and was an Intelligence Officer in the Auxiliaries and a very hostile killer. I told Tobin to send two men to the Castle next day and I would point out this man whom we knew lived in

a city flat to which he cycled every morning. Joe Guilfoyle was at the gate next morning with a bicycle. Our man did not appear. After hours waiting I signalled Guilfoyle to go away. He cycled to the flat in Harcourt Street where he found Caldwell, another member of the Squad, standing on the street. Guilfoyle told him to clear off as Hardy was not coming out. As they moved off a lorry dashed up the street. Several auxiliaries dismounted and placed the boys under arrest. They were brought to the Castle and put in a cell while their captors went for a drink. Hardy's wife had seen Caldwell hanging about and, fearing for her husband's safety, had 'phoned to the Castle in some pre-arranged phrase. Caldwell had in his pocket a note-book containing such entries as the index numbers of military and auxiliary motor cars and addresses of auxiliaries and military officers. Guilfoyle took it from him and swallowed it. They were interrogated, knocked about and taken for a midnight ride. They were released next day. They believed whatever ridiculous yarn the prisoners put out. Several other attempts to get Hardy likewise failed. I believe he has written a book about his experiences but I've never seen it.

Another night Assistant Commissioner Barrett warned me to be at the Castle gate as a certain suburban Postmaster intended to come into the Castle with important information. On this being reported to Collins he directed Guilfoyle and another member of the Squad to be there also at the Castle gate and to shoot the man on his way in, but I am glad to say the man did not turn up at all. As "curfew" was on at this time it was very courageous of C. Dalton and Joe Leonard to turn up armed to the very Castle gates, which they did.

/Another

Another job I had at the time was searching the Bridewell for Dick McKee and Peadar Clancy, important Volunteers, who had been arrested by the British and for whose fate Collins rightly feared; they having been arrested on the night ^{before} of "Bloody Sunday", 21st November, 1921, when a large number of British Secret Service men had been shot by the Volunteers. I did not know them personally, but when I went to the Bridewell I saw no one answering to the description given to me. I called ^{by appointment} to St. Michael's and John's Church in Exchange Street where Frank Thornton had twelve men waiting to rescue them and I told him they were not in the Bridewell. (A couple of hours afterwards fifty Black-and-Tans occupied the Bridewell.)[^] That meant that the prisoners were in the Castle in the custody of the Auxiliaries and as good as dead. A fantastic story of an escape by these two men was put out later by the Castle Authorities as an excuse for murdering them. Actually McKee, Clancy and Clune had been murdered by the Auxiliaries as a reprisal in a Guard Room in Exchange Court, next door to and inside the Castle gate. Collins was extremely upset over the disappearance of McKee and Clancy and wanted them rescued at all costs. He told me through Thornton that if necessary I could be sent to America if my part in it were discovered. A man named Ryan from Gloucester Street area was said to have betrayed them and he was shot later, but I do not know if this was the reason.

One day I saw a lorry standing in the Castle Yard. Buzzing around the lorry were Colonel Winter, Director of Intelligence for the British, and a number of other British Officers. There was a waterproof cover on the lorry and I went over to see what was under it. It hid two dead bodies. Winter told me: "That is Treacy and one of my men". Treacy

/was

was a famous Tipperary Volunteer. He had been traced by the man who now lay alongside him in death - a British Secret Service man. The British Tommies, seeing Treacy wrestling with their own officer, opened fire in panic-fashion with rifles and killed both. Along with the two now dead, another Tommy, one Sergeant-Major Christian, was wounded. Christian afterwards received compensation in the Recorder's Court. That day half the Squad turned up to shoot him, but he took no chances; he came in an armoured car. Some time later a man named Matt Furlong was brought to the Mater Hospital in a dying state. He was a Volunteer who had been injured in an explosion in County Meath. The British thought this man was Dan Breen. They sent up Sergeant Roche of the Tipperary R.I.C. to make sure. Roche came to the Castle. He was accompanied by a Constable Fitzmaurice. I was detailed to go with him to the hospital. The Sergeant looked at the face of the dead man and said: "That is not Breen, I would know his bulldog face anywhere". I reported his mission to Collins. Next day I got a message through Thornton that Roche was to be shot. Collins was furious over Treacy's death. He was anxious to hit back at once. I met Roche and the Constable on the Quays. I was talking to Thornton as they came along. Roche, a huge man of burly build, was immediately shot down by the Squad. He only lived a few minutes. The Constable and I ran away. I went back to the Castle. In a few minutes I was told that the Inspector-General of the R.I.C. wanted me at once. Entering his room I saw Constable Fitzmaurice and several other officers of high rank. The Inspector-General, a tough-looking fellow with an ugly face, accosted me: "Neligan", he said, "this Constable says he saw you talking to the man who shot Sergeant Roche". I replied: "He is making a mistake, Sir". "What did you do?" he asked.

// "Did

"Did you see the man who attacked Roche?" he continued. I told him that I had run away as I thought the shots were fired at me. I also told him that I was waiting for a tram to go to the Park. I had no sooner said this than I saw there was a flaw in it as I was on the wrong side of the road for an outgoing tram. When they failed to get any clues about Roche's death they arrested a poor wretch of a woman employed in the bookstall at Limerick Junction whom the Constable had remembered having asked them what was their destination.

For some time we had been busy collecting data concerning the night prowlers of the British Secret Service. Collins had a plan to strike them down. A considerable number were located. Friendly police who were on duty at night helped him taking a note of their addresses and supplying the details to him. Of the whole D.M.P. there were scarcely half-a-dozen actively helping Collins. Certainly many of them were passively friendly but what I state is a fact. Maids, boarders and messengers also noted English accents and West-end suits/clothes. Fellow-lodgers reported nocturnal wanderings. Suspicious enquiries by strangers and persons frequenting houses of the Volunteers were reported to the Squad. Broy, MacNamara, Tobin, Cullen, Thornton and myself attended the Gaiety Theatre on the night of the 20th November, 1920. We saw some of those, whose names we had, in a box there and they were enjoying themselves too. We cleared up some details regarding addresses. We were told that known Secret Service men and certain British Army Officers, including Captain Bagally who had figured in Lynch's shooting, would be shot in their lodgings next day. Cullen said to me that he was going to Croke Park the next day to see a match. We told him to keep out of it, that it was madness to go there. At breakfast the next morning in the Castle Bruton entered. His face was white. "Terrible work in the City", he said, "a crowd of

/Army

Army men murdered in their beds!" I went to O'Shaughnessy's house in Fitzwilliam Square. Two British Army ambulances stood in the street. R.A.M.C. men brought a stretcher out of the house. On it lay an inert figure. Three times they entered and emerged with a similar burden. Auxiliaries arrived and held up a crowd of staring loungers. In that house three executions had taken place. In the Castle, pandemonium reigned. An officer, whose pals had been wiped out, shot himself in his room. The tragedy was hushed up. His body was taken to England with the others. A long string of cars and baggage choked the Castle gate all day. Officers, Secret Service men and their wives were flying to protection and a room could not be found in the Castle for love nor money. ^{Point Cook} An officer wounded himself in the D.B.C. cafe in Dame Street and then put up a tale of being attacked and received compensation at the Recorder's Court. Cullen went to Croke Park on the Sunday and made his escape when the Auxiliaries opened machine-gun fire on the people in the grounds. I met Thornton by appointment that ^{afternoon} evening and he told me of the arrest of McKee and Clancy, the details of which I have already described.

Things were very bad at this time and even the Squad were very much circumscribed in their activities. One night I was waiting at a street corner for one of the Squad. None of them turned up, but Collins came instead. There was a real reign of terror in Dublin at that time.

One day I was in the Castle and I saw Rory O'Connor, a prisoner. An Intelligence Officer talked to me in the Yard. "Do you know this fellow?" he asked me. "I know him about the town for years", I said. "He is a harmless crank and has nothing to do with Sinn Fein". Rory was interned in the

/Curragh.

Curragh. Some time later I was hailed on the Quays by a strange man in a clerical-looking suit, a full moustache and whiskers. It was Rory who had just escaped from prison. Dublin Castle at this time was virtually in a state of siege. An elaborate system of identification cards with photographs was in being for those having business there. All night long the Square gleamed with headlights as raiding parties came and went. Officers and civilians dashed in and out in covered cars. About 100 Auxiliaries were quartered there - the notorious "F" Company. They were an extraordinary collection. I saw men in Airmen's uniforms, highlanders complete in kilt, Naval Officers, Cowboys and types from every quarter of the globe. A sprinkling of the crowd wore the blue tunics of the R.I.C. with the letters "T.C." (temporary cadets). All wore glengarry caps. Some wore old British Army uniforms. Auxiliaries were paid £7 (seven pounds) a week, most of which went to the Canteen, which did a roaring trade, night and day. Once, when cash ran out, a squad raided the City Hall in broad daylight and stole several thousand pounds. Night after night a dark tall fellow wearing a Colonel's epaulettes and a glengarry cap was frog-marched to a lorry by his men. I did not know his name. Some of them, including the S.S. men, adopted a different name for every day of the week. He was so drunk that he could not proceed under his own steam but at the same time insisted on going out to look for the "Damn Shiners". He was left in the front seat of an open Crossley tender, a pair of which always travelled together. These fast lorries were handled by daredevil drivers and had netted wire overhead to guard against grenades. The Auxiliaries made little distinction between Loyalists and Sinn Feiners and had been known to kill two men in the City for possession of Rebel leaflets. The leadership of the Dublin Brigade failed

/miserably

miserably so far as making war on the Auxiliaries was concerned. The latter came and went without let or hindrance. Undoubtedly, the Auxiliaries were a formidable force and the Dublin Brigade was very badly armed. The bombs thrown at the Tommies were harmless home-made things. The number of casualties thus caused is not worth mentioning. In the Castle I saw an open military lorry that had just been bombed. Two grenades had exploded inside the vehicle. The occupants were not even scratched. From the beginning to the end one serious attack was not launched on the Castle Auxiliaries. The plain-clothes gang of the R.I.C. had a like story to tell. This gang was composed of about twelve R.I.C. men from the provinces who were known to be extremely hostile to the Volunteers, some of whom had been wounded by ^{Volunteers} them. They operated in the City under the leadership of a burly ruffian named Igo, who struck down every suspect he saw. Each wore a steel vest under his coat and carried two webley revolvers. Sometimes they travelled in Ford touring cars but more often they walked through the City. They haunted railway stations and other places likely to provide victims. They killed a ^{Vol} man named Howley at the Broadstone terminus and seriously wounded a Volunteer named Newell Sweeney. Not one shot was fired at this gang. Collins's squad did attack a bunch of plain-clothes men outside the Castle and killed three of them, Hoey, Greer and McDonagh. Those poor wretches were merely dispatch riders and were mistaken for members of the Igo gang.

I was in the Castle one day when a message arrived saying that a man had been shot dead in Wicklow Street. This was Mulloy, a military policeman, who was engaged in intelligence work for the British. The 'G' man who searched his body for identification papers found a long list of names of Sinn

/Feiners,

Feiners, including that of Countess Markievicz. Mulloy had a friend in the Castle. He, too, was a military policeman who escorted a British General named Boyd about the town. In the course of my business picking up Castle news, I became friendly with this fellow. Shortly after Mulloy's death I met him at the Castle gate. He told me he knew who had shot his pal. He said it was Tobin, that he knew him and that he was out to get him. It appears that he had followed Mulloy one night when the spy had met Tobin. I warned Tobin who lay low for some time while every effort was made to get this soldier. He was ^{not} found. Of course, this was often the case with those fellows: they were "here to-day and gone to-morrow".

About this time a Sergeant in the 'G' Division named ^{DV} J. Coffey was very active and hostile to Sinn Fein and was to be shot at the first opportunity by Collins's orders. Although, in my opinion, he richly deserved such a fate, I determined to save his life for the sake of his poor wretch of a wife and young family. I, therefore, sought him out and told him I'd heard two fellows in a public-house saying they'd shoot him next day. Did he get a fright? I'll say he did! He never came out of the Castle (where he lived with his wife and family) again until the Truce and as he was able to do no damage inside it was a good solution. Lives hung by a thread in those days. Coffey had picked out men in 1916 for execution and the danger was that as he knew a great number of the old Volunteers by sight he'd pick out more of them when hanging round the streets. He had no stomach for the business after that.

MacNamara was sent to Glasgow to bring back an Auxiliary under arrest for robbery. While he was away, two British officers arrived at the Detective Office in an armoured car.

/They

They arrested Broy and brought him to Arbour Hill Detention Barracks. A great quantity of old police documents had been found in a raid by the British in Miss McGrane's flat in Dawson Street. The leakage, which the captured documents showed, told the British that the 'G' Division was undermined. MacNamara was dismissed on his return from Glasgow. Masked "Auxies" raided his home that night but I had warned him to clear out. He then became a full-time member of the Squad. They even suspected Superintendent Brien and fired him without a pension. Brien certainly was not friendly disposed to the Volunteers. He was to have been "done in" also but they could not get him outside the Castle! He had done great harm to the Volunteers in his time and should have been shot really. T. Cullen 'phoned to him one night in the name of an informer and wanted him to come out to Parliament Street but old Brien was too wary. No further confidential information was sent to the D.M.F. by the British. I carried on for some time. Then I told Collins the facts. It was useless staying there any longer. The British Secret Service had taken over and we were completely in the dark. I told him I intended trying to join the ^{British} Secret Service which I did in a few days. That was about the end of 1920 or beginning of 1921. I asked the Assistant Commissioner of the D.M.P., Denis Barrett who had filled Redmund's vacancy, to get me into the British Secret Service as I knew he was acquainted with all of that crowd in the Castle. Barrett was to have been shot for taking that job but escaped through sheer good luck. Several times the Squad attended local Churches where he and Bruton were supposed to be at Mass and by a fluke missed him on each occasion. Another 'G' man joined with me. A few days later we were sent over to Mr. Cope, then Assistant Under-Secretary for Ireland and the mainspring of Castle rule. Our police files were on the table. He asked us: "Why do you wish to join?" We told him we were looking for bigger pay. He told

us to put in our resignations from the Police in the ordinary way. Later that day we went to an office across the yard from Mr. Cope's where we were interviewed by Major Stokes of the British Secret Service. He told us we had been strongly recommended as good men and that he would be our friend if we did our job. We were sworn into His Majesty's Secret Service in the following words: "I ___ do solemnly swear by Almighty God that I will faithfully perform the duties assigned to me as a member of His Majesty's Secret Service; that I will implicitly obey those placed over me; that I will keep forever secret such membership and everything connected therewith, that I will never, in any circumstances, betray such service or those connected with it even when I have left the Service. If I fail to keep this Oath in every particular I realise that vengeance will pursue me to the ends of the earth, so help me God". I was initiated into the signs and handgrips of the Service and later learned how to use secret inks and similar artifices.

I was assigned to the district of Dalkey, Kingstown (Dún Laoghaire) and Blackrock. I got a curfew pass signed by General Boyd, O/C., Dublin District. "Join the I.R.A. by all means", said the Major, "if you can. We will be glad if you get in". The Major went to an adjoining room and called up another Englishman who was a British Army I.O. named Captain Woolridge. They arranged to meet me a couple of days afterwards in Kingstown. When I told Collins the next day he was pleased. His squad already knew Woolridge but they didn't know the Major. Cullen and Tobin had followed him (Woolridge) from the North Dublin Union once or twice but he had given them the slip. Collins agreed to come to meet me in Keegan's public-house near Blackrock because I was not supposed to come into the City. Collins was furious with the other man who had joined with me and said he deserved to be /shot.

shot. However, I explained to him that I had persuaded him to join as a blind. McShane is his name and he still serves in the D.M.P. He did no harm and was simply looking for easy money.

I met plenty of the British Secret Service after this. They were scattered in various private houses about the City. These houses were all owned by loyalists and they were carefully screened by the British before the agents were allowed to go into them, a very wise precaution!! These loyalists, whose houses lodged the Secret Service men, were, for the most part, Freemasons and were of course largely staffed by Protestant servants. The other Secret Service man I knew were practically all Englishmen. Those fellows were good types. They could not understand why I, a Catholic and an Irishman, was hostile to my own countrymen and they clearly told me that I should be ashamed of myself and that if they were Irishmen they would be Sinn Feiners too. More curious still, one of them remained friendly even after it was known that I had betrayed them: and he used to send me £5 for sweep tickets in each Sweep until he died. One of these men was threatened with dismissal because he could not get information. He asked me to help him. There were two spies in Dublin whom we suspected of giving information to the British, Hamilton and McEntaggart. I therefore brought this Secret Service man to meet these two men but they refused to have anything to do with him at which Collins laughed heartily. I was expected to make an intelligence report once a week. Collins often helped me to write these reports; in fact, he wrote them himself. Many a good laugh we had over them! He used to say in these reports that the I.R.A. was in no way short of arms or ammunition; recruits were simply falling over each other; they had plenty of money; new columns were being formed to fight the British.

The Captain came to see me. He said I could write good reports. He told me that the man who had joined with me had left the Service. He said he was now back in the Police. He discussed the latest that I had sent in. "Yes, I know", he said, "that they have plenty of ammunition. We are helping them out". I asked him what he meant. "We are", he said, "dropping stuff here and there. If they use it, they will get a shock". It was ammunition that was filled with a charge that would go off prematurely. The cartridges that contained such a charge were marked "Z.Z" I told Collins and he issued an order on the matter. A D.M.P. Sergeant O'Sullivan, Dún Laoghaire, was working with us, and Collins arranged a meeting between us. A youth called one night to his station and demanded the use of the telephone. The Sergeant told him to clear off. He replied threateningly that he had authority from a Major at the Castle to use the police telephone. The Sergeant listened in to the conversation. The youth was reporting to the Castle about two men, that is Volunteers, who had guns in the local cinema. He was shot a few days afterwards by the Volunteers: he had joined the Volunteers some days earlier. Once the Secret Service courier handed me an anonymous letter which had been received in the Castle. It said that a red-haired man used to frequent Foxrock railway station and hold up British soldiers in trains. I went up to Foxrock to see whether there was anything going on there. I was arrested by a column of Volunteers including a red-haired man. They let me go after a while. I reported to the British that there was no one there. The column were warned to keep away from the place. As I had the anonymous letter in my pocket at the time I did not feel too comfortable.

After a while I suggested to the British that it would be better for all the British Secret Service men to meet some
/place

place where we could have a discussion. The meeting took place in the North Dublin Union. About forty or fifty of those fellows turned up there. I got to know several of them and where they were living too. These men were living in private houses about the City and suburbs.

There was to be another "Bloody Sunday" but the Truce came along and it saved those fellows from further attack. The Squad attacked Auxiliaries in Grafton Street some days before the Truce and shot two of them. It was to be a regular batteau but something misfired.

Before the Truce I was promoted Paymaster for my section of the British Intelligence crowd in Dublin. I used to pay my section of Secret Service people in Dublin.

When the Treaty negotiations were in progress in London I was directed by the British to go to the Castle one night. I reported to Count Sevigne alias Major Geary, an important man in the Secret Service. He said I was to go to London with a letter and I was to meet someone in Holyhead. He gave me the letter. I could not find anybody next day in the usual haunts so I had to go into Emmet Dalton's office (Liaison Officer) in the Gresham Hotel, O'Connell Street. It was a dangerous place to go. Before I entered the room I heard a familiar voice inside. Cope came out and I hid behind the door of an empty room. I gave Dalton the letter which was sealed. That evening I received it back. A beautiful job had been done on the seal by Pat Moynihan, but it was a waste of time. The letter was in cipher of which we had no key and presumably merely identified me. Collins directed that two men be sent with me to London - Bob O'Neill and Paddy Kennedy. I walked about the City of London for a fortnight meeting Tobin or someone of them every day. I delivered the letter to a man named Woolly in London in

/Falkiner's

Falkiner's Hotel, Charing Cross. Collins reproached Birkenhead afterwards for having sent a man to London to watch him. He denied it. I was not asked to do anything in London and to this day have not discovered what the object was. A telegram from Dublin on the morning of the 12th December recalled me. On the boat returning were Collins, Griffith and the delegation, also Cope.

Before disbandment the Castle "Auxies" mutinied and myself and other Secret Service men were sent in there to pick out ringleaders. It fizzled out later as they got more money.

After the Truce I was sent to Oriel House where Collins had set up a new Police Force. This was reported to the British. Having heard it, Cope sent for me and asked me what I was doing working for the Provisional Government. I told him I was a resigned policeman and that I demanded a job as such and got it. Then he questioned me about the Treaty; whether Collins was in earnest about it at all. I told him he was. He said he thought it was going to be a good thing for this country and that he was a friend of Ireland, that he had risked his own career for the Treaty. That was true too! He said he hoped everything would be alright. He said; "I am leaving to-morrow". I said: "You are leaving, Mr. Cope, and I have to stay behind; what are you going to do about it?" He told me that he was re-transferring me to the Police so that I could draw my pension which I would otherwise be entitled to do, and that is what he did. Afterwards I received a letter from General Tudor thanking me for my "magnificent services in Ireland".

Signed: David Keegan

Date: 4th May 1950

Witness: D. J. Feely, Comdt.

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