

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BURO STAIRÉ MILE' TA 1913-21

No. W.S. 434

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 434.....

Witness

Charles Dalton,
86 Morehampton Road,
Donnybrook,
Dublin.

Identity

Member of 'F' Company 2nd Battalion
Irish Volunteers, 1917 - .

Member of Intelligence Squad 1920 - .

Subject

Activities of 'F' Company 2nd Battalion
1917 - 1921;

Intelligence Squad 1920.

Conditions, if any, stipulated by Witness

Nil

File No. S. 1540.....

Form B.S.M. 2.

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STATEMENT BY CHARLES DALTON (Colonel, retired)

86 Morehampton Road, Donnybrook, Dublin.

I joined the Volunteers, F/Company, 2nd Battalion, in December 1917. My company officer at that time was Frank Henderson. Henderson afterwards went up to the battalion and Oscar Traynor then became company captain.

After some preliminary company jobs, I was sent for by the Brigadier, Dick McKee, and attached to the H.Q. Squad on an assisting basis.

THE INTELLIGENCE SQUAD.

After participating with the squad in the seizure of the Castle mails at Dominick St. Dublin, in February 1920, I was again sent for by the Brigadier who asked me would I join the G.H.Q. Intelligence Unit, which I did. I reported for duty to the Deputy Director of Intelligence, Liam Tobin, at an office in Crow St. which was used as our headquarters.

My duties were outlined to me by the Assistant Director of Intelligence, who was in daily communication with Michael Collins. They consisted of tracing the activities of enemy agents and spies, keeping records of enemy personnel, contact with friendly associates in government and Crown service, organising and developing intelligence in the Dublin Brigade as an adjunct to headquarters Information Service, and participating in active service actions arising from our duties.

Our Department was strengthened from time to time by the inclusion of selected officers, and, with the growth of duties and the increase of activities by the Crown forces, it was later found necessary to set up an additional office to house the Intelligence Department. This office was located over the Brunswick St. Cinema.

In those years of activity, the sources of our information were very limited, due to the fact that all Government Civil Servants, including the members of the Metropolitan Police, R.I.C. and other Crown forces, had taken an oath of loyalty to the Crown. The fact that they occupied pensionable positions, even though they had mild national leanings, did not induce them to be of help to the Republican movement.

One of the most fruitful sources of information to our Department would have been the Post Office, which controlled the delivery of correspondence throughout the country, the dispatch of all telegrams and the working of the telephone system. In those days the Crown forces depended mainly for inter-communication on the telephone and telegraph systems. We possessed the key to the R.I.C. code, which was changed monthly. Through this channel we were able to forestall Crown forces' raids, impending arrests, etc., but, due to the fact that our helpers in this department were so few, the results obtained were far from complete. Similarly, in the postal dispatch departments and letter sorting offices, we had very few helpers, and, although the members of the Crown forces used the mails freely, the amount of information gathered through interception, raids on mails, etc. was rather limited, due to lack of co-operators. In the Central Telegraph Office, Liam Archer, and in the principal Sorting Office, Paddy Moynihan (nom-de-plume 118) were the most important aides.

The Post Office aides invariably left their information for Michael Collins's perusal at addresses in Parnell Street, viz: Jim Kirwan, publican, Knocknagow dairy shop, and Liam Devlin, publican. They were the principal rendezvous for these people.

Before leaving the subject of postal assistance, it is well to mention that the Director received valuable information from some postal officials he personally dealt with who were engaged on the mail boats, and from London through Sam Maguire, who was in charge of that city on his behalf.

Amongst the important information that was supplied were particulars of the Castle mails, including Lord French's mails and how they were transmitted, and the plan of the Sorting Office in the Rink, from which Government mails were subsequently seized. In certain cases, copies of telegrams in code were forwarded to us, and in some instances, letters going to a particular individual who was a suspect came into our hands likewise.

COUNTER INTELLIGENCE.

Counter Intelligence was organised traditionally through the police. In Dublin city the "G" Division controlled all political information, and in the country the Special Crimes Branch of the R.I.C. did likewise. In addition to these two sources of information, the British army had a military Intelligence Service which was conducted in Dublin by Major S.S. Hill Dillon. During 1921, the British Secret Service established an independent Intelligence Unit principally in Dublin, which worked, it is believed, directly with the Cabinet in London through the War Office. Agents of the latter body were identified by us, as these lived as civilians in the City, following fictitious occupations and participating, to a limited degree, in what was their final objective - the elimination of active I.R.A. leaders through secret murder. Many of these Agents were executed on 21st November 1920, before their operational plan was put into effective action.

In Dublin the "G" Division operated with open contempt for the Volunteers until some of their members had been shot. After these shootings "G" Division were "confined to barracks" in the Castle and were thus immobilised from active detection work.

In this body there were two or three officials who co-operated with our Department and supplied valuable information to counteract the activities of the Crown forces. These were Jim McNamara, David Neligan, whom I met frequently and Ned Broy, whom Collins himself met. These men had channels of contact through very reliable intermediaries. In many instances, I or another member of our staff had, at short notice, to meet them adjacent to the Castle in the street. There we learned of intended raids, the location of prisoners, etc. The assistance of these men cannot be sufficiently recognised, due to the fact that they alone were able to confirm beyond doubt the activities of suspects whom we had under observation.

The Director of Intelligence was in touch with contacts in the prison service, warders in Mountjoy Jail - Daly and Peter Breslin. In the R.I.C. he received valuable intelligence from Sergeant McCarthy, stationed in Belfast in the County Inspector's office.

In the Auxiliary Division of the R.I.C. we had assistance from an Englishman, Sergeant Reynolds of "F" Coy. stationed in Dublin Castle. He supplied information through a friend of his, Bríghid Foley, whom he first met during a raid.

As regards the R.I.C., this Force did not operate in the city of Dublin, but a few friendly members were contacted in the counties where they were stationed. Their headquarters were located at the Depot, Phoenix Park.

The British Military Intelligence Department operated from the Dublin District office at Royal Barracks. Contact was never established with this body other than through the efforts of a typist, Miss Mernin, at a late stage in the struggle.

From the Intelligence Officer of the 1st Southern Division (Florrie O'Donoghue) copies of radiograms intercepted were forwarded to our office for decoding, but, as all these were in the British Naval numerical code, we were unsuccessful in decyphering them until after the Truce.

In Dublin city at any rate, the main sources of information to the Castle, in addition to police reports, were anonymous letters, telephone calls which we were unsuccessful in intercepting, and material supplied from what was known as the loyalist element.

The "G" Division depended, as also did the Secret Service for much of their information on particulars supplied, mainly about individuals, by newsvendors, hotel porters, policemen, as well as the ordinary police reports. For instance, Barton of the "G" Division was held in the highest esteem by the publicans, pawnbrokers and other commercial men, due to the fact that he had established a unique method in the tracing of petty larceny and illegal pawning of stolen goods. In carrying out his routine police duties, he had many newsvendors and minor thieves of the pickpocket variety in his power, and he utilised this type of informer for checking up on the movements of prominent wanted Volunteers. After Barton's demise, informers of this type were contacted by other members of the counter Intelligence Service, and became commonly known as "touts". It was one of these "touts", Pike, who followed Dan Breen and Sean Treacy from Flemings of Drumcondra to Fernside, and it was another of these, "Chanters" Ryan, who successfully discovered the hideout,

during curfew hours, of Dick McKee and Peadar Clancy, from which they were taken prisoner and subsequently shot. At the time of this occurrence, Ryan was serving as a military policeman, but lived in a disreputable neighbourhood in Dublin

TYPE OF CONTACTS.

Outside those already referred to, the services of friendly waiters, hotel porters, railway officials and, in fact, anyone in a position to supply or confirm information relative to the activity of Crown agents was solicited and utilised. In this connection the elimination of spies was assisted through the medium of reports thus received. This type of helper was contacted by members of our staff. In reality, the number of dependable assistants in this category was strictly limited. The receipt of information was important, but more important still was the necessity for complete silence on the part of our informants, as failure to observe this would have frustrated the work of our Department, as well as possibly leading to the elimination of ourselves. Offers of assistance were many, but the integrity and resourcefulness of the would-be informants in many cases did not qualify them for inclusion in our network of helpers.

If, as a result of information supplied by a hotel aide, shooting accrued, this individual, as well as other members of the hotel staff, was subject to a "grilling" by the Crown forces. Anyone known to have sympathies with Sinn Fein would receive special attention by the Authorities. Such an examination could possibly result in the informant double-crossing us, with unhappy results.

When we got offers of assistance we first had to make up our minds whether we could trust them or not, and then we could only tell them very little. There was the danger

that, in their enthusiasm to give information, they would go and ask other people for information without exercising proper caution.

One of our greatest sources of information in the tracing of movements of prominent personages was the society columns of newspapers, covering banquets, dinners, etc. Also "Who's Who", which enabled us to trace the clubs, hobbies, etc. of these people, as well as Press photographs taken at Castle or similar functions. In our Crow St. office we kept an alphabetical card index of all known enemy agents, Auxiliary Cadets, R.I.C. men, etc. Any information as to their movements, whereabouts or intentions obtained from the Press in this manner was tabulated and circulated to the country Volunteers, if it concerned them. Photographs were studied by our staff, and, in many instances our identification, on the street or elsewhere, of these individuals was made possible through a study of their photographs.

G.H.Q. PERSONNEL, CROW ST. AND LATER BRUNSWICK STREET.

Michael Collins was Director of Intelligence. He operated from his own personal office in the daytime and saw his lieutenants at night. Liam Tobin was Deputy D.I., and Tom Cullen was Assistant D.I.

The staff consisted of Frank Thornton, Joe Dolan, Joe Guilfoyle, Paddy Caldwell (later transferred to "An t-Oglach" staff), myself, Frank Saurin, Charlie Byrne, Peter McGee, Dan McDonnell, Ned Kellegher, James Hughes, Con O'Neill, Bob O'Neill, Jack Walsh and Paddy Kennedy.

Jimmy Murray was, I believe, a member of 6th Battalion and acted as Battalion I.O. Murray resided in Kingstown and was at one time employed on the boats.

Shortly before the Truce, Murray and Dan McDonnell were our contacts with Dave Neligan, who was then residing with another Secret Service man (Woolley) in Kingstown, having left the "G" Division, on the instructions of Michael Collins, to join the British Secret Service proper.

THE DIRECTOR OF INTELLIGENCE AND HIS STAFF.

During the daytime Michael Collins worked from an office of his own, and at no time did he visit the Crow St. or Brunswick St. offices. Inter-communication was maintained by his special messenger, Joe O'Reilly. In the evening time Michael Collins used to meet Liam Tobin and Tom Cullen at one of his numerous rendezvous in the Parnell Square area - these were Jim Kirwan's, Vaughan's Hotel and Liam Devlin's.

In the earlier years Michael Collins used to meet these men at 46 Parnell Square and at McCarthy's in Mountjoy St. They were all on the run and on many occasions they stayed together, sometimes at Joe O'Reilly's lodgings, Smith's of Lindsay Road, and on other occasions at Paddy O'Shea's house in Lindsay Road.

Michael Collins used as his personal office Miss Hoey's house in Mespil Road; also Mary St., and finally Harcourt Terrace. I was on duty at the Harcourt Terrace office, which was an ordinary dwelling-house, furnished as such, and in the front bedroom the D.I. had his papers. These were concealed in a secret cupboard on the landing, in which he himself could take refuge should the house be raided while he was in occupation.

It was from his personal office that Michael Collins dealt with all the Brigade and country Intelligence reports.

ENEMY AGENTS AND SPIES.

Following the death in action of Sean Treacy, we received information through our contacts in the Special Branch in the Castle that Sergeant Roche and Constable Fitzgerald were in Dublin. They had come to Dublin from Tipperary to identify the remains of Treacy, and, evidently, to be available, if required, in the search for Dan Breen who had escaped, wounded.

On 17th October 1920, I was in touch with Dave Neligan, who told me that the wanted men would probably be dining in the Ormond Hotel that day, having left the Castle to do so. Neligan first arranged that he would take them to lunch and would indicate to me that they were the wanted men. Something went wrong with this arrangement, but nevertheless, the squad took up positions around Grattan Bridge. Neligan came along on his own and bumped into the two R.I.C. men who had left the Ormond and were on their way back. He conversed with them, and after parting from them, he gave the pre-arranged signal by waving his handkerchief. Those of the squad nearest to the R.I.C. men opened fire on them, fatally wounding Roche, but Fitzgerald escaped by running up Capel Street. *Both men were wearing civilian clothing.*

We understood that Sergeant Roche was a particularly active Crimes Special man, and his gloating over the corpse of Treacy had irritated even some of his own associates.

D.I. O'Sullivan of the R.I.C. was employed by the British in a clerical capacity. He had made the acquaintance of a lady employed in Messrs. Arnott's, and she subsequently became his fiancée. While waiting for her coming from business in Henry St. he was shot on the 12th December 1920, by members of the squad on instructions from Intelligence Office.

Through information received through one of our contacts employed as a waiter in the Wicklow Hotel, it was confirmed that Doran, the night porter, was in contact with enemy Intelligence officers during curfew hours, and instructions were received that he was to be liquidated. Several efforts were made to carry the order into effect and on 28th January 1921, our contact in the hotel, Paddy O'Shea, raised the restaurant blind, indicating that the man then leaving the hotel was Doran. Doran walked in the direction of some of the waiting squad who acted on my signal and shot him. Subsequently Doran's widow communicated to Michael Collins that her husband had been shot by Crown forces and that she was in dire straits financially. Rather than tell her the true facts, Collins instructed that she receive financial assistance.

Arising out of a letter which had been intercepted in the course of post by one of Collins's sorters, the location of the writer, Captain Cecil Lees, was discovered. Captain Lees had not been in Dublin very long when he wrote the letter (reproduced in facsimile in Piaras Beaslai's "Michael Collins") to a friend of his in the War Office, indicating that he had been in touch with Major S.S. Hill Dillon, District G.S.O., Intelligence Branch, Dublin District, Royal Barracks. From the nature of the text it was clear that Captain Lees was a British Secret Service Agent engaged in the preliminary surveying of prospects for the murder of Irish leaders. This communication was sent to the Director of Intelligence for his instructions and was returned with the comment: "Oggs" him'. This was the code word for the immediate execution of Captain Lees. I and other Intelligence officers, with members of the squad, took up positions each morning endeavouring to intercept Lees leaving his hotel, and on one such morning when he left at an early hour, I think about nine o'clock, he was shot on his way to the Castle.

Brady and Halpin were shot on 4th June 1921 by members of F/Company, 2nd Battalion, under the command of Lieutenant Danny Lyons. They had been acting as touts in conveying information to the Crown forces. The information relative to their activities had been supplied through the Brigade Intelligence officers.

Robert Pike was shot on 18th June 1921. He was a member of the tinker class and lived in Tolka Cottages, Drumcondra. I believe he was an ex-soldier who had been in the world war, and he was conveying information to the Crown forces. There was an unconfirmed statement that he had reported on Dan Breen's and Sean Treacy's movements from Fleming's of Drumcondra to Fernside.

Appleford and Bennett were two Auxiliary cadets of F/Company and were shot in Grafton St. in an abortive encircling movement on 24th June 1921. It was intended to enclose Grafton St. and shoot any members of the Crown forces who happened to be there. These two individual Cadets Appleford and Bennett, had been recognised by the Intelligence present, from a marked photograph of F/Company of the Auxiliaries which had been supplied to the Intelligence Department by Sergeant Reynolds, already referred to. The general intention was that anyone in Grafton St. who was fashionably dressed and believed to be an enemy agent was to be shot.

The Director of Intelligence received a report from a veterinary student, Sean Hyde, who was living in 20 Lower Mount St. to the effect that there were two suspects by the names of McMahon and Anglis, living in No. 21 Lower Mount St., where a number of medical students were lodging. I was instructed to investigate and I met Hyde, who gave me all the facts. It would appear that one of these men, McMahon,

had been out during curfew on the night that Mr. Lynch of Kilmallock had been shot by Crown forces in the Exchange Hotel, Parliament St. These suspects did not go out in the daytime except to an ex-servicemen's club, known as the South Irish Horse Club, in Merrion Square. They also occasionally visited a billiards saloon at the rear of a tobacconist shop in Mount St. This was owned by a Mr. Kerr who was not sympathetic to the movement.

I duly reported back, and instructions were issued that these men were to be shot if they could be intercepted on the street. I was working on this assignment with some members of the Squad, on some occasions with Tom Keogh, Joe Leonard and others. We were unsuccessful in sighting the wanted men. One of Hyde's friends reported one evening that the two men had gone into Kerr's billiards saloon. On this occasion I was accompanied only by Joe Leonard. We went into the saloon, in which there was one table, and two gentlemen were playing billiards. The only description I had of McMahon, who was the principal party, was that he wore a signet ring on a finger of his left hand. We sat down on the seat and decided that when the man who was wearing the ring came to our side of the table we would fire. While thus engaged, preparatory to taking action, Hyde's friend, Conny O'Leary, rushed in and said that McMahon had gone back into his house.

On a check-up afterwards, it appeared that while McMahon had, in fact, entered the shop, he had gone to an upstairs apartment to see a girl, and was not the individual we had seen in the billiards saloon.

We continued after McMahon for a day or two, but the Director of Intelligence deferred action in view of reports which had come to hand concerning the location of other suspects residing in various parts of the city.

THE RE-ARMAMENT OF THE VOLUNTEERS AFTER 1916.

When I joined the Volunteers there were very few arms held by members of the Dublin Brigade, and it became one of our regular duties to report on and seize arms either at private houses or from government sources when opportunity arose.

After the first shooting activities by the Volunteers, it was discovered that a source of supply, viz: serving Tommies, for ammunition was being exploited by the Castle authorities for the issuing surreptitiously of explosive revolver ammunition to Volunteers. Fortunately, information of this move was received, and a general warning was issued to all Volunteers to examine their .45 revolver ammunition for any rounds which bore an imprint "Z.Z." as these were explosive cartridges.

In addition to these activities I participated in many actions, including the seizure of arms from Messrs. Guinness's boat "the Clarecastle", the filling of home-made hand grenades with gelignite, the attempted shooting of hangmen on arrival at Dublin to carry out executions, attempted rescues of prisoners in military custody (Barton, the T.D., at Blessington St., and Dan Breen from the Mater Hospital, after being wounded at Fernside), and the encirclement of Grafton St. shortly before the Truce.

SPECIAL MISSION TO LONDON.

Before I was actually attached to the Intelligence Department, but in the period during which I had carried out a few jobs with the brigade or squad, the Brigadier sent for me and I met him at 44 or 46 Parnell Square. Several other Volunteers selected from the different companies were there also, but Dick McKee and Peadar Clancy interviewed us individually. I was asked had I ever been to London, and I

said I had not. I was then asked would I be prepared to go there on a special mission and I said "certainly". I was told to be available to travel at short notice, but no further instructions were received about this, so I did not make the trip across.

It was stated afterwards that the object of this visit to London was the shooting of members of the British Cabinet, at the instigation of the Minister for Defence, Cathal Brugha. From stories I heard subsequently, it would appear that the Director of Intelligence, Michael Collins, opposed the plan as being as impracticable and out of harmony with his own plans.

RAIDS ON MAILS.

The first of these was the seizure of the Castle mails at Lower Dominick St., en route to the Castle from the Rink. This raid was carried out by the squad under Mick McDonnell's command. In the party were Tom Keogh, Jim Slattery, Vincie Byrne and myself; there may have been one or two others, but I cannot recollect them.

The next raid was on the chief sorting office in the Rink, and was carried out by a party of Volunteers selected by the Vice-Commandant of the 2nd Battalion, Oscar Traynor. As it took place immediately before I joined the Intelligence Staff, I was acting under the command of Traynor on that occasion.

I was in the first party to approach the Rink, and entered the building by going down the mail chutes for the bags. Joe Dolan and another Intelligence Officer had already entered the building and joined our party in holding up the postal staff.

This raid was made possible by the information and maps

supplied by one of our contacts, Patrick Moynihan (118), indicating the layout of the Rink and the section where the Government mails were sorted and held.

It is interesting to note that an armoured car always accompanied the mails in transit, and that the building was equipped with alarm bells direct to the Castle. Fortunately, the raid was carried out with such swiftness that we were able to frustrate any attempt to give an alarm, and all government mails for the various Departments were successfully seized. These included mails for the R.I.C., Under-Secretary, Viceroy, military, etc.

The third raid was on Ballsbridge post office. While operating with the Intelligence Department, we received a report that the newly-formed Auxiliary Division with their headquarters at Beggars Bush Barracks, sent a tender of Cadets each morning at about nine o'clock to collect their mails at Ballsbridge post office.

Having surveyed the collections, I submitted a report which was transferred to the Brigadier for local action, and a successful seizure of the Auxiliaries' mails was made.

The knowledge gained through captured documents was of great value to us. Not alone was the information thus obtained of military importance, but the fact that the transmission of mails became unreliable deterred many would-be informers from sending information through the post.

As a matter of interest, the addresses obtained from the private correspondence of Auxiliary Cadets helped to establish the identity of these people, together with their home addresses in Great Britain. After the burning and sacking of Irish towns, reprisals were taken by the I.R.A. in Great Britain by burning some of the Cadets' homes.

Arising out of the initial shootings and raids for mails, large sums were offered by way of rewards to the people of Dublin for information which would lead to the arrest of the participants.

ATTEMPTED RESCUE OF ^{obert} RICHARD BARTON, T.D., AT BERKELEY ROAD.

On 12th February 1920, on instructions from the Brigadier, we took up positions at the junction of Mountjoy St., Berkeley Road and Nelson St. We had been advised that Barton, who was on trial in the Dublin police courts, would be removed to Mountjoy jail in a military van.

When the military van was approaching, some of the Volunteers present ran out a handcart containing painter's ladders, thus stopping the progress of the van. We drew our pistols and surrounded the van. In the excitement one of the Volunteers discharged his revolver, wounding himself in the leg. However, Barton was not with the party in the van, and as they were unarmed, they were allowed to proceed on their way. Major Crew was in charge of the British party, and appealed to us not to lose our heads and shoot them.

PLAN FOR THE WIPING OUT OF THE POLITICAL BRANCH OF "G" DIVISION IN ONE ACTION.

In September 1920, before becoming a whole-time member of the Intelligence Department, when I was assisting the squad, I was instructed to accompany Paddy Daly and Joe Leonard and report with other members of the squad for an operation to be carried out outside the Upper Castle Yard in the maze of alley-ways that approached the rear entrance of to S.S. Michael and John's Church.

We took up the various positions indicated by Mick McDonnell, and we were advised that a party of the political

branch of "G" Division would leave from the Upper Castle Yard on their way to eight o'clock Mass in the church mentioned, as was their habit. This was the only occasion that these much-wanted men left the Castle during the week.

Tom Cullen, who was the Assistant Director of Intelligence, took up a position quite close to the Castle Gate, and on a signal from him the job was to proceed. The reason that this signal was necessary before action taking place was to safeguard McNamara should he be a member of the party leaving the Castle, as happened. On the first occasion the job was abortive for this reason. Each subsequent Sunday we took up positions, but the job was called off on the spot, due to the fact that Terry McSwiney was not dead. The latter had been on hunger-strike for a lengthy period, and Collins deferred action until such time as McSwiney would die, so that this would be a fitting climax. In all, we took up positions on four or five Sundays.

BRITISH MILITARY FIRED ON AT NEWCOMEN BRIDGE.

On a Sunday morning early in the month of October 1920, accompanied by Joe Leonard of the squad, we called to collect Paddy Daly at his residence, Bessboro' Avenue, North Strand, shortly after curfew had ended. We were proceeding shortly after 7 o'clock to report to Michael McDonnell at Saints Michael and John's in connection with the attempted ambush of members of the political branch of the "G" Division.

Approaching Newcomen Bridge, a lorry containing British "Tommys" passed us by and pulled up on the Canal Bridge, the soldiers taking up positions on the bridge for search and hold-up purposes. The three of us turned sharply at left angles down Ossory Road where we crossed a wall on to the railway lines. We took Daly's gun from him and he proceeded to join the squad at its rendezvous, having to pass through

the military picket. As daylight broke, we saw a sergeant and some soldiers walking down the railway in our direction, so we decamped and proceeded along the link-line towards Drumcondra. From each overhead bridge we could see a military party on each corresponding canal bridge. At 8.30 a.m., which was approximately the time the squad would be returning, we decided to fire on the military holding, Binn's Bridge, Drumcondra. We both emptied our pistols - I was using a mauser (a peter-the-painter) and Leonard, a colt (.45), and we saw two soldiers fall as a result of our fire. The range was approximately 200 yards. We proceeded along the railway for about a quarter of a mile and climbed down on to the roadway in the neighbourhood of my house. We continued along to Botanic Avenue to the house of a Volunteer Goggins where we left our arms.

As a result of the unexpected attack, the military cordon was withdrawn from all canal bridges and the roads left free again.

Subsequently, Brigadier McKee sent for me and asked me what was in my mind in firing on the soldiers. He seemed to be satisfied with the explanation I gave him. Shortly afterwards, this action was cited in 'An tOglach' as a splendid example of initiative and, as far as I know, this was the first occasion on which British military had been fired on since the Insurrection. Following this incident the policy of the I.R.A. was extended so as to include attacks on armed soldiers in addition to police and enemy agents.

SWOOP ON ENEMY AGENTS ON 21st NOVEMBER 1920.

I was instructed by the Deputy Director of Intelligence to contact a girl who had reported to a Volunteer about some strange residents who were occupying the block of flats in

which she was a maid. I met her in this Volunteer's home over a shop in Talbot St. I think his name was Byrne. I questioned the girl, whose name was Maudie. She described the routine of the residents of the flats, and it would seem from her account that they followed no regular occupation but did a lot of office work in their flats. I arranged with her to bring me the contents of the waste-paper baskets. When these were examined we found torn up documents which referred to the movements of wanted Volunteers, and also photographs of wanted men.

The D.I. and G.H.Q. staff then decided, in the light of Intelligence reports supplied, that the only certain method of dealing with these enemy agents was by surprise and general attack, rather than by picking them off individually.

I last met Maudie on the Saturday evening, 20th November 1920, at our rendezvous, and she told me that all her "boarders" were at home, with the exception of two who were changing their residence that night to Upper Mount Street. I duly reported to the Brigade Headquarters and told Dick McKee of the change of address of two of them and he had already briefed all the squads for action on the following morning. However, he made up a patch unit to attend to the officers in Upper Mount Street.

On the Saturday night I stopped as usual in the "dugout" where we used to stay while on the run. This was located in the unoccupied portion of Summerhill Dispensary, and we gave accommodation for the night to several other Volunteers who were going into action in the morning.

Before curfew that night, I left the Brigade office in the Plaza in Gardiner's Row and proceeded to Harcourt St. to meet the officer who would accompany me to 28 and 29 Upper Pembroke St. on the following morning. It was thus that I met Paddy

Flanagan of the 3rd Battalion, and we fixed a rendezvous for the morning.

When I arrived at Upper Pembroke St. on the Sunday morning, I met Flanagan and a few other Volunteers. I explained to Flanagan that we had no keys for the hall doors in order to gain admission, so we went over our arrangements.

Fortunately, at the zero hour of 9 a.m., the hall door was open and the porter was shaking mats on the steps. There were separate staircases in this double house; and a party proceeded up either staircase to the rooms already indicated. I accompanied Flanagan and two other Volunteers to a room at the top of the house occupied by two officers, one of these being Lieut. Dowling. We knocked at the door and pushed it open. The two officers were awake in bed. They were told to stand up and were then shot.

I told Flanagan that I wanted to search the room and he said: "Search be damned! Get out of here". We proceeded down the staircase to the hallway, where a number of other officers had been rounded up from their rooms and were lined up against the side of the staircase that led in the direction of the basement. Our reaching this level was the signal for a volley.

In all there were six or seven agents in residence at this address, all holding British military commissions. All of them were shot, but a few survived their wounds.

All the papers that were captured that morning were brought to Mrs. Byrne's house in North Richmond St. and were later conveyed by me to our office in Crow Street.

Although instructions were issued for about twenty different operations on the Sunday morning, several were not carried out. Later on, reports were supplied by our officers,

and these were examined and filed in the Intelligence Office. In some instances the excuses put forward for the non-carrying out of instructions were not considered very satisfactory; in particular, those received from the Commandant of the 1st Battalion regarding two addresses they should have visited on the North Circular Road, adjacent to the Phoenix Park.

The effect of this swoop was very marked, inasmuch as Detective McNamara told me that scenes never before witnessed took place in the Castle. Cabs, sidecars and all modes of conveyance brought people into the Castle who had been operating surreptitiously against the I.R.A.; they were driven in there by their consciences in order to secure protection. In this manner, the efficiency and the effectiveness of the British Secret Service in Ireland was brought to a standstill.

THE IGOE SQUAD.

Towards the end of 1920 a young Irish Volunteer officer by the name of Howlett, who had arrived at Broadstone railway station from the West, was waylaid and shot dead by men dressed in civilian clothes. It was inferred by the Castle authorities that this shooting was done by Sinn Fein elements.

In our investigations which followed, the name Igoe was mentioned for the first time in our Intelligence Office, and inquiries were set afoot to identify him, as he and some of his associates had shot Howlett.

A report was received to the effect that several country members of the R.I.C. were living in the Depot, Phoenix Park, and were moving around the city in civilian clothes.

We had no lead to begin inquiries until I was instructed to interview a lady who ran a tea-room and was a member of Cumann na mBan. I made the acquaintance of this lady, Miss Maire Gleeson, the proprietress of the West End Cafe, Parkgate St. This was located adjacent to the main entrance to Phoenix Park, and was a small shop with a tea-rooms attached. Miss Gleeson informed me that amongst her patrons were several plain-clothes R.I.C. men who dropped in shortly before curfew for a light supper fairly frequently. She said they were living in the Depot. From further investigations it was clear that Head Constable Igoe and other members of his party were the diners mentioned by Miss Gleeson.

I duly reported the facts and the Director of Intelligence had active inquiries made through Brigade Intelligence Officers throughout the country as to the absence from their home stations of the constabulary who were engaged on political work.

In retrospect it would appear that some - probably about a dozen - members of the R.I.C. who had become obnoxious in their own areas, through their zeal in tracking down Volunteers, had been transferred to the Depot for special work, and were acting under the instructions of Head Constable Igoe. These men were ideally situated to carry out the task allotted to them, which was evidently the tracking down of country Volunteers visiting the city, and summarily shooting them. In other respects they were invaluable to General Tudor, the officer commanding the Auxiliary Division of the R.I.C., and to the headquarters staff who were dealing with political information from the country, inasmuch as their services were available for identification purposes in connection with reports reaching the Depot from the country. As time passed, inter-communication between Dublin and the

Provinces through the official channels became more hazardous, and the advantage of having men on the spot with a knowledge of their respective local situations was a great asset to the Crown forces.

I met Miss Gleeson several times, but the information obtained was insufficient for an ambush to be arranged. Although efforts were made many times in this connection, the movements of these men were so erratic that no results could be obtained.

In January 1921, the Director of Intelligence had transferred to Dublin a Volunteer by the name of Thomas Newell (also known as Sweeney Newell) who knew Igoe personally, and Newell was attached to our Department in an external capacity.

About this time Igoe and his squad had adopted a technique of moving as a patrol through the streets of Dublin in a formation that was not noticeable to the pedestrians, and if they came across any country Volunteers in their strolls they either arrested them or beat them up and then arrested them. Needless to remark, as street activities became more general, this patrol became a menace to the Dublin Volunteers who were moving around the streets carrying out ambushes or other jobs.

On a weekday in January, Newell rushed in to our office in Crow St. at about eleven o'clock in the morning and stated that he had seen Igoe and his party proceeding up Grafton St. in the direction of St. Stephen's Green. I immediately accompanied Newell, and, simultaneously, instructions were sent to the squad, who were "standing by" in the headquarters in Upper Abbey St., to assemble at St. Stephen's Green and await instructions from me.

As Igoe had been in the habit of visiting railway stations, I assumed that he was heading for Harcourt Street station and that should this be so we could manoeuvre our squad into action positions on St. Stephen's Green, West, to ambush Igoe's party on their return journey.

Newell and I proceeded to Grafton St. by the shortest route, and when we had almost reached Weir's jewellery stores in Grafton Street, I noticed that we had been passed by some men, who, I instinctively recognised as Igoe's party, although Newell had not had time to confirm this. When they had passed us out, they wheeled on us, and at close range said: "Don't move", which we did not, as we were unarmed. This manoeuvre took place with pedestrians passing by, unaware of anything unusual taking place.

Without much delay, we were told to keep walking, and a surrounding formation of Igoe's squad kept pace with us as well as accompanying us.

We walked, as directed, up Suffolk St. and down Trinity St. until we came to a building in Dame St. (No. 38) which was an insurance office, where we were directed to stand against the wall. Newell was kept several paces away from me, and we were surrounded by a bodyguard on either side. I should mention that Newell was dressed in typical country fashion. He was wearing a cap and greatcoat, and was easily identifiable as a man from the country.

Igoe, whom I had identified from his description, first questioned Newell and later questioned me, but neither of us could hear the other's answers.

While in this predicament, I saw Vincent Byrne and other members of the squad cutting across Dame St. and going through Hely's Arch, on their way to St. Stephen's Green to

the rendezvous. They evidently thought that I was engaged in conversation with some friends, as they made no effort to approach us.

In reply to the questions put to me, I gave my correct name and address. I stated that I was a believer in Home Rule and that my father was a J.P. and did not agree with the Sinn Fein policy.

Newell endeavoured to bluff also, and we were asked how we came to know one another. I stated that he was a stranger I had met on the street who had got into conversation with me and that I was directing him somewhere or other. I failed to realise at the time that Igoe was aware of Newell's position in the Galway Volunteers and knew him quite well. Under the interrogation Newell lost his temper and told Igoe that he knew who he was, just as well as Igoe knew him. His outburst ended any further questioning.

I was told to walk on and not look back. I walked on in the direction of Trinity St., knowing from the footsteps behind me that I was under cover by some of Igoe's men. I moved fairly slowly at first, not being physically able to go any faster. I moved through Trinity St., Suffolk St. and into Wicklow St., gaining a few yards on each bend and keeping civilians, as far as possible, in the line of fire between myself and my pursuers.

When I turned the corner of Wicklow St. I made a dash of about thirty or forty yards and entered a building where my father had his commercial offices. I went up the two flights of stairs into his office and was practically in a state of collapse on reaching it. My father's typist was in the office, but I did not speak to her as I expected to hear the sound of steps on the stairs any second. After ^{about} five

minutes, as nothing happened, I asked her to put on her hat and coat and accompany me, which she did. We walked out from the office and cut up Clarendon St. as far as St. Stephen's Green, where I parted with my pilot and located the squad.

Having told Tom Keogh what happened, I got hold of a gun and we all returned to Dame St. in the hope of overtaking some of Igoe's party. We searched several streets in the area without coming across them. We assumed that they must have entered the Castle, as they were nowhere to be seen.

Our surmise proved to be somewhat correct. Although Newell was not brought into the Castle, some of Igoe's men went in and secured motor cars. Newell was brought - I think he was walked - to Greek St. adjacent to the Bridewell, where he was riddled and thrown into a car and driven to King George V Hospital. His wounds did not prove fatal, however, but before receiving medical aid his legs, which had been broken by bullets, were twisted in an effort to get information from him. He was detained in custody, and was one of the first prisoners claimed by Michael Collins on the signing of the Treaty.

Subsequently, an all-out effort was made, not alone by the Active Service Unit, but by all units that were available in the Dublin Brigade, to shoot Igoe and his party. Many abortive attempts were made, without the desired effect. Possibly Igoe became more cautious, because they used Ford cars for their excursions between the Depot and the Castle, and did not move around on foot except on very rare occasions.

The personnel of Igoe's party was never fully established, beyond the fact that it contained members from the different "hot spots" in the country. They were all Irishmen who had considerable service in the R.I.C., with the exception of a Scotsman who was known as Jock. He may

have become associated through his membership of the Black and Tans. Due to the fact that he had committed some crime, they did not want him to appear in police uniform.

Igoe's party were effective in their duties, and picked up a number of Volunteers, many of whom, fortunately, were imprisoned. This party became one of the most difficult and dangerous forces opposed to the I.R.A. in Dublin.

VINCENT FOUVARGE AND BRIGADE INTELLIGENCE.

Later on, the Brigade Intelligence Service was organised by the appointment of an Intelligence Officer to each Company in the Brigade. These, in turn, operated through a Battalion Intelligence Officer, who then reported to the Brigade Intelligence Officer. None of these men ^{was} ~~was~~ whole time on the Intelligence Staff, and only operated on Intelligence as part of their Volunteer duties.

The first Brigade I.O. was Peter Ennis.

1st Battalion I.O. - Tom Walsh.

2nd Battalion I.O. -

3rd Battalion I.O.

4th Battalion I.O. - Vincent Fouvarge.

During the course of a Crown forces raid, Fouvarge was arrested. He was questioned and released. It would appear that while in captivity he divulged information regarding his I.R.A. duties and associations. Fouvarge left Dublin for London and was shot on a golf course by Sam Maguire or his men, on the instructions of the Director of Intelligence.

Arising out of that incident, Peter Ennis was arrested by Captain Hardy and company and received inhuman treatment in the Castle, all his teeth being kicked out. It was believed that there was a connection between Ennis's arrest and Fouvarge's information.

ATTEMPTED LARGE-SCALE AMBUSH OF "F" COY., AUXILIARIES.

A large party of specially picked Volunteers from the 2nd Battalion, under Sean Russell and Tom Ennis, took up positions one night on the Great Northern railway bridge which runs across Seville Place. I was in the party and there was a Volunteer from "E" Company, 2nd Battalion, who worked in the shipyards, and he had invented a super bomb. This was constructed with a large outer case containing rivets, and must have weighed several stone. The intention was to drop this bomb from the bridge into the street at the opportune moment.

The plan of operation was that my colleague, Tom Cullen, Assistant D.I., would ring Dublin Castle from a house in Seville Place, and inform them that the Battalion headquarters was full of Volunteers. The house selected to telephone from was that of a Unionist, adjacent to 100 Seville Place, which was Battalion Headquarters.

It was assumed that on receipt of the message by Dublin Castle authorities, they would send several tenders of Auxiliaries to raid the hall. Although in position for almost an hour, no raid was made by the authorities on the hall, but a convoy of Auxiliaries with armoured cars passed along Amiens St. from the Castle and proceeded out to Killester, where they raided Furry Park, the residence of a friend of Michael Collins.

From inquiries made later, an unconfirmed report stated that the Castle authorities 'phoned the nearest D.M.F. Bks. and instructed them to send a D.M.F. man to find out if the building was occupied, and that when he arrived he found it in total darkness and no sign of life within. On the other hand, it may have been that all their available forces were already detailed for the raid which was carried out at Killester about the same hour.

SECRET MEETINGS OF DÁIL ÉIREANN.

One such meeting was convened and held at Alderman Cole's house in Mountjoy Square, at which, I believe, important decisions were made regarding the progress of the war. Only those members who were not in jail or interned attended and, as most of these were Volunteer officers, and more particularly, because Michael Collins, Cathal Brugha and Dick McKee were attending, myself and a few other members of the Intelligence Department performed security guard duties at the house to deal with any attempted raid by Crown forces.

On another occasion we took up similar protective duty outside the residence of Professor O'Rahilly in Herbert Park where Michael Collins and members of the headquarters staff of the I.R.A. were meeting de Valera after his return from America.

CAPTURE OF ARMOURED CAR.

In late April 1921 I was instructed one evening by the Assistant Director of Intelligence to report to the Plaza Hotel in Gardiner's Row. This building was being used as the offices of a Trade Union body, and one of the offices was now our brigade headquarters. When I walked into the room I saw several staff officers assembled. Among them was the Director of Intelligence, Michael Collins. I knew Michael by sight, but this was the first occasion on which I met him face to face. He was sitting at a table, and he gave me a friendly nod when I reported to him. I felt very important to be in such company, but at the same time the presence of Michael completely overawed me. I was very vexed with myself not to be able to be at my ease, as I was most anxious to make a good impression.

He told me that the Superintendent of the Corporation abattoir (who was also a Volunteer officer) had reported to him that an armoured car called to the abattoir each morning at six o'clock to escort supplies of meat to the military barracks. "I want you to go to the Superintendent's house", he said, "and observe the movements of the crew and see if there is any possibility of capturing the car".

Sean MacEoin was a prisoner in Mountjoy Jail. He was a fine and chivalrous soldier, having conducted the campaign in Longford with brilliant success and great humanity; but he had been captured after an ambush and was awaiting his courtmartial at which he was certain to be hanged. Michael Collins was determined to rescue him and, with the help of an armoured car, there was a chance. I was to take up residence in the Superintendent's house, and to make my observations over several mornings.

The next night, shortly before curfew, I went to the house. The Superintendent's wife, Mrs. Lynch, was expecting me. Her husband, the Volunteer, was "on the run" and very much wanted by the Authorities, so that he was unable to sleep at home. The house was raided for him from time to time, which added to the precariousness of my position.

It was moonlight, and, while paying due attention to what Mrs. Lynch was telling me, my eyes wandered round looking for a possible way of escape in the event of a raid on the house. To my horror I saw something else - a sight calculated to strike far greater fear to my soul than the approach of any number of armed men. Below me, scurrying about in the moonlight, were shoals of rats! I withdrew hastily from the window, making up my mind that, if that were my only way out, I would cheerfully allow myself to be murdered in my bed.

I was then shown to my room which looked most comfortable and inviting, and, after an excellent supper, I retired for the night. Mrs. Lynch promised to call me in good time so that I could watch the arrival of the armoured car in the morning. She was as good as her word, and, hurriedly dressing myself, I went down and took up my position by the drawing-room window. Kneeling down, I could see, through the lace fringe at the bottom of the blind, all that was going on. I saw the arrival of the armoured car. It accompanied two lorries and, while it pulled up exactly on the spot opposite the window, only a dozen paces away, which Mrs. Lynch had pointed out to me, the lorries were driven on up the yard to be loaded with the meat.

I saw the door of the car opened. Four soldiers got out. They were dressed in dungarees and each had a revolver on the holster of his belt. Lighting cigarettes, they stood chatting. It was a double-turreted car, and I knew the crew consisted of six men. On getting out, one of the soldiers had locked in the other two by fastening a small padlock on the door.

Morning after morning at six o'clock I took up my position behind the window and saw this performance repeated. The lorries, conducted by the armoured car, made several journeys with their cargoes of meat to and from the various barracks. While they were away I had my breakfast and made friends with the two children of whom I had grown very fond.

Every morning I made my observations and every day I reported them to Liam.

After a week I was summoned to another meeting at brigade headquarters. On this occasion we met at Barry's Hotel, a few doors from the Plaza, where to my surprise, and gratification, I again saw Michael Collins.

We sat around a table. Michael asked me to tell him what I had seen and what my opinion was in view of my observations.

I described the arrival of the car, the several journeys it made, and the conduct of the crew. I produced a sketch of my own, showing the position usually occupied by the car when in the abattoir. They heard me out without interruption. When I had finished, Michael Collins addressed me:

"I take it from your report you consider it possible to capture the car?"

"I do, Sir" said I, "but our success depends upon the exact arrival of our men at the opportune moment, which may only occur very occasionally".

I had already explained to the meeting that during the dozen or so times I had had the car under observation, only on one occasion did the whole crew leave it. Until such another occasion arose we could not capture it. When it did arise, it would be necessary for our men to be at hand to seize it instantly. This seemed to satisfy Michael.

"Since they left it once, they will probably do so again" he said.

He then addressed the others in turn. He first questioned Pat McCrea. Pat is a Co. Wicklow man, about forty years of age, an older man than most of us. He was out in the Larkin Strike and took part in the Rising, and was always to be found wherever there was any hard fighting to be done. Of a gentle disposition and charming manner, he endeared himself to everyone who ever had the pleasure of serving with him. Meeting him, it would not occur to you that he was a soldier, on account of the mildness of his address. Only, if you were observant, you might notice a directness in his glance which corrected your impression of his entirely peaceful disposition. He was our crack driver and took part in practically every action in Dublin.

Another meeting of the key men was held the following night, when final arrangements were made and last instructions given.

I returned to my post behind the blind.

Our plans for concerted action were now complete. The Volunteers, who were to hold up the soldier and to seize the car, were to gather unostentatiously in the neighbourhood of the abattoir. One man was to lie concealed in a spot from which he could see the window of one of the rooms in the Superintendent's house. From my vantage point I was to watch for the first occasion when all six men would leave the car. When this occurred I was to give a signal - I would raise the blind in that room which was visible to the waiting Volunteer. The moment he saw the blind go up, he would signal to the others who would appear at once upon the scene of action.

All of us were in our respective positions on the following morning. But only four of the soldiers left the car and, greatly disappointed, I saw there was again no chance. As soon as the car had moved off, I slipped out by the back and, getting on my bicycle, I made my way to headquarters. The waiting Volunteers, seeing me depart, moved away, knowing the job was off for that morning.

On the next morning, 14th May 1921, we made a slight change in our plans.

As usual, I was at my observation post at 6 a.m. When the car arrived I formed the opinion that the crew were in a not over-zealous mood. They seemed to be less vigilant. That was my impression.

As soon as they drove off escorting the first delivery of meat, I made my way on my bicycle to a stable

in Abbey St. which was used as a rendezvous and place of waiting by the Active Service Unit.

Here were assembled all the men on the job waiting for my message. Michael Collins was with them and I made my report.

MacEoin's days were now numbered, and Michael, fretted by the continual delays and disappointments, was most anxious that the attempt should be made at once. I told him I was optimistic and thought there would be a chance later in the morning when the armoured car returned. I based my hopes on that appearance of carelessness in the mood of the crew. Hurrying back to the house, once more I took up my position behind the blind. I was not long there when I saw the car return. It drew up outside the window. I saw four of the crew get out and wander away through the slaughter-houses. They had not locked the door of the car! I became excited and hopeful. With my eyes glued to the door, I wished with my whole being to see the remaining two soldiers step out. For a whole ten minutes I waited. Then I saw the door swing open. It had happened! I had got my wish!

On stepping out, they lit cigarettes, and one of them shut the door, locking the padlock and putting the key in his pocket.

Nearly suffocating with excitement, I rushed into the room from which my signal was to be given and I raised the blind.

That was the most awful decision I have ever had to make. Those few moments were the longest of my life, while I waited to see the approach of our men up the avenue which led to the abattoir. From that window I could not see the car. It was possible that during those two minutes the soldiers had got in again and I would see the massacre of my comrades,

men whose places could never be filled, and feel myself responsible for their loss.

While I waited, I shouted to Mrs. Lynch to get the children out of the way. We had arranged together that she should take them to a back bedroom, where they would be safe from stray bullets in the event of any firing.

Then I saw two Volunteers pass by the window. I recognised Tom Keogh. Dashing back to my post of observation at the other window, I was in time to see the two soldiers with their hands up, while our men were taking their revolvers. All my anxiety was over now. I was full of joy and relief.

The other Volunteers were scattering through the buildings, searching for the rest of the crew, who had gone to watch the animals being slaughtered.

Our men were getting ready to take over the armoured car. From my window I watched Pat McCrae, with a benign expression on his face, struggling to get his legs into a pair of dungarees. The other members of our crew were doing the same, while the soldiers were kept covered. They had brought dungarees in parcels, ready. They were dressing up for their new parts. I saw Pat take the cap off one of the Tommies and put it on his own head. It was too small for him. he jammed it on his head anyhow, so that it had a rakish look, while he still struggled to get his foot out through the leg of the dungarees. I found myself laughing as I watched him, and I waited to see him search the soldiers for the key of the padlock and, finding it, unlock the door of the car.

I had now seen enough. I ran upstairs to Mrs. Lynch. I told her the good news. Then I locked her and the children into one of the bedrooms, so that when the authorities arrived and the house was searched, she would not be suspected of any

complicity, but would appear to be but one more of our victims.

At that moment I heard several shots ring out. It was necessary to be off. Jumping on my bicycle I hurried to the house where Joe and Emmet were waiting. It was round the corner in the North Circular Road. They were ready, dressed in the British uniforms. I had just time to notice that they looked very well in them.

"Come on", said I, still breathless with excitement, "the car will be along any minute".

They came out into the street. At the same moment the car appeared. We saw it turning out of the avenue and coming towards us. I saw Emmet and Joe picked up, and then, the happiest young man in Dublin that morning, I cycled away to the stable in Abbey St. There I found Michael Collins waiting. His look searched mine for an answer to the question there was no need to ask. He was overjoyed, and my satisfaction was unbounded to be the bearer of such good news to him. He was all smiles. "I hope the second part will be as successful", he said.

AMBUSH OF BRITISH TROOPS AT DRUMCONDRA, 16th JUNE 1921.

I accompanied a party from the squad and the A.S.U. in an endeavour to ambush a train containing newly-arrived troops in Ireland, en route to the Curragh.

This ambush was arranged to take place after many of the active Volunteers had been rounded up at the Custom

House burning, and an all-out effort was being made by those still at liberty to increase the number of attacks, so that the enemy would not be aware of the depletion the Custom House arrests had made in the ranks of the active Volunteers in Dublin.

We took up positions along the roadway adjoining the railway embankment adjacent to Lindsay Road, and myself and another Volunteer, with a Thompson gun each, took up position in a laneway covering the railway line adjacent to St. Columba's Road, Upper.

The party armed with grenades bombed the train before it came to our position. My companion opened fire with his gun, but I did not get my gun into action as the target only presented itself for about one minute. Neither of us had ever handled a Thompson gun before this. As a result of the fire, several soldiers were wounded. The train continued on its course, and the attackers decamped.

This was the first occasion on which the two Thompson sub-machine guns that were in the country were brought into action. It may not be irrelevant to mention that two American ex-officers of Irish descent had come to Ireland to offer their fighting services to Collins. Their names were Dineen and Cronin. Before this train ambush, they had demonstrated the Thompson guns, of which two had been successfully smuggled into the country, at the Casino, Malahide Road, to Michael Collins and some of his associates, but I was not personally present on this occasion and had not seen the gun in action before the train ambush. I was not given any instructions on the handling and loading of the Thompson machine guns. The two guns were brought to the rendezvous in a van, and myself and the other gunner were handed one each, which we had to keep concealed under our coats until the train came into view. However, I later made myself familiar with its mechanism, and carried one in the encircling movement of Grafton St. later on.

EFFORTS TO PREVENT HANGINGS AT MOUNTJOY.

On three or four occasions a number of Volunteers had been hanged in Mountjoy jail by the public hangman, who crossed from England to carry out the executions. On each occasion an effort was made to intercept the hangman before he reached the jail, but in no instance was this successful.

On one such occasion I was instructed to proceed to Kingstown, as a report had been received that Ellis, the hangman, and his assistant were to arrive there some days before the date fixed for the executions.

The squad had a van stored in a garage at the rear of Lower Fitzwilliam St. and a Volunteer named Paddy Kelly undertook to drive it. Kelly was living with other Volunteers at an address in South William St., and it was necessary for me to stay with him overnight, as curfew was imposed at an early hour and did not finish until five or six o'clock in the morning. We left South William St. immediately after curfew, or possibly before it ended, and proceeded to Lower Fitzwilliam St. where we took out the car and drove to Kingstown, where we met Jimmy Murray, 6th Battalion I.O. We waited at the pier head and watched those passengers who disembarked from the mail boat and proceeded to waiting cars to drive to town. We had a description of the hangman, but no passenger thus alighting resembled him.

The information which we had received was of the most meagre character, and subsequently it was ascertained that the hangman always arrived in Dublin several days before the executions, were taken to Mountjoy in an armoured car and left there under special protection.

ENCIRCLEMENT OF AREA IN DUBLIN BY CROWN FORCES.

In company with two members of the squad, Joe Leonard and Jimmy Conroy, I was staying on the run at night in the Summerhill Dispensary, having secured permission to do so from Relieving Officer Madden.

We were awakened one morning during curfew, and saw from our bedroom window large parties of military on the street. They were driving sticks into the ground and erecting barbed wire entanglements. We also saw tanks and armoured cars, and, guessing that there was something unusual afoot, we decided to vacate our quarters. While crossing the back wall into the laneway we saw a Tommy, but as his back was turned to us, he did not see us. We crossed further walls and got on to the roadway at the N.C.Road.

While proceeding along the N.C.Road towards Jones's Road three tenders of Auxiliaries passed. They did not see us, because, fortunately, a doorway opened and a postman inquired from us what hour it was. Leonard pushed him into the doorway and closed the door behind him; we scampered down a side road.

WHAT MICK McDONNELL ASKED ME TO RECORD.

Two years ago, Mick McDonnell was on a visit to this country from California, and he spent an evening with me discussing matters about which he said he would like me to have the correct facts. He also promised that, if an opportunity arose, he would give me a resumé of his complete activities in the movement, but, unfortunately, that never materialised, and it can never be done as he died recently.

Regarding the formation of the squad, Mick stated that a number of selected Volunteers were assembled at 42 North Great Georges St. on the instructions of Dick McKee. These

men, many of them with service in the 1916 insurrection, were informed by the Brigadier that a certain line of action would be necessary if the movement was to continue. In this connection he indicated that it would be necessary to shoot some members of the "G" Division whose political activities had jeopardised the activities of the re-formed Volunteers.

There were present three or four members of each of the five companies which then constituted the 2nd Battalion, and after the Brigadier's address, most of those present refused to give an affirmative answer to the request made by him. Some of the men advanced the reason that they could not do such work as it would be contrary to their consciences; others stated that they would think the matter over and get spiritual advice before giving an answer, and, finally, some of them stated that, while they were prepared to carry out acts of open warfare, they were not prepared to shoot a man down unwarned. (The "G" men had received several warnings before action was taken).

Mick McDonnell told me that when the question was put to those present from "E" Company, he stepped out of the ranks as also did Jim Slattery and, probably, Vincent Byrne and Tom Keogh.

I was discussing this matter subsequently with Jim Slattery and he confirmed Mick McDonnell's story and stated that he said to the Brigadier: "I am prepared to carry out any and every order I receive from you".

Mick McDonnell told me that amongst the dissenters, for one reason or another, were Cyril Daly, Oscar Traynor (?), I think, and Frank Kearney, all of "F" Company, 2nd Battalion.

From my close association with the various members of the squad subsequently, I learned that in the initial stages a few jobs were carried out independently by Paddy Daly, Joe Leonard and Ben Barrett. At one period of the fighting, Paddy Daly was imprisoned as was also Joe Leonard. This would suggest that two squads operated in the early stages. Later on, the squad consisted of about twelve members. Paddy Daly, after his release from Ballykinlar, took charge of the newly-formed active service unit, while Joe Leonard continued in the squad.

During my association with the squad and previous to my joining the Intelligence Staff, Mick McDonnell was in charge of the operations I was concerned with, namely, the seizure of the mail van at Lower Dominick St. and the attempt to ambush "G" men at SS. Michael and John's Church. Later on, when the squad had reached its full strength of about a dozen men, they stood-to for hours at Seville Place and other centres and acted on the instructions of the Deputy Director of Intelligence.

It might not be inapt to add in conclusion that throughout the whole period of active service in which I was associated with members of the squad and Intelligence and Volunteers in the city, I found that the morale was always very high and that everyone was anxious to do his part without any consideration as to personal danger or inconvenience and that a very strong spirit of comradeship resulted which, I am glad to say, survived in the years that followed.

Signed: Charles Dalton

Date: 12th October 1950

Witness: W. Jerry Condit

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