

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BURO STAIRÉ MILEATA 1913 21

No. W.S. 435



BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 435.....

Witness

Tadhg Crowley,
Ballylanders,
Co. Limerick.

Identity

O/C. Ballylanders Company;
Adjutant East Limerick Brigade;
Member of East Limerick Flying Column.

Subject

- (a) National activities 1913-1922;
- (b) Rescue of Sean Hogan, Knocklong, 13/5/1919;
- (c) Burning of Kilmallock R.I.C. Barracks, 27/5/20;
- (d) East Limerick Flying Column, 1920.

Conditions, if any, stipulated by Witness

Nil

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STATEMENT BY TADHG CROWLEY

Ballylanders, County Limerick.

In 1911 a man named Willie Fraher was home from Manchester. He was a native of Ballylanders, and he was very enthusiastic about Sinn Féin at the time. He told me that we would never get anything from England except we fought for it, and I was very much impressed by what he had stated, although not enthusiastic about his point of view.

Subsequently when the Volunteers were started in 1913 I became enthusiastic about the Volunteer movement, and we decided to hold a meeting about December of that year. We arranged a meeting after Mass in Ballylanders on a Sunday morning. We got out a wagonette from Jack Clery's to form the platform, and Willie Manahan, who was the creamery manager in Ardpatrick, was the only speaker that we had. He addressed the meeting and told the people to join up this new movement. Ned Ryan was there, and Manahan's brother Jack was there, and we started the movement. The following week we had drill in the National School yard.

Each week afterwards we used hold meetings in the school yard, and were usually drilled by ex-soldiers of the British Army. I recognised that these ex-soldiers who were drilling the Volunteers were not specially expert in military training, but, having been members of the British Army they had an idea how to handle men. I recognised early on that it would be far better if we had somebody who was in the Volunteers and took an interest in trying to drill and train men. On one occasion when we were out on a route march from the village I came to the conclusion that the earlier that some of our own people would take command the better. The

particular ex-soldier we had was John O'Brien, and he said, when we were on the route march, "When I say 'Halt' you all stand up of a suddint". I said then that it was time to get rid of those. I stepped in myself and got an instruction book and took charge of the Volunteers from that onwards.

Some time about the end of June, 1914, Roger Casement was billed to review the Galtee Brigade at Mitchelstown, County Cork, about nine miles from Ballylanders, but he did not attend. Colonel Maurice Moore and J.J. Walsh, as well as others whom I cannot remember, were there and they addressed the Volunteers. I would imagine that there were about five hundred men there on that day. The Mitchelstown, Anglesboro, Galbally, Ballylanders and Dungrud Companies, and a Company from Knockanevin, as well as some others attended. The whole square in Mitchelstown was lined with Volunteers. I did not have an opportunity of listening to the speeches made by Colonel Moore and J.J. Walsh, as we were all lined up around the square. From Ballylanders on that occasion there were about ninety Volunteers, and we were led to Mitchelstown by Michael Condon of Ballylanders on horseback. Condon was then a member of the Limerick County Council.

Some time after the declaration of war between England and Germany, a Company of British soldiers established a camp at Ballylanders, within about 75 yards of the village, in Walsh's field. They were a cycling Company, comprised I would say of about 25 to 30 cyclists. They were in that field for about ten days when they got swamped out at night in very bad weather. They then commandeered a hall in the village. This hall was owned by Denis O'Grady of Ballylanders, but the committee had rented it from him, and all National functions used to be held there. We, the committee in charge, had put down a new floor and built a

supper room. Mr. O'Grady was informed by the Captain of the British Company that they were commandeering the hall, and we were very concerned about the commandeering. We notified the Captain that the floor and supper room were our property, and that we would not agree to have the hall commandeered. He said, "It is now Government property".

I think it was the following day that the soldiers came along and began to prepare the hall for occupation. They were working on it for some time, and then they left. Some members of the committee, including myself, went in and started taking up the flooring boards. While in the act of doing so, the Captain of the military came along and asked us what we were doing, so we said we were taking our own property. He said, "This is Government property since this morning". I told him that we would hold a meeting of our committee to see what was to be done and that we would give him word that evening.

We duly held a meeting of the committee, at which Michael Hannafin, Tom Murphy and several other members of the committee agreed that we should not give permission to have the place taken over.

Tom Murphy and myself were directed as a deputation to go to the camp and interview the military Captain. We told the sentry who was at a gate of the field near the road that we wanted to see the Captain; that we had informed the Captain earlier in the day that we would give him the committee's decision that night. The sentry permitted us to enter. We met the Sergeant Major near the camp, who said that the Captain had gone to bed, and he kicked up an awful furore and asked who let us in. We said the sentry, so he called the sentry and told him to get us to leave the field at the double and to put the bayonet at our back. We

refused to double, but marched out quietly and returned to the village. When we woke up the following morning the military had disappeared.

In August 1914, or probably July 1914, before the start of the first world war, a camp was formed outside Carrigogunnell, near Clarina, about six miles from Limerick. The man in charge there was Lieutenant Holland, an ex-Lieutenant of the British Army. People attended that camp from different parts of the country, including Dr. Ned Dundon of County Carlow, who formerly resided in Clarina, County Limerick. Some of the Volunteers on that occasion, including myself, wore uniform, and the first shot I fired out of a Service rifle was at Carrigogunnell at a range of about 250 yards.

After returning home from Carrigogunnell Camp I had some ammunition and a couple of Service rifles. On a Sunday we proceeded to Galbally and went up to a range near the Garnalina River, put up a target there, and for the first time the Volunteers of the district understood what a Service rifle was. We gave each man who fired, including those from the Ballylanders, Dungrud and Galbally Companies, three shots apiece. We were too far away from the target to check whether those who fired hit the target or not. While this was going on, two R.I.C. men from Galbally approached within about 100 yards. They did not interfere with us. After each man firing his course, we marched home to our Company areas. On the way, the Ballylanders Company were passing a local priest, who, seeing me in uniform, understood that we were up against the government. He did not like it. I do not wish to mention his name.

About September, 1914, the Volunteer split occurred, and the Volunteers had to decide whether they would side

with Eoin MacNeill or with John Redmond. Most of the Ballylanders Company, of which I was Captain, took the Redmondite side, but I with a strong minority followed MacNeill.

We carried on our usual drilling in the school yard, and soon afterwards a parade was held at Elton, Knocklong, County Limerick, where a competition took place between the various Companies. Galbally, Ballylanders, Hospital, Kildeely and Kilmallock were competing for a prize for the best-drilled section, and also for a prize for the best Company Captain. I had just about 26 men in my Company. While we were on the way to Elton, many people fell into the parade with the Company because they thought we were Redmondite, which was not so. We competed, and Captain Holland of Limerick was the officer in charge of the competition. The Ballylanders Company went into the ring, and I made a mistake in giving an order. I gave an order in moving my Company into two sections which was misinterpreted by one group of the Volunteers. Finally I halted them, marched each man back to his place and then gave the order again and everything was done correctly. I was the only non-British Army man who was in charge of any section in the competition.

Ballylanders Company got first prize and were presented with a cup. Captain Holland then told me that as far as a prize for section commanders or company commanders was concerned, if that competition was to be held I would be sure to get the prize. He asked me did I think it would be wise to hold it, and I told him I thought it would not, as I felt that the ex-British Army men in charge of each of the other Companies might feel aggrieved if a recruit who had never received any military training pulled off the prize.

Mitchelstown Company was at that time part of what was called the Galtee Battalion, and they sent an instructor to Ballylanders occasionally when parades would be on. The instructor they sent was an ex-Irish Guardsman, or probably he was on the Reserve, because he was subsequently called up for service in the Great War. He attended at a parade in Ballylanders when the Rev. Father Coyle, who was a great Irishman and very enthusiastic about the Volunteers, was there at a Corpus Christi procession. The local Company was mobilised and a Guard of Honour arranged for the Blessed Sacrament in the church on the day that the Bishop attended. Father Coyle stated on that occasion that he believed that all those present who were connected with the Volunteers as instructors and who were being called up for service would come back safely. To my knowledge, not one of those who were present on that occasion and subsequently served in the Great War lost his life.

The Galtee Battalion got an order to attend a parade in Limerick of Irish Volunteers at Whitsun, 1915. Ballylanders Company, Galbally, Dungrud, Mitchelstown Companies and probably some others, joined a train at Emly station and proceeded to Limerick. Mitchelstown Company at that time had about 12 or 14 new Lee Enfield rifles. In Ballylanders Company we had only two. Having arrived in Limerick, the parade formed up and we went through Irishtown and were violently attacked by people in that part of the town. We were most unpopular, because many of the people who resented our marching through the city were relatives of men who had joined or taken up their places with their units in the British Army, and many, of course, were in receipt of separation allowances.

I remember on that occasion seeing Pádraig Pearse with the Dublin Battalion that attended. Practically all the

men from Dublin were armed, and we thought we were very unfortunate that we could not be armed in the same way.

Eventually, when proceeding home in the evening, we met with a very hostile reception at Limerick railway station. People, whose friends were in the British Army, came along in a very hostile mood and shots were fired. Captain Monteith was in charge of the Limerick City Brigade on that occasion, and he made sure that everybody got clear. Several fracas took place. Men who had nothing else to fire at the Volunteers but the pipes that they had in their mouths fired them. Bottles were thrown, glasses were brought out of public-houses and fired at the Volunteers. Eventually everybody got clear and the trains returned to their destinations with the contingents who had travelled on that day.

About August (21st August) 1915, arrangements were made by headquarters of the Volunteers to have a military training camp at Galbally, County Limerick. Tents were supplied by Volunteer headquarters, and Colonel O'Connell was put in charge of the camp by headquarters. We remained in Galbally for a couple of days and then marched from there to Kilfinane, County Limerick. We camped in the fields quite near the town. I was appointed for duty as sentry for two hours on that night, and the opinion in the camp was that, the people of the town being hostile, we might be attacked, so another sentry and myself marched up and down seeing the moonlight glinting on our fixed bayonets, and nothing untoward occurred.

The following morning we decided to leave and we marched to Ballylanders and pitched our tents outside the town. We got a great reception from the Ballylanders Cumann na mBan, and presents were showered on us.

I do not recollect very clearly all of the people who attended it, but Michael Kilroy of Mayo had cycled all the way from Mayo to the camp. He was subsequently Fianna Fáil T.D. for Mayo, and after that he was appointed on the Hospitals Commission. Frank Fahy, the present Ceann Comhairle of Dáil Éireann was also there, and O'Connell, a teacher at Caherciveen, as well as Seán Hurley of Athlone, who sang "The Soldiers Song" the first time that it was ever heard in this district. J.J. Burke of Dublin was Camp Q.M. Dick Davis of Dublin was also there. He was a very popular man with all the members of the camp.

On Sunday all the camp members were to march to Galbally, which was just three miles distant. I was unfortunate to be appointed Camp Orderly for the day. Frank Fahy, seeing that I was upset about it, said that he would let me go to Galbally and that he would act as Camp Orderly instead.

After returning from Galbally we proceeded to Quane's field in Anglesboro' - that would be between Mitchelstown and Ballylanders - and there the local Branches of Cumann na mBan came along and made a spread for all the troops.

Every day during this period we had manoeuvres, and O'Connell, the Commandant, being a very hard-working man and having great military experience, took us through our paces in great style.

Séamus Brennan of Tullamore provided the music for us during this period. He had a pair of bagpipes, with which he made our journeys from point to point very easy by his accompaniment.

I must say we had a very pleasant time indeed.

There is one person I think I should have mentioned, that is Peadar Bracken. I think he was employed by D.E. Williams & Co. of Tullamore.

We had a very pleasant time. We learned many useful hints in military training, and I think on the whole at that early stage it was a wonderful idea. We were very grateful to headquarters, and I am sure that all the officers who took part in the camp at that time gave a good account of themselves afterwards.

I think I should have previously mentioned that Captain Robert Monteith, who was sent down from headquarters to take charge of the Limerick City Battalion, used to come from Limerick to Ballylanders to train an officers' class consisting of men from Mitchelstown, Anglesboro, Galbally, Hospital, Knocklong and Kilfinane. He attended this officers' class in Ballylanders for some months before Whitsun, 1915, when the parade took place in Limerick, at which Pádraig Pearse attended. We were given practical training in field work about a quarter of a mile outside the village on Jim McGrath's land, and many hints that he gave us at that time in training proved subsequently to be of very great value to the officers who were trained by him.

Some time during the summer of 1915, I cannot recollect exactly about what time, Ernest Blythe who was organising for Volunteer Headquarters (I am not sure that his job was not to get in touch with members of the Irish Republican Brotherhood) had been in Mitchelstown and he came from Mitchelstown to Ballylanders. He came in the back way into my house. I cannot remember exactly who accompanied him, but he had an interview with me, and we talked about military matters. While in my house, a telegram was received from Mitchelstown to the R.I.C. in Ballylanders. My father at that time was the local post-master and had the telegraph office. The message was brought along by my brother Jack, who was in charge of the telegraph, to me, and I asked Blythe if this would have any reference to him. The message

ran: "To Sergeant, Ballylanders. The parcel left here to-day. Look up." Blythe said, "I am the parcel".

Looking towards the barracks I could see the police on the look-out for Blythe. They seemed to make no move because they had not seen him. Subsequently he left for Galbally, and on his way to Galbally after crossing fields at the back of my house, he asked me whether I belonged to the I.R.B. I said no, that Dr. Dundon had spoken to me previously about it in the camp at Carrigogunnell. Blythe then took me into the I.R.B. Subsequently I learned that before Blythe took me into the I.R.B. he had questioned an existing member whose name was Michael Hannafin, a local school-teacher from County Kerry, who, I believe, was a first cousin of Thomas Ashe. Having learned from Hannafin that I would be a suitable recruit I was duly sworn in.

On 1st August, 1915, Thomas Murphy, myself, and I do not recollect who else from the area, attended the funeral of O'Donovan Rossa to Glasnevin, and I listened to the speech that Pádraig Pearse made over his grave. It certainly made a wonderful impression on me, and when we came back we were more enthusiastic than ever to see that the ideals that O'Donovan Rossa had would be faithfully carried out by us.

Some time after the close of the Galtee Camp I was in Dublin. We had made collections for arms in the Galtee Battalion area. I took the money to Dublin that had been collected, and called to see Micheál O'Hanrahan. I cannot recollect exactly how much money I had, but we had some from each Company area. He informed me that they had no rifles at the time, but that they had shotguns with home-made bayonets. The shotguns were manufactured, as far as I can remember, by Richardsons, gunsmiths, of the United States.

These were delivered to some place in Dublin. I got Dr. Ned Dundon of Carlow to call and collect them. He collected them in a lorry and brought them to Mitchelstown and out to Anglesboro, about four miles from that town. They were subsequently collected and distributed to the different companies in the battalion.

When I was speaking to Micheál O'Hanrahan I asked him whether or not our people in America would be in a position to provide arms, and he stated that the Americans were very good to subscribe all right, but that what we wanted to get badly were arms, and that they did not seem to make any effort to collect arms and to send them on to this country.

I recollect that at about that time I went to Lawler's in Fownes St. and purchased a Martini Enfield rifle which was brought subsequently to my home in Ballylanders by my sister, Bridie, who was then a pupil in the Presentation Convent in Dunlaoghaire.

Some time during the year 1915 we had a dance in the hall in Ballylanders and about nine or ten Volunteers, including John Joe Crawford, Tom Murphy, my brother, Joe Crowley, myself, Paddy Hannigan and Jack Meade left the hall and cycled about five miles away to a house in the Glen of Aherlow, where we understood National Volunteer rifles were concealed. We arrived at about one o'clock the following morning, made a thorough search of the house and found no arms or ammunition in the place. The following morning the owner of the house, Mr. Meade, attended an auction some place near the Glen of Aherlow. He met the local sergeant and informed him that several police and detectives from the town of Tipperary had made a raid on his house the night before. He asked him why he had not been there. The sergeant was very annoyed because forces from an outside district had come into

his area without informing him, and thereafter went on to Tipperary to find out why a raid had been made in his district without him being informed of it. The people we had engaged in the raid were dressed in police uniforms which had previously been used in a play in the hall. It was a play called "Partition" in which police uniforms were used. These uniforms were used by some of our men, and the other men were ostensibly detectives.

The sergeant, having got in touch with police headquarter in Tipperary, was informed that no police or detectives from Tipperary had been out the night before.

The following morning what they called the "Black Maria", a police van, came from Tipperary to Ballylanders Barracks informing the local police of the raid that had been made the night before and asking if they had any information about people from the district who might have been there.

I might mention that after the raid and before we proceeded homewards we made a collection between ourselves and found that we had the price of two bottles of ginger wine. One man of the party took the money, went into a publichouse called the 'Caravanserai' and ordered two bottles of ginger wine from the lady behind the bar. He brought it out and we consumed the two bottles of ginger wine on the road and then proceeded homewards.

On our way home we came to a crossing between Mitchelstown and Galbally called Garnalina Cross. We rolled our bicycles on the road towards Mitchelstown, then got off, took them on our shoulders, came back and went portion of the road towards Ballylanders in order to deflect the attention of anybody who might be tracing us. We then left our bicycles down and cycled home.

After the attack on Ballylanders barracks, about May 1920, a record of this raid was found on the police records. They were able to describe the men who went into the publichouse, the 'Caravanserai', for the two bottles of ginger wine. The lady behind the counter had described accurately to the police the man who called. He happened to be a first cousin to the man whose house we raided. The police at that time took every precaution to record everybody who was strange coming into any area, so this record captured in the attack on Ballylanders barracks proved to be very accurate.

Early in 1916 an Aeridheacht was held at Lough Gur, Co. Limerick. Eoin MacNeill and Michael Colivet, Limerick, who was the O/C. of the Limerick City Volunteers at that time, attended. Colivet informed me on that day that if anything was to occur, the password or the indication of anything occurring would be that "the football match is on". Volunteer officers from different areas attended the same day, but it was not at ~~the~~ meeting that Colivet informed me about the password for action. He spoke to me by myself, nobody else being present, and I anticipated that when I would get word to the effect that the football match was on it would be an indication of the day or date we would rise.

I think it was early in 1916 that the postmaster in Kilmallock post office came to Ballylanders to interview my father, Timothy Crowley, who was then postmaster in Ballylanders post office. He had directions from the government to interview my father and ask that all members of the family who were in the I.R.A. and my sister, who was in Cumann na mBan, should sever all connection with the movement. My father gave no definite reply, but said he would let the postmaster know in due course what his decision was.

I then communicated with Eoin MacNeill, who was the head

of the Volunteers at that time, and asked him for a decision on the matter. MacNeill ruled that I, as Company Captain of Ballylanders Company, should resign, and that the other members of the family, including my sister who was in Cumann na mBan, should also retire from the Volunteers and Cumann na mBan respectively.

I subsequently resigned, and Thomas Murphy of Ballylanders took my place as Captain. He acted as Company Captain and was Company Captain up to the time of the Rising. MacNeill recommended that we could become auxiliaries, and the members of the family who retired from the Volunteers continued to act as auxiliaries.

I was then head Centre of the I.R.B. in Ballylanders district, and I used to call meetings of each Centre containing five men and summon them to various places on the same night. My recollection is that we had five Centres amounting to about 22 men in all. My brothers, Jack and Joe, were members; John Joe Crawford and his brother Thomas of Ballylanders; Thomas Murphy and Pat Hannigan, Ballylanders; Edmond Tobin and his brother David of Ballinalacken, Ballylanders; John and Jim Fogarty, Glenbrohane, Knocklong; John and William Fogarty of Glenlarne, Knocklong; William Quish, Killeen, Ballylanders; John Riordan, and some others whom I cannot exactly place, were members.

EASTER SUNDAY, 1916.

A dance had been arranged by the Hall Committee in O'Grady's hall. This hall had been acquired by us at a rental, and the Gaelic League, G.A.A., Cumann na mBan, Volunteers and other organisations had the use of it any time they required it. This dance was arranged for Easter Sunday night.

On Easter Sunday the Ballylanders Company travelled to

Galbally where a mobilisation took place. I was not present on that occasion, but a dispatch arrived from MacNeill - brought. I think, to Galbally from Charleville - stating that the mobilisation was off. Manoeuvres, I understand, took place there, and then the demobilisation occurred, each company going back to its own area.

Liam Manahan being the battalion commandant of the area, I was continuously in touch with him regarding preparations for the Easter Sunday mobilisation. My father got a direction from the constabulary that the post office which he held was to be kept open night and day from the Good Friday preceding Easter Sunday. My brother Jack used to remain up at night, and we held copies of any messages that came through and communicated to Manahan the information that we received.

I think it was on the Good Friday night, and, if not, the following day, Saturday, that a military convoy was proceeding from Kilworth Camp to Tipperary. They got wrong directions after leaving Mitchelstown and came by a byroad on which they got sunk. Two military officers called to the post office late in the evening, in or about nine or ten o'clock, I should say, and they wanted to get in touch with Tipperary to have forces leave there and come to their relief. We were contemplating attacking them, but, having no order to do so, we did not carry out our intention. Some time later in the night the relief they were looking for came from the military garrison in Tipperary.

On the Wednesday evening of Easter Week, Manahan informed me that Sean Treacy had come from Tipperary and had stated that the Volunteers in Clonmel, Tipperary and Limerick City were mobilising on that night and that they were to fall back on the Galtee Battalion. I got my rifle, bandolier, ammunition and other equipment, and some provisions that we had on hand for the dance which did not take place on Easter

Sunday night, and I took them along to Liam Manahan's house about a quarter of a mile from the village. There all the Ballylanders Company were mobilised and of the 22 members of the I.R.B. all reported for duty.

Treacy was very anxious that something should be done immediately, and we started out in the morning at about daybreak, the Ballylanders Company in itself, to attack the constabulary/^{post}in the village. We lined up all the men. Thomas Murphy and myself were directed to cut the telephone wires on the Knocklong Road. Before doing this, Murphy was ordered to proceed to our house and to cut the connection of the telephone in the post office. This he did. My brother, Jack, asked him before he cut it was the thing on definitely and he stated yes. "Well", said my brother, "there are £60 or £70 post office money here and you had better take it". Murphy said "I cannot do that without getting an order".

Murphy and myself then proceeded to the Knocklong road and cut about 200 yards of wire between the telegraph poles. We were coming back again towards the place we had mobilised, having the coils of wire on our shoulders, when Ned Tobin came along and said it was a pity we had done it. He said that it had been decided by the Commandant, Liam Manahan, and the battalion engineer, Paddy Coughlan of Mitchelstown, who came along that morning, that it would be better to wait until we got more definite information, and that we could mobilise again when we had more definite information.

The men having been disbanded and directed to await further orders, nothing transpired for a few days. Then a message was received at the post office from the District Inspector of the R.I.C. in Bruff that a surrender had taken place in Dublin, and a message was submitted to be put up on the post office window stating that Pearse had surrendered.

Subsequently, Michael O'Sullivan, who was an officer in the Mitchelstown Volunteer Company, brought a message from Colivet, who was O/C. of the Limerick City Volunteers, directing that we should surrender our arms. Thomas Murphy, who was captain of the Ballylanders Company, ordered their surrender, and the arms from the Galbally Company were surrendered in or about the same time. They were handed over to the R.I.C., some of them broken. They were mostly shot-guns; I think there were only one or two rifles.

I think I might mention now that a sister to Liam Lynch, living in Anglesboro, Mitchelstown - Maggie Lynch - came to my place in Ballylanders with a dispatch from Donal Hannigan, a brother of Donnchadh Hannigan, who was O/C. of the column subsequently when it started in East Limerick. Donal, in the dispatch, stated that he wanted to see me at Ballymahane Bridge, north of Anglesboro, within about a mile of Liam Lynch's home. He mentioned the time, which was twelve o'clock midnight that night. I duly went to Ballymahane Bridge, but found nobody there. After about ten minutes I saw two people moving along the bank of the river. They came out on the bridge, and there I met Donal. I had met him before, of course. He told me that he had been some place near Dublin when on Easter Monday the Volunteers struck in Dublin. I understood he was some distance outside the city with some group. At any rate we had a long chat about the whole affair, and everything had then terminated as far as the Rising was concerned.

Also in 1916, perhaps a few weeks afterwards, Michael O'Callaghan of Tipperary, who had shot two R.I.C. men on a mountain outside Tipperary, came to Shanahan's in Glenbrohane. Michael Hanagan, a teacher in Ballylanders at that time, used to meet me and, having the post office at the time, we were getting telegrams from Bruff principally, which was R.I.C. headquarters for the district, directing the police on certain

activities. Every message that came we would get to Henaghin, who then transferred it to Paddy Shine, a teacher in Glenbrohane, and he conveyed word to Mick O'Callaghan at Shanahan's to be on the lookout for police activities the following morning.

I used to meet Tom Murphy, who lived in the village and was a baker, and we sometimes decided that we would get up early the following morning and watch the direction in which the police would go. One morning they raided Jim Clery's, a short distance outside the village, and Tom and myself followed them down the Knocklong road. They went into Clery's, and just as we were coming to where they were, we spotted them coming back. We skedaddled as quickly as we could, and then we saw them going across a byroad to Liam Manahan's house, just about a quarter of a mile outside the village.

A couple of months after Easter Week 1916, my father was informed that he was no longer postmaster and the post office, after a period of nine or ten days, was removed to another house in the village. The family were free to take active part in the Volunteer movement after that, and we continued active up to the time of the Longford election - Joe McGuinness's election for Longford (9th May 1917). On that night we had a big mobilisation of Volunteers in the area, and paraded through the streets of Ballylanders, having a torchlight procession. Two policemen who were standing at the end of the village would not get out of our way, and one of the torch-bearers lowered his torch and they had to move away from it. We sang round a bonfire for a long time.

About four or five days afterwards, a big contingent of police appeared in the village early in the morning and Thomas Murphy, John Joe Crawford, Thomas Walsh and myself

were arrested and taken to the barracks. Major Webb of Elton was the Resident Magistrate at the time. He came along and we were remanded to Limerick jail. The police then proceeded to get a suitable car to take themselves and an escort to Limerick prison. They could not find a car anywhere and we were kept in the barracks all night. We had scouts out to intercept any transport that would come along. None, however, arrived until a car came from Bruff on the following morning at or about five o'clock. This was what they called a long car with two horses, and our escort and ourselves were taken to Limerick prison, where we arrived at about seven o'clock in the morning.

About four days afterwards we were brought to Galbally, Co. Limerick, and tried there before the local court. Hugh O'Brien Moran of Limerick defended us. We were not in favour of putting up any defence, and wished to inform the court that we did not recognise it. O'Brien Moran counselled us against this action and we eventually agreed. The trial lasted about two hours.

There was a tremendous mobilisation of police from most of the districts in East Limerick, and when the trial was over and we were sentenced to one month's imprisonment and two months in default of bail, we were escorted from the courthouse to the barracks. As we left the courthouse, Volunteers who could not be restrained made an attack on the police, and a baton charge took place. My father and several other people were batoned, hit on the head with police truncheons. Glasses, bottles and bricks were fired, shots were discharged, and eventually, we arrived at the barracks, where we were held for a short time. So angry were the people in the village, the police could not take us back directly to Limerick; so they took us out to the Glen of Aherlow, on to Tipperary, and eventually on to Limerick jail.

We served one month's imprisonment, and the Governor, being anxious to get rid of us, told us that he would get the Mayor of Limerick to come in and see us and arrange to go bail for us. The Mayor duly arrived. The four prisoners were on the one word, refusing to accept bail, and we continued the balance of our sentence, coming out about the beginning of the month of August. When we were released we got an extraordinary reception in Ballylanders from the Volunteers of the surrounding districts.

While I was in Limerick jail, some disagreement took place amongst the Volunteers in the area. I only learned after coming out that Donnchadh Hannigan, who had been O/C. of the area at one time, took charge of the battalion during Liam Manahan's forced expulsion from the country - Manahan was in some part of England confined to a particular area with Michael Brennan of Clare and some others. Jack McCarthy of Kilfinane was O/C. of the battalion before I was arrested. Ned Tobin of Ballinalacken, Ballylanders, was Q.M. I was adjutant.

Having arrived home from jail, I found that things were not moving smoothly, and that at an aeriocht in Ballylanders, both Hannigan and Manahan put in an appearance to take charge of the Volunteers who were present on that occasion. Disagreement between the two officers arose, and headquarters were notified and called on for an inquiry. Headquarters agreed to have an inquiry and they sent M.W. O'Reilly down to the area to see what the position was. He eventually set up a body representing the officers of the area and took evidence in connection with the dispute, at Danny Maloney's in Knocklong. The case started at about eight o'clock one evening and went on all night until the following morning. O'Reilly then stated that he would convey his remarks on the matter to headquarters.

Headquarters, after considering the case, and apparently acting on O'Reilly's recommendations, decided to appoint new officers for the battalion.

About the end of August or early in September 1917, Larry Ginnell, M.P., was to address an aeriocht at Mitchelstown. Posters advertising the aeriocht were put up all over the district and they were headed "Remember Mitchelstown".

When Larry Ginnell arrived in Mitchelstown the evening before the aeriocht he was informed that it had been proclaimed by the police. It was then arranged that he would come to Ballylanders and address an aeriocht that was being held at the back of the village. I do not remember who accompanied him from Mitchelstown to my place, but he arrived late at night. The people in my house were gone to bed and we did not wish to disturb them, so we put up boxes to a window at the back of the house and Larry and myself went in and went to bed.

I accompanied him to Ballylanders Mass the following morning. All the people in the church, and after we came out from Mass, noticed that he was a stranger; he was very neatly dressed and was wearing a goatee beard. He addressed a meeting at the aeriocht that day, but nothing exceptional occurred.

It was about this time that the Galtee Battalion became a brigade, and the formation of this brigade entailed the appointment of new officers. Sean Wall of Bruff was then appointed brigadier. Sean O'Riordan of Kilmallock was appointed. I am not quite clear as to what officers were appointed after the inquiry, but Manahan did not appear to be active after that, nor Hannigan. However, in the Ballylanders area we still continued to carry on through the

I.R.B. until things got active later on when the active service column was started.

Some time before the conscription crisis in 1918, Sean McLaughlin of Dublin arrived in the area. He held a meeting at the hall in Ballylanders, and representatives from different companies all over East Limerick arrived for the meeting. I was not present on that occasion, and I have a very poor recollection of what took place.

Some time after McLaughlin being in the area, the old battalion officers of the Galtee Battalion decided to attach our unit to Limerick City Battalion, of which Micheal de Lacey was then commandant. When the conscription crisis came on we were directly under orders from de Lacey, and we had an elaborate dispatch system arranged between the different company areas.

Some time early in 1919, I think, Jack McCarthy, who was commandant of the Galtee Battalion and was living in Kilfinane, sent word to Ballylanders that there were two men in Kilfinane who were making arrangements to join the R.I.C. He wanted our company to come along and raid their homes at night. I think those who went to Kilfinane on that occasion were Tom Crawford, Jack Meade, Ned Tobin, Davy Tobin, Tom Murphy, Paddy Hannigan, Davy Clancy of Cush, and Paddy O'Donnell of Cush.

After reaching the town of Kilfinane we divided into two parties. Ned Tobin, some others and myself went to Condon, a tailor who lived in the east end of the town. We interviewed him and we were, of course, masked. Ned Tobin asked him if he was going to join the R.I.C. He denied that he was joining. He was warned then that if he joined the R.I.C. he was liable to be shot.

Those operations were rather difficult. Masked and

armed men going into a house where there was a family were likely to frighten the children, so we had to do it very cautiously. However, I think we treated the people we called on with great consideration.

Late in 1919, or early in 1920, we held a meeting at Cush, near Kilfinane; as a matter of fact, we held several meetings there, regarding ambushing a patrol of two police that used generally come every night from the R.I.C. barracks in Knocklong to Elton, just a mile away. We made all arrangements and assembled at Clancy's house at Cush. We were informed there that two scouts had been sent down to Elton the evening before, and that no patrol had turned up, so we arranged not to carry out our intentions as we had no proper intelligence reports to go on.

Shortly after this, Ned Tobin and Tom Murphy of Ballylanders, acting on their own, wanted to shoot two R.I.C. men in Ballylanders or a little way from it. Tobin and Murphy apparently had made up their minds to do this, but I, as captain of the company at the time, could not see my way to agree to it. I dissuaded them from their purpose and the thing did not come off.

On May 13th, 1919, Dan Breen, Sean Treacy, Ned O'Brien, Jimmy Scanlon and Ned Foley of ^{DUNTRYLEAGHUE} ~~Duntraleague~~, Galbally, went to Knocklong to meet a train that was conveying Sean Hogan from Cork to Thurles in charge of an R.I.C. bodyguard. I was not at Knocklong; I was at home in Ballylanders at the time, but later that evening, after Hogan had been rescued from the train, Ned Tobin came to my house with Ned O'Brien and Jimmy Scanlon of Galbally, both of whom had been wounded in the attack. They waited for me in O'Grady's hall outside Ballylanders. I met them and they gave me a dispatch to take to Galbally to Timmy Cummins and, I think, Fraziers,

directing them to go to Emly station and collect the bicycles on which they had travelled down to take the train at Emly station. After directing them to do what they were told, Davy Tobin and myself went to Dr. William Hennessy's house, a short distance outside Galbally, to seek his aid in attending to Breen and Treacy who were then at Tom Shanahan's in Glenlara, Glenbrohane. That was about a mile and a half, at least, from Knocklong station. Breen, apparently, was badly wounded, shot through the lung, and Treacy was shot through the throat.

I arranged with Ned Tobin that he should go to Shanahan's and take charge of Breen and Treacy, while I was going to Galbally to see Cummins and the Fraziers, and going for the doctor.

Davy Tobin and myself came to the doctor's house. We knocked at the door and got no reply. It was a large house. We pelted gravel at the windows, Davy Tobin taking one side of the house and I taking the front. After throwing gravel at every window we had got no reply. Davy Tobin said to me that he thought it was no use, that the doctor must not be there, but I said we could not leave without making certain whether he was there or not. We started again to fire gravel up at all the windows in the front and sides of the house. Eventually Dr. Hennessy put his head out of an upper window and asked who was there. I told him that it was Tadhg Crowley and David Tobin. He asked what was wrong and I told him that there had been an ambush on a train at Knocklong and that there were at least four people wounded, that two of the wounded men had gone to Shanahan's at Glenlara, Glenbrohane, and that he was to go back there first, that a scout would meet him at Ballinavreena Cross and direct him to Shanahan's house. We told him that it was Dan Breen and Sean Treacy who had rescued a prisoner being taken from

Thurles to Cork on the train, and that the train had been ambushed at Knocklong and two policemen shot. We then told him that when he had called at Shanahan's he should come along to Ballylanders and call at Paddy Maguire's in Glenahoglisha, just about three-quarters of a mile outside the village.

I told the doctor that two local men had also been wounded - referring to Ned O'Brien and Jimmy Scanlon - and that they would be at Maguire's in Glenahoglisha.

Before Tobin and myself went to Galbally, we got in touch with Father O'Brien, who was a Curate in Ballylanders at that time. Father O'Brien was taken on a pony and trap by my brother, Joe Crowley, to Shanahan's in Glenlara, Glenbrohane, and he attended to Dan Breen and Sean Treacy.

I returned with Davy Tobin to Ballylanders, and we went to Glenahoglisha, a short distance outside the village. Having arrived there we told Jimmy Scanlon and Ned O'Brien that we had seen the doctor, that he was going to Shanahan's first and then he was coming to Ballylanders. It was then, with the aid of a candle, that I inspected Ned O'Brien. He had a slight wound in the chest underneath the nipple, and thought his arm was sore and that the bullet must have gone in. However, I searched all round under his arm and at his back, and I could see no exit wound. I examined Jimmy Scanlon also and I found that he had a bullet ^{wound} just at the top of the shoulder and that portion of his clothing had gone through with the bullet, but he did not seem to be seriously wounded.

I said I would wait until after daybreak before going home, and that if the doctor had not come along in the half hour after daybreak, the best thing to be done would be to have the wounded men brought to Quane's.

Half an hour after daybreak Paddy Maguire's pony was harnessed and the trap attached. Jimmy Scanlon and Ned O'Brien

were then driven by Jack Meade of Glenahoglisha to the house of William Quane, about a mile outside Anglesboro on the road to Mitchelstown.

I then started for home. I heard creamery cars on the road, they were going to the milking of cows, so I skipped over a fence, went down by the back of the village and in the back way to my own house. My clothes were all wet. The night had been extremely bad, it had rained practically all the time while we were going for the doctor. I put my clothes under some coats in the kitchen and put my shoes into an oven to dry them.

I was in bed just about an hour and a half when military and police came into the village and stopped at the barracks. My brother Jack slept in the same room as me, and his bed was near the window. There was a fair in Mitchelstown that morning and cars were passing through frequently. Each time a car passed I used to tell my brother Jack to look out and see if anything was happening. Finally, when I heard a lorry stopping at the barracks I asked my brother to look out and see if there was anybody at the barracks. He said that I was calling all morning and told me to go to sleep. I said: "Look out" so he looked out and he said: "My God, there are any amount of police and military down at the barracks".

Within about eight or ten minutes afterwards, the local sergeant and two soldiers with full equipment, tin hats, &c. arrived into my room. I pretended I was asleep. On being called I woke up in a hurry and pretended to be scared. "What is wrong, sergeant?" I asked, and he said: "Didn't you hear that there were police shot at Knocklong last night?". I said: "No, I didn't hear it. My God, that's awful". Then I said: "What brought you in here anyway?" and he said: "We are searching the house to see if there are any strangers

here". I said: "When I came to bed last night there were no strangers here". With that they left and went back to the barracks. They had counted the people in the house, but apparently had not missed anybody, but, about four or five hours afterwards, the sergeant came back and asked where was Peter. I told him that Peter had gone over to my uncle, Jim Ryan, in Killogues near Galbally, the previous night with the pony and trap, that he had stayed there but had returned in the meantime. As a matter of fact, it was Joe who was missing; he had taken Father O'Brien down to Shanahan's to attend to Dan Breen and Treacy.

The police knew the following day that Dr. Hennessy, who had attended to Breen, Treacy, Ned O'Brien and Jimmy Scanlon, had been out early that morning. They came to him and asked him where he had been in the morning. Dr. Hennessy refused to give them any information. He said that he would give no information about patients that he attended. Apparently, afterwards they were pressing him to state where he had been, but, under any **circumstances**, Dr. Hennessy would not admit where he had been.

On 3rd April 1920, or about that date, in accordance with a general order issued by headquarters, evacuated barracks in different parts of the country were directed to be burned. Some of the men of our company in Ballylanders, some of the Cush Company, some men from Kilmallock Company and some from Knocklong Company went to Elton to burn the evacuated barracks, or blow it up. There were about twenty-five or thirty men present. We had some fuse, some sticks of dynamite and several tins of petrol. We did not know very much about the danger of petrol at that time, but we got the barracks sprinkled on the different floors and we put a couple of sticks of dynamite on the upper floor, but the barracks did not go on fire. We went in again, and one man from Kilmallock, who

pretended to know all about how to set a fuse and use dynamite, put them into a range in the kitchen. We then withdrew out in front of the barracks and waited for something to happen. The only thing we saw was big puffs of smoke coming out the chimney. We waited to know if anything else would happen, but nothing happened. We then went in and discovered that the iron range had been blown up.

We afterwards proceeded to a blacksmith's forge about forty or fifty yards away, broke open the door, got the box of a car-wheel, and a blacksmith who was with us, Ned Tobin, previously referred to, got a bolt and a nut and we made a home-made bomb, loading it with dynamite. We found, on having it completed, that we had no fuse; our fuse had been used; so we got a paraffin oil rag, put it in, touching the dynamite at one end of the box-wheel, brought it along to the barracks and placed it in a hole that we made in the wall. We set fire to the paraffin oil rag, withdrew immediately and waited for an explosion to take place. Nothing happened. There was no explosion, so we withdrew, leaving the bomb there. The following morning people from the district came in to see the damage that had been done to the barracks the night before, and they took the bomb, placed it under a cock of hay in the meadow a short distance away, set fire to the cock of hay, and ran to beat the band. When they retreated outside the ditch, the bomb burst with a fierce explosion.

Liam Lynch of Anglesboro, who was then working in a furniture and hardware store in Fermoy, and who was in charge of the local battalion in the Fermoy district, arranged with some of the local men to disarm Protestant soldiers going to Church on a Sunday morning. The soldiers were, I understand, disarmed and all their equipment and ammunition taken, but Liam himself was accidentally shot by one of his own men.

He was laid up for a few weeks. Eventually he came to Galbally, Co. Limerick, and, to the best of my recollection, Mick Scanlon, who was a national teacher at that time, teaching in Kilmallock, brought him to Ballylanders to my house. We arranged that he stay with me for the night.

The purpose of his coming was to get in touch with Michael Collins at headquarters. He came to the conclusion that he could not operate effectively locally after the Fermoy attack. He stayed with me that night, and after we retired, police (R.I.C.) arrived at the barracks, which was only just about 25 yards from my house. Police came off a lorry and apparently collected some of the local R.I.C. We thought it was too dangerous to stay in the house, so we went out the back way and went to a gateway next door, where we had a good view of them. After about five or seven minutes the lorry cleared away and we returned to bed.

On the following day we arranged that we would go up by the night train to Dublin; so Liam Lynch, one of my local companions, Ned Tobin, and myself went to Knocklong railway station where we joined the train which would arrive in Dublin at about four o'clock the following morning.

When we arrived at Limerick Junction we noticed a few policemen there. Tobin was armed and I had two guns, so I asked Liam did he want a gun. He was reluctant to take it, and said he did not want to put us in any danger because of himself. Eventually he took it, but the police did not interfere.

The train moved out and eventually we arrived at Kingsbridge station, where we found a cab ready for us. This had been arranged by John O'Rourke of Sandymount, who was then, I think, working in Todd Burns in Dublin. We proceeded to O'Rourke's house in Sandymount. Liam, Ned Tobin and myself

stayed there on that night. On the following morning I left with a dispatch for Michael Collins. When I returned to Sandymount I found there a dispatch for Liam Lynch. I did not get back until late that evening, I would say in or about half-past ten or eleven o'clock. On arrival at O'Rourke's, I found that Liam had left a note for me that he was going out to Fleming brothers at 140 Drumcondra Road. The dispatch from Michael Collins appeared to be urgent, and the trams at about that time having ceased to run, I was in a predicament. I made up my mind to open the dispatch and I read it. It said that under no circumstances should he (Liam Lynch) stay with Flemings in Drumcondra. Having read it I realised the necessity for moving immediately, so I got a bicycle and cycled into town. On the way in, the bicycle got punctured. All the trams were stopping, so I went to Vaughan's Hotel in Parnell Square. I knew a man there by the name of Christy (Christy Harte) and I told Christy my trouble. He did not know me, but I suppose he came to the conclusion that I was an honest sort of fellow. I asked him for a bicycle and he said: "Well, you can come out the back and I'll show you what's there". I went out the back and there were at least from 22 to 25 bicycles there, all punctured. There was nothing to be done in the bicycle line, so I returned again to the hall and told Christy that I would try and hire a cab. I had very little money in my pocket. I met a cabman and asked him if he knew where Fleming's in Drumcondra was and he told me that he did.

I started off in the cab and was driven out towards Drumcondra and well past it. I think he drove me about half a mile beyond it, and then he said: "It must be somewhere around here". I got off, made inquiries and found that I had passed where Flemings lived. I went back about half a mile to Fleming's house. Mick Fleming and his brother were there. They were annoyed because I seemed to be upset about things.

I said that I wanted to see Liam Lynch immediately, and they told me that he was gone to bed. "Well", I said, "I must see him". Mick Fleming asked me why did I want to see him, and I said I had a very urgent dispatch for him. Mick said, "I suppose a dispatch from Collins?" and I said, "Yes". He said, "Let me see it", so I let him see it, and he said, "Liam isn't going to be waked up at all. We know here that ^{it} is perfectly safe for him to stay in this house".

I can remember that the following day local elections were taking place in Dublin City. I met Liam in the morning, and I being very upset about the whole incident he told me not to worry at all about it. Well, I did not stop worrying about it, but he said to me that everything would be alright.

Early in 1920 Tomás Malone was appointed an organiser for the Dáil Loan in the East Limerick area. After his arrival a decision was made by the Brigadier to attack Ballylanders barracks. I made a plan of the barracks which I sent to the Brigadier. The attack was well arranged. All the Ballylanders Company were on service on the occasion. I would say in all there were about 25 men from the local Company and nine or ten from Galbally Company; there were men present from other districts in the Brigade area. I should think that about 60 or 70 people were in the village for the purpose of the attack. All the Company areas around were doing other work, trenching roads or knocking trees to make it impossible for the enemy to approach.

Prior to the attack on the barracks I had arranged to send my mother for a holiday to Kilkee. On the evening

of the attack I informed my father that the house was to be occupied for the purpose of the attack, and I told him he would have to go up with Jack Walsh, a publican who lived near the barracks, to the house of Bridget Condon. He, my father, having been a Fenian and Secretary of the Fenian organisation in Hospital, County Limerick, many years before, made no objection and told us that whatever we did we were not to forget to say our prayers.

Tomás Malone was in charge of the attacking party. They occupied a house next the barracks. They broke out through the roof and dropped stones first through the roof of the barracks, then I think one bomb, followed by torches. Petrol was fired on the barracks and after Malone gave the green light signal that the attack was to start from the different houses around, including my own house, Mrs. Burke's, O'Grady's, Mrs. Upton's, and David Condon's, fire was concentrated on the different windows of the barracks, and the police replied. The fight would not have lasted long, I understand, were it not for the fact that there was a British ex-soldier, rather a young man, in the barracks and he insisted on keeping up the fight.

One of our men, Jack Meade, got wounded in O'Grady's because of exposing himself. He was shot through the lung.

After the fight had proceeded for about 25 minutes the garrison surrendered. The five constabulary men who formed the garrison came out on the square. Malone took the surrender and congratulated them on the great fight they had put up, but reminded them that they were at great odds. The carbines and revolvers that the police had, and all the ammunition that could be found in the place, were duly collected, and Meade, the wounded Volunteer, was moved in my brother Jack's Ford car to Burke's of Ballingady, between Kilfinane and Kilmallock.

Previous to the attack one of the garrison used come in to our shop in Ballylanders and speak to Peter, the youngest boy in the family. I was afraid that Peter might give away information, and I warned him about it. Peter told me that he was acting cute enough; he was taking all the information he could get but he gave none. This policeman, Mulvey, had been stationed in County Clare and had been in a barracks that was attacked there. The police in that barracks had defended it, and subsequently this constable got a decoration from Lord French. When our men entered the barracks my brother Peter was one of the first in, and he met this policeman, Mulvey, who said to him, "Here is my rifle, Peter. I told you I would not fire a shot to defend the barracks". He handed over his rifle and ammunition, and it was evident that he had not fired a shot.

Regarding the attack on Ballylanders barracks, I might add that Liam Scully, who was a Gaelic League teacher, was in the area for some time before it. He stayed at my house and took part in the attack.

Subsequently, on 27th May 1920, we attacked Kilmallock barracks. Most of the East Limerick Brigade had representatives in the attack. Tomás Malone, otherwise known as Seán Ford, was in charge of the attack, under the Brigadier who was present. The usual precautions were taken and all the outlying Companies trenched and barricaded the roads for many miles around the centre of the attack. Seán Wall, the Brigadier, who was there on that occasion was in command of the operation. Those of the Ballylanders and Galbally Companies who were taking part in the attack travelled on bicycles. When approaching the town of Kilmallock we thought that nobody would be on

the roads. We met several couples walking out against us. We waited until they came back and directed them into Kellys, near the Co-operative Creamery, and told them that they would have to stay there.

After a short time we proceeded to the mobilisation field, which belonged to Mitchell, a veterinary surgeon in Kilmallock. The rifles were distributed there, and then we all took up our allotted posts in the town. Those with me were Commandant Donnchadh Hannigan; Jack Lynch, Tankardstown; Jack O'Brien, Tankardstown; Michael O'Keefe; Dan McCarthy of Kílfínane. We were directed to take up our positions in the Provincial Bank directly opposite the barracks. We were to get in over the fanlight at the front of the house, but we found that that was a difficult job so we decided to ^{go} /around to the rear, scale the wall and get in through the back. When we went in the manager and his wife and family were in bed. We told them that we were going to attack the barracks and that they would have to leave by the rear. A scout was provided. After a short time the manager's wife came back to the room I was in, and I came to the conclusion that she was worried about jewellery or something that she was very particular about. I told her that I would give an undertaking that nothing would be interfered with in the house, and she said, "No, it is alright. I'm just looking for a stud for the boss's collar".

The Anglo-American Oil Company had a depot in the town of Kilmallock. A car on their premises was loaded with paraffin, and that was drawn up in front of Carroll's house just alongside the barracks. Pint bottles were procured from O'Sullivan's Brewery, which belongs to Murphys of Cork, and those bottles were filled with petrol and taken up through Carroll's house to the roof.

Having barricaded all the windows in the Provincial Bank, where I was situated, other houses in front of the barracks - Clery's Hotel and Con Herlihy's - were also barricaded. We awaited the signal to start firing. The signal was a green flashlight. On the signal being given fire was opened on the barracks. The police inside replied.

Shortly after the start of the firing, the man who was alongside me, Dan McCarthy of Kilfinane, thought that he had been wounded in the arm. Blood, he felt, was running on his wrists. I took a chance and struck a match and found that he was not wounded by gun-fire but was cut by broken glass.

The fight went on for many hours. The barracks was blazing at one end after being broken by heavy weights and bombs, the pouring of petrol and the firing of petrol bottles from the roof which overhung the barracks. Shortly afterwards the building from which the barrack was set ablaze went on fire, and we came to the conclusion that the fight was ended. However, the fire was subsequently put out but it started again about half an hour later and was again successfully quenched.

During this period those who were drawing the oil from the Anglo-American tank were hauling it up in buckets, and bottles were being filled at the top of the house. When the fire started, water was brought along. Some of those attacking came to the conclusion that a particular bucket contained water, and they were looking for a drink working in such heat. They dipped cups into the paraffin oil and drank it. They were very sick later on in the morning.

Eventually the fight had proceeded so far that only one section of the barracks remained unburned, but still the police under Sergeant O'Sullivan - a Kerryman I believe - held on. He doggedly continued firing, although several of his men had been lost in the attack. Eventually Tomás Malone, alias Seán Ford, gave the signal to cease fire, and the garrison were called on to surrender. The reply they gave was to open fire again on our positions and the fight went on. It went on so late into the morning, and Kilmallock not being so very far from Ballyvonaire, Buttevant, which was a military town, Limerick city, Tipperary and Mallow, it was considered that it was safer for us to withdraw, so the signal was given that we were to retire. Just before retiring, Liam Scully from around Ballylongford, County Kerry, went out on the street and started firing at the last section of the barracks. The police returned the fire and Scully was shot. Nurse O'Sullivan and Mary Kate Sheehy, who was a member of Cumann na mBan in the Kilmallock area, attended to him. Scully was put into a motor car and some of the West Limerick Brigade who were there at the time conveyed him back to a little graveyard at Templeghantine in West Limerick, where he was buried. He was the only casualty that the attacking forces had on that particular night and it is strange that it was a repetition of what happened in the attack on Kilmallock barracks in 1867 when a man, who then was not known, was shot and he too was the only casualty.

I would not be sure of the number of men comprising the garrison in Kilmallock at that particular time, but it was estimated that there were at least seventeen.

After the attack on Ballylanders barracks, some member of the British House of Commons asked a question regarding the attack on Ballylanders barracks. He mentioned, I believe, that it was a heavy defeat for the government and that he understood that another barracks in the area was soon to be attacked. The Minister, in reply, stated that precautions were being taken and that the barracks were being put into a well-fortified state. We understood before we went to Kilmallock that engineers had been there strengthening the fortifications. We did not see that there was anything extra on that barracks compared with Ballylanders, because Ballylanders already had steel shutters, and at any rate whatever fortifications were there would not have prevented the barracks being taken completely had we stayed long enough.

I think I should make it clear that the preparations for the attack on Kilmallock barracks were made at Tom Sheehy's in Laurencetown, Kilfinane. The Brigadier Seán Wall, Tomás Malone, Ned Tobin of Ballylanders, Mick Scanlon, Liam Scully and others were in the making of the plans. It would be well to make it clear that the Brigadier, Seán Wall, was at Kilmallock and that Tomás Malone carried out the orders he got from him.

In the morning we had tremendous difficulty in getting to our home areas. The roads were heavily blocked with trees. One man who was with me, Paddy Hannigan of Ballylanders, had drunk a cup of paraffin oil and was extremely ill. After cycling about nine or ten miles we reached Glenbrohane and a publican there, who had been a chemist in Cork, gave Hannigan a dose of medicine which made him vomit and completely cured him. The publican's name was John Bacon. He had been a chemist in Kyloh & Co.'s premises in Patrick Street, Cork.

Some time after the attack on Kilmallock barracks my father's house in Ballylanders was bombed by police, who, we understood, came from Kilfinane R.I.C. barracks. I was not then staying at home, nor were any of the active I.R.A. men. I was at William Luddy's of Cush, about a mile outside the village, with Thomas Murphy. We were in bed and my brother Michael turned up from the village and stated that the house had been bombed. We immediately got up and proceeded to the village where we found that all the houses near our house at the bottom of the village had broken windows, and at the bottom of one of the pillars between the windows a bomb seemed to have been placed. This, having, exploded, broke all the glass. The police had gone away, and we were able to establish the fact that they had come from Kilfinane. There were about half a dozen policemen there, we subsequently understood.

On the morning afterwards, we proceeded to Cush, near Kilfinane, where we formed the first Active Service Column I believe in Ireland. All the men who were there were not going home again except when they could get an opportunity. We decided it was a dangerous thing to return home and stay at home, so we started the Column and on that occasion we had only about three rifles. Two rifles were that day brought from Tankardstown Company by John O'Brien, Jack Lynch and I think Tommy Finn of Tankardstown, near Kilmallock. They had cycled back to Newcastle West where the rifles had been taken to after the Kilmallock attack, in preparation for a proposed attack on Newcastle West barracks, which eventually did not take place. With those few rifles and some small arms the Column was started. Seán Stack, of Kerry, who is now a Local Government/Department Inspector in Galway, ^{who} was there was a Dáil Loan organiser. He had a small revolver.

We waited on the road for a patrol that might be coming from Galbally to Kilfinane, and then we heard through a dispatch rider from Ballylanders that the police from Kilfinane had gone to Ballylanders to investigate the bombing of our house - Crowleys of Ballylanders. We left our positions and went directly across the Slieve ^{RIACH} ~~ree~~, or the Black Hill as it was known locally, to intercept the police coming back from Ballylanders to Kilfinane on the high road. After travelling about a mile and a half through the mountain, we found on arrival on the main mountain road that the police had gone back to Kilfinane.

Those present on that day, as far as I can recollect, were Davy Clancy, Paddy O'Donnell, Seán Stack, Tom Murphy, Ned Tobin, his brother, John O'Brien (called "Holy John"), Con Kearney, Tom Howard and probably Phil Ryan. Tommy Finn, Jack Lynch, John O'Brien of Tankardstown, were I think, the three who brought the rifles from Tankardstown.

Some time in late July 1920 and after the ambush carried out by the Flying Column at Emly, police came to Ballylanders to make arrests. Ned Tobin, Jerry O'Callaghan, my brother Michael and my brother Peter were in our house on that night. Tom Crawford was staying at his own house in Ballylanders. Tom Murphy, who lived across the street, was staying at Margaret Powell's just about a quarter of a mile from the village, *with*
Paul of Hammer.

I was on duty that night, on guard in the village, and a chap by the name of Walsh, from Curraturk, and Michael O'Reilly from Ballyfaskin were with me. We were sitting on empty stout casks in front of John Walsh's

at the bottom of the village, when we noticed a patrol of about six police creeping across from the Kilfinane road to the Galbally road. They had not seen us but we saw them. I immediately went to my own house, called Jerry O'Callaghan, my brothers Jack and Michael, and Ned Tobin. I then went to Crawfords and called Tom Crawford. We got together and we decided what we were going to do. We assembled at the door of our shop. My father had got up and was at the door when we met. He said, "You had better be careful. There may be troops or policemen out the road who would be ready to come in". I said, "Well, we'll give them the works". We arranged that Jerry O'Callaghan, Ned Tobin and my brothers Peter and Jack would go up portion of the street and come round to the back of the house. The reason we adopted this tactic was because our house had been bombed in or about four or five days before by a party of police who came from Kilfinane. I referred to that incident in an earlier part of my story. We came to the conclusion that because the bombing attack on the house failed, they were coming back probably to do it again more effectively. Apparently we were wrong.

Those I refer to, that is, Jerry O'Callaghan, Tobin, my brothers Peter and Jack, went up the street, went into the back, and came down at the back of our house at the back of the garden. They saw nobody there, and unfortunately they went into the house. A short time afterwards, the police, having been reinforced from a patrol of about six police who came along from Galbally, blocked exit from the back. In the meantime, Mick O'Reilly and myself were on the street. I went down to Burke's corner and was looking in the direction where the patrol of police from Galbally went - that is, out the Galbally road.

I was at the pier of ^{Mr Burke's} ~~the~~ gate and went out about a yard from it, and sat down to know if I could see anything in the skyline. I saw ^a figure, who immediately gave me "hands up". I fired round the pier of Mrs. Burke's gate with my right hand. He fired at me immediately after giving "hands up", so after firing on him I retreated to the front of Mrs. Burke's house and then I fired. It was a .45 revolver I had. I fired again, with my left hand, but I saw afterwards that I had hit the pier. I then retreated up the street to Tom Crawford's house. Shortly before that I had seen two figures moving from the Galbally road into the ruins of the barracks, which had been destroyed some time before. They did not fire. I told Tom Crawford that I saw them going in.

Tom started off across the street towards Connery's and down to a thatched house that was in the village. I did not know what he was going to do, but I told him that whatever he intended to do he was to take cover. Unfortunately, when he reached the end of Power's house he came out a bit from the end of the house and he ordered the people in the barracks to surrender. The reply was a shot out of a shotgun. Tom ran up the street saying he was shot. I ran into Connery's house, where he had gone, and I saw that he had been shot allright. I did not know where he had been shot but he was bleeding profusely from the mouth.

Seán Stack, the Dáil Loan organiser, was staying in Connery's at that time. The previous evening we had counted out in or about £400 that he had in Dáil Loan money. He left Connery's and came across the street and went into Mrs. Hannon's.

I, having seen Tom Crawford, went out the bog road down at the back of O'Grady's house and I fired I think about two or three shots out of my revolver at the barracks where I had seen the two figures enter. There was a reply and then I heard a big volume of firing. That was the signal for troops and police outside the town to enter.

I retreated to the bog road and knocked at Connery's door to get in to see how Tom Crawford was getting on. I rapped first and got no reply. Then a person from across the road, whom I thought was Jerry O'Callaghan, gave me the order "hands up". I said, "It's alright, Jerry", thinking he was Jerry O'Callaghan, and turned round and rapped at the door again. The man who was giving me "hands up" came somewhat nearer and said again, "hands up", and I said, "It's alright, Jerry". Then he advanced out on the road a few yards further and gave me "hands up" for the third time. I then saw that he was a soldier, with a tin helmet, fully equipped. I had a .45 police short Webley revolver in my pocket with a lanyard. I pulled the gun out of my pocket, fired, and apparently stunned him. I ran back the bog road and on my way back the soldier fired. He did not hit me, however, and I got to a stile and into a meadow, and went up the back of the village and into the school-yard.

From the school-yard I looked down through the village, and, as the light was then better, I could plainly discern a lot of figures at the bottom of the village. The military and police had arrived.

After I had fired on the soldier, he apparently got reinforcements and followed me in the direction I had gone, down the bog road. They heard some pigs in a sty and apparently concluded that I had hidden there. They went into the sty and bayoneted the two pigs to death. These pigs belonged to a man named Willie Raleigh, who was also known as Will Hickey. Raleigh had a bad impediment in his speech, and, on people sympathising with him next day on the loss of his two pigs, he said, It d-d-d-doesn't matter about them. They d-d-d-died for their country anyhow*.

From the school-yard I went to Hayes', where I stayed for a little while. There were cars coming in with milk to the creamery, which is alongside Hayes's house. I went out and took charge of a donkey and car, went up the village about sixty or seventy yards, left the donkey and car away and went in Hennessy's boreen and from that over to Margaret Powell's outside the village, where Tom Murphy and Paddy Hannigan were that morning. Ned Tobin, who had been in Connery's with Tom Crawford when the police arrived, got into bed alongside two of the Connery children. When the police arrived he said that he was a harness-maker working for Ned Connery, so no policeman recognised him. He got up and went out the back window into Nunans next door, met the local postman, Micky Davern, who was then delivering the post, took the bag and letters, and went round delivering the post. He eventually arrived at Mrs. Coleman's and met Tom Murphy and myself, Mrs. Coleman and Mollie Joe Powell, her niece. Tobin, looking at the letters, said, "I think I have nothing for you this morning".

We stayed there for some time and then we came to the presbytery to Father Barry, the Parish Priest. Tom Murphy, Tobin, Hannigan and myself were treated to a few glasses of altar wine, and Father Barry brought along about five or six pipes and plenty of tobacco. Nobody, however, was smoking a pipe but Tom Murphy, and he enjoyed his smoke out of Father Barry's pipe.

A military ambulance from Tipperary passed the presbytery going towards Ballylanders to collect Tom Crawford and bring him to Tipperary. Dr. Dowling of Tipperary attended to him. While at Fr. Barry's we saw the ambulance leaving with some of the lorries going to Tipperary.

When the military and police had cleared out, we returned to the village. I was in at Jack Walsh's when a reporter named Halpin from Tipperary arrived to get the story of the fight. He was a reporter for the "Cork Examiner".

My brother Jack, Michael O'Reilly, my brother Peter, Tom Crawford and Jerry O'Callaghan were all arrested that morning, taken to Tipperary and eventually sent to Limerick prison. They were in Limerick for some short time and were then sent to Cork prison. Tom Crawford and Jerry O'Callaghan were some time later sentenced to penal servitude. My brothers, Michael, Jack and Peter Crowley and Christopher Upton went on hunger-strike in Cork prison with Terry MacSwiney. They were on hunger-strike for ninety-four days, when they were ordered by Arthur Griffith to go off it. Mary MacSwiney wanted them to stay on the strike, but they acted on Griffith's orders.

Some time after the start of the column we assembled on the old road between Glenbrochane and Kilfinane. We proceeded from there through the main line between Galbally and Kilfinane, and took up our positions alongside the road. Tomás Malone was there on that day with the other members of the column. Tomás Malone was in charge of a car with a ladder tied across it, at the entrance to the ambush position. I was in charge of a car, with a ladder likewise, at the far side of the position. A signal went up that a lorry was coming from the Galbally direction. It looked in the distance as if it was a lorry of troops, but on arriving into the ambush position we found that it was a private car belonging to Colonel Saunders, an ex-Colonel of the British Army, who lived in Charleville and also had a place in the Glen of Aherlow called the Saunders Estate. He, when coming to the ambush position, on seeing the car of which I was in charge coming out on the road with a ladder on it, pulled up and himself and two ladies who were in the back of the car got out.

Previous to the arrival of the car, Donnchadh Hannigan, who was the O.C. of the column and had a Peter the Painter pistol, fired a shot accidentally. He went out on the road and was marching up towards Colonel Saunders. Saunders apparently ordered the two girls into the car and directed the driver to reverse. He stood on the running-board of the car and started firing from a .32 revolver at Donnchadh Hannigan, who was approaching him along the road.

The members of the column, seeing that there were women in the car, did not fire, but one of them, Con Kearney of Tiermore, Kilfinane, came out on the road on his knee and fired at least two shots from his Service

rifle over their heads. The car, however, reversed out of the ambush position and went back to Ballinavreena Cross, where it turned and went back the way it had come, turning to the left to Knocklong, and from Knocklong into Kilmallock.

When Saunders' car was coming into the town of Kilmallock, it is said that a couple of Black and Tans held it up, but Saunders directed the driver to continue. The Tans fired, and several bullet marks were on the car, but apparently nobody was injured.

About June, 1920, Ernie O'Malley came to East Limerick Brigade area. He was organising East Limerick Brigade on behalf of headquarters. I first saw him and met him in Davy Clancy's in Cush. The shoulder of his coat had been burned, after, I understand, an attack on Draingean R.I.C. barracks, County Tipperary. He drilled the Cush Company. Our column, East Limerick, apparently was not then recognised by headquarters. Later, after the attack by the column on a patrol of R.I.C. and military, about eight in all, he intended to attack a pay car which used to travel between Galbally and Kilfinane but it came by ~~Knockeera~~^{KNOCKARRON}. He asked several local men to take part, some of whom did not know how to fire a shotgun. The Column learned of his intention, and I, as Adjutant of the Column, sent a dispatch to Brigadier Seán Wall at Bruff to direct him not to undertake such an enterprise.

Our reason for appealing to the Brigadier was that we thought any such enterprise should not be undertaken at that stage without having the men of the Column engaged on it, all of whom were then well armed.

Ballinavreena, Kilfinane, County Limerick, was the scene of an ambush undertaken by the East Limerick Flying Column, about early July 1920. A patrol of four police left Kilfinane for Elton, a distance of four or five miles. I was sleeping at home in Ballylanders at the time, and Ned Tobin, another member of the Column, was with me. A scout came from the Cush direction, informing us that the patrol had passed. Ned Tobin, Tom Crawford, my brother Peter, who was then very young, and myself started off on bicycles with our rifles strapped to the bicycles. We went as far as Glenbrohane. There we met a few cars that took us on towards Ballinavreena Cross, where we met several members of the Cush Company including Davy Clancy, Paddy Hannigan, Paddy Slattery and several others whom I cannot now remember.

We proceeded to a point just about -half-way between Ballinavreena Cross and Elton. There we met a man who was coming from Elton. We asked him had he seen any policemen on his way and he said they were just coming along.

We then took up positions at the side of the road, some on one side and some on the other, near O'Sullivan's of Ballinahinch. The police being on bicycles very quickly sailed into the position. We blew a whistle and called on them to surrender. They got off their bicycles. No shot, as far as I can remember, was fired except one that I myself fired at a policeman who had a shotgun. His name was Mulvey and he was an R.I.C. man. I asked him to put his rifle on the ground. Two of the R.I.C. men ran away scared. Two surrendered. Subsequently Davy Clancy went into O'Sullivan's house and brought out Corrigan, the constable, who had a short Webley revolver. Clancy took it from him. We collected the arms from the

other members of the patrol, and then we proceeded to try them. They were taken into a field just about one hundred yards from the road, and lined up there.

Having got the policemen lined up behind a fence I came along in disguise. I had the belt of a waterproof coat across my face. I court-martialled them on the spot and said they should be sentenced to death as traitors to their country, but I was prepared to let them go if they would give me a guarantee that they would resign from the R.I.C. They gave me that guarantee, but I subsequently heard that when they got back to Kilfinane, the R.I.C. station from which they started, they did not resign and apparently had no intention of doing so.

I was subsequently charged, after being arrested in October, 1920, with having taken part in this ambush. One of the policemen, whose name was Olery, attended at the courtmartial and recognised me. I was tried at the New Barracks in Limerick, Sarsfield Barracks now, by a courtmartial of three officers. I had been in Limerick jail for some time before the courtmartial took place.

About three or four weeks after my courtmartial, an officer came to Limerick prison and asked for me. I was taken to the office of the clerk of the prison. He read out the sentence of the courtmartial. He said, "You have been sentenced to 15 years penal servitude". I said to him, "Is that all?" and he laughed.

In recording the story that goes before, you might come to the conclusion that it was strange that two of four police escaped out of an ambush position where there were at least fourteen or fifteen men. At that particular time we did not want to be severe on the police, and nobody

fired nor was an order given to fire by me. Nobody fired on any of the police except myself. I fired over Mulvey's head just to get him to drop his gun. But we knew at any rate that none of them could possibly escape so the thing ended up very satisfactorily from our point of view. We got, I think, a shotgun, 2 rifles (police carbines), a revolver, and whatever ammunition they possessed.

The next operation, I believe was at Emly on 13th July, 1920. Most of the members of the Column were billeted in Lackelly, about four miles away from Ballylanders and about two miles from Lackelly. My brother Peter, the youngest member of the family, who was subsequently on the great hunger-strike in Cork with my brothers Jack Crowley and Michael Crowley, he drove our pony and trap to Lackelly the night before. I stayed in Ballylanders that night, and started off for Lackelly in the morning. I arrived there I would say in or about eleven o'clock. The Column then proceeded through the fields down to a double bank near Emly, within about a mile of the town.

My brother Peter was sent to scout the village of Emly and report back any police movements that might take place. We expected a patrol to leave the town and go towards Galbally. My brother came back, but previously we got information that the police had passed up over the railway line between Cork and Dublin and between Knocklong and Limerick junction. They passed along South, up to a hill not very far from the railway station. We met a man coming from Galbally, and we asked him if he had met any R.I.C. men up the road. He stated that he had and that they were coming back, so we immediately took up positions just alongside the railway station. We had men on the left-hand side inside the fence, and we had men on the right. The extent of the ambush position would have been just about one hundred yards. I think we had about ten or eleven members of the Column and

a couple of locals.

The patrol came back in extended formation. There were about six soldiers and two police. They came in very extended formation, and a policeman and a soldier were first into the ambush position. Jerry O'Callaghan of Lackelly and myself were at the end nearest the railway station. When the patrol entered, the two first members of it went towards the gate on the right-hand side and somebody fired a shot. Those of the patrol who had not come into the ambush position tried to break away. Four soldiers went into a field near Burke's cottage, which was about 80 or 90 yards from the road. Burkes lived in the field. The soldiers started firing rapidly. We came to the conclusion that they had a machine gun, so Jerry Callaghan and myself fired from the pier of Burke's cottage after locating their position. We fired just one shot each and one of the soldiers got wounded. Then they put up the white flag and stood up. I stood on the fence and ordered them to ground their rifles. They did not appear to understand the order that I gave them, so I repeated it, "Ground rifles, eight paces forward, march". They immediately grounded their rifles and marched eight paces forward.

Then my brother Peter and some of the other members of the Column went into the field, collected the rifles, and we found that one of the soldiers had been shot in the finger. They were provided with Red Cross bandages and he was immediately dressed. He was quite a young fellow, I would say not more than 19 or 19½ years of age. There was a man with him who had a Mons Medal, which he got for action during the first World War. We put those into the cottage.

I should have said also that when the first two came into position - the policeman and the soldier - the soldier arrived right in front of where Jerry O'Callaghan and myself were. We asked him to surrender and he said, "Don't shoot, Paddy". We again asked him to throw his rifle over the fence, and he repeated, "Don't shoot". Jerry Callaghan fired a shot out of a Winchester rifle over his head, and he then threw his rifle into the field. We brought in the policeman and the soldier. Then we captured four soldiers, and there were still two missing. We found that one of them had made his way across country and had got back into Emly. Emly is a very low-lying country in the Golden Vale. The trenches there are very deep, and it would have been impossible to detect a man escaping, so we got the Column to search the ground round behind the road to the West, and we called out on the police to surrender. Eventually we left the position, commandeered two motor cars from Higgins' Hotel in Emly, and two brothers named McGrath drove us with the captured guns to John Crawford's premises in Main Street, Ballylanders where we stayed for some time. That night we transferred the guns from Crawford's place to the Catholic Church and placed them underneath the floor of the choir. The following evening we removed them and placed them in a four-wheeled carriage drawn by a horse driven by Paddy Clery, an employee of John Walsh, Ballylanders. We also had a sidecar driven by Jack Clery of Ballylanders .

We proceeded to Ballylough, about four miles from Mitchelstown, over the Cork-Limerick border. At that time curfew was to be introduced. We did not understand what

curfew meant, so we thought that by going over the border to County Cork we could wait there and get reports as to how curfew was operating in East Limerick. East Limerick at that time was the only part of Limerick County that was to have curfew.

Having arrived at Ballylough, beyond a place called Marshallstown, about eleven or twelve of the men of the Column were billeted with local people; some stayed at Edmond O'Keeffe's in Ballylough, others at Jack Murphy's, some stayed at Rouse's, and some were billeted in other places.

We were there for a few days, and we had reports of a patrol that used to leave Caherdreena Castle, outside Mitchelstown; this patrol, a cycling patrol, used to go every day to Kildorrery. We found, after our arrival there, that this patrol was not travelling at all.

After being in Ballylough for about three days, we started off from there at about three or half-past three one morning to a point within about half a mile of Kildorrery. We took up our position in an evacuated labourer's cottage, just about one hundred yards away from the Funcheon River, over which a bridge came from one side to the other. We had^{been} informed by Tom Barry, the local Commandant in Glanworth, that a patrol of two police used to go out by Rockmills and come round at one side of the Funcheon, cross over this bridge and go back into Kildorrery. We stayed there for many hours, but no patrol turned up. The day was very wet, so in the afternoon we decided to leave, and we went back through the fields again to Ballylough to our billets.

We afterwards got reports from East Limerick that it was much easier for the Column to move in the curfew area in East Limerick than it had been before we left, so we decided to return. We came back by Marshallstown, and we got our men billeted in Tully, a few miles from Ballylanders. We were there for a few days, and, as far as my recollection goes, we went to some other Company areas and within a fortnight we returned to Kildorrery and billeted with our old friends in Ballylough.

On 20th August 1920, Donnchadh Hannigan and myself left Ballylough and went to Glanworth to meet the local Commandant, Tom Barry, who informed us that a patrol, composed of about two police (R.I.C. men) and four Black and Tans, used to leave the R.I.C. barracks in Kildorrery every morning. We took up a position within a few hundred yards of the village. We met local employees of Kildorrery Creamery who were going to work, and we warned them not to say anything about what they had seen. We were there for about two hours when men came along to work in the meadow alongside the road. We let the men into the meadow and told them to continue working, cutting and saving hay. Then we got word that the patrol were leaving Kildorrery. They came on down the road, going South from the village.

We had on that occasion a nurse with us whose name was Nurse ^{O'SULLIVAN} ~~O'Sullivan~~. She was well qualified and she came from Tipperary County. She made her headquarters in a labourer's cottage. Nobody occupied it only an old Fenian ^{named Collins,} and his wife. The Fenian's wife got very perturbed on seeing armed men around the place, so I asked her if she

would like to go further down the road to a neighbour's house, and we got her conveyed to the neighbour's house. I then asked the old Fenian if he would like to go with his wife, and he said no, that he was going to stay, and he blew the bellows for the nurse boiling hot water with which she sterilised her implements, and laid them all out on the table. I told the nurse to keep the door locked and that she should not open it except for somebody's voice that she knew. She locked the door.

Shortly afterwards the patrol arrived. Donnchadh Hannigan blew the whistle and called for the surrender of the Tans and R.I.C. and they immediately started to fire. The Black and Tans started to fire automatically. The R.I.C. men, as far as I could see, did not fire. The battle opened and after a few minutes one of the Black and Tans fell on the roadside. Another was badly wounded in the arm. They surrendered. We came out from behind the fences and took their rifles and their ammunition. We got the nurse to come out from the cottage, and she immediately went and attended to the worst one of the two wounded. As a matter of fact they all had shotgun pellets but two of them had .303 bullet wounds. Nurse O'Sullivan dressed the man who had fallen down and who was wounded in the thigh, and gave him an injection of morphia. He woke up after the injection and he could not understand how it was that there was a Red Cross Nurse attending to him, but she said, "Don't worry. I am a qualified nurse and I will give you all the attention I can".

Subsequently, I might say, it appeared in the "English Nursing Mirror" that a Red Cross Nurse had been present with the rebels when this attack was made on the patrol at Kildorrery, and that it was a scandalous thing that any qualified nurse should accompany rebels in their work of destroying Crown forces. That article can be traced in the "English Nursing Mirror".

After having attended to the man who was most seriously wounded, Nurse O'Sullivan dressed the wound of another Black and Tan who was shot through the arm. He complained to me that one of our men had taken his Mons Medal, which he had got for distinguished service on the retreat from the battle of Mons in the Great War. I told him not to worry about it, that I would get it back, and asked him did he know who took it. He said, "No, I could not recognise the man, but it was one of your men", so I blew the whistle and summoned the Column. I said, "Some member of the Column has taken a Mons Medal from this soldier over here, and I want to have that Medal returned within five minutes to him". I then dismissed the Column and took no further notice of the incident. I went back to the Black and Tan after about five minutes and asked him if he had got his Medal. He said he had got it and he was profuse in his thanks.

We then left some bandages, iodine, etc., with the Black and Tans who were not so seriously wounded and told them to attend to their comrades and to send for a doctor immediately to attend to the two men who were badly wounded, that we could not afford to stay in the area very long. We then went into the Fenian's cottage and Hannigan and myself summarily tried

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the two R.I.C. constables. The name of one of the constables was Clifford, but I cannot recollect what the name of the other man was. We tried them there and then, and sentenced them to death, but said that we would be prepared to commute the sentence if they gave us a guarantee that they would leave the R.I.C. This guarantee was forthcoming, so we took them out on the road, ranged up the Column, said goodbye to the Black and Tans, left them behind and marched the two R.I.C. men further down the road to the South to ^{SCART} school-house about three or four hundred yards away. We put them into the school-house, told them we were putting a guard outside and that they were not, under any circumstances, to attempt to leave for at least an hour and a half. Of course we left no guard outside, but they stayed for the hour and a half and then they returned to the barracks.

We procured a guide who took us as far as Puhys, and one of the Puhys, outside Kildorrery, acted as guide and we retired from Kildorrery.

There is a song very well known in that part of the country, called "Famous Kildorrery Town". In the course of the song it is stated that "At the top of a hill, both naked and chill, stands famous Kildorrery town". We had good reason, when retreating from Kildorrery, to know that Kildorrery was on top of a hill because from there you could survey the country all round. However, we got safely away, but on nearing a bridge crossing the River Funcheon we had to come out on the main road, which was not very far from Castletownroche. We crossed the bridge, took to the fields again immediately after crossing it, and, as we were going up the first field away from the road, a patrol of about

fifty soldiers and two policemen appeared to converge on the bridge from Castletownroche direction. Davy Tobin and myself were the last going up the field. We saw the others running. They went rapidly, crossed over a fence and gave us the signal to go down. We went down although we did not understand the reason why we got the order, but on turning round gradually on the ground we observed the police and soldiers on the bridge where we had crossed only a few minutes before. We waited for a signal to retreat, and when the signal was given to us we doubled, got over the fence and joined our comrades at the back of it. The military did not fire.

We then started retreating, and eventually arrived at a place which I think is Killawillen, not very far from Kildorrery. I suppose about five miles, and we stayed there at John Joe O'Sullivan's, Nagles, and with several other people in the place. The nurse accompanied us on this journey all the way, and she was carrying a Winchester rifle which belonged to Ernie O'Malley. If it had been necessary for her to use it she certainly would have done so, because she was an eminently brave and clever girl.

Having retired to bed in our billets that night, we were disturbed later by scouts of the local Company who said that there were lorries coming. Hannigan and myself were staying in the same room in John Joe O'Sullivan's, also a chap by the name of George Lennon of Waterford, who was a Dáil Loan collector in East Limerick subsequent to Seán Stack and Tomás Malone. The three of us leapt through the window, and went out to the rear taking our clothes with us. The lorries

passed on and we returned to bed. Lorries were flying through from Castletownroche to Kildorrery during the night, but we were not further disturbed.

On the following day we decided that we would come back to East Limerick, so we got local transport, horses and cars, and the Column proceeded down through Glenanaar, which was made famous by Canon Sheehan's story. It is a very wild and desolate country, and the houses there were very few. We came to a house alongside the road, and on making enquiries as to whether any military or police had passed through on cars or lorries that day, we found that the old man we were questioning was deaf. We were not sure whether he was actually deaf or whether he pretended to be, but at any rate we could get no information from him, so we left him and we proceeded down by the cross of Redchair. At Redchair I took the rifle from one of the members of the Column, Tom Howard, who was eventually killed in the struggle, and told him to proceed to Tully, Glenroe, and get arrangements made for the billeting of the Column there that night. Tom Howard resented very much that he should be asked to do such a simple thing as act as message bearer for the Column and be deprived of his rifle, but when I was speaking to him the following morning he understood that it was a very essential thing to send a reliable man.

We crossed through the country down to Glenrue. The journey, I suppose, would have been about six or seven miles. Arriving there we called at an old friend, Father Bob ^{AMBROSE} Ambers.

an old Fenian too. He received us in the Parochial House. We had tea there and after that the members of the Column presented Father ^{AMBROSE} Ambers with one of the bayonets that we had captured from the Tans at Kildorrery. We made the presentation of a .32 revolver to his Curate, Father Coleman. We had a very jolly evening, and we stayed in the houses locally in Glenroe on that particular night. Most of the Column were billeted around Ballyshane townland, and we dumped the rifles in a hay-barn.

The following morning, just as we were about to assemble and collect our rifles and equipment, a patrol of police came along from Kilfinane to Glenroe. Father Coleman got word round to us that they were in the district, so as we were coming across the fields we just lay low and watched the police wherever they went. They raided a few houses locally, but apparently they did not get what they were looking for. It seemed strange to us that they could pass through the area and find nothing; we were in the immediate district, but, of course we were far removed from where we had the arms dumped.

When they retired, we quickly went to the hay-barn where the arms were. We collected them and moved off to some other district.

While the Column was at Tankardstown, I went to Mass to Kilmallock one Sunday morning. I think it was either the 9th or 19th July, 1920. Coming from the church after Mass, I met May Comba - that would be Conway - who lived in the town. She asked me did I hear anything and I said no. She said, "Your home at Ballylanders was burned down by Crown forces last night". I asked about my mother and

father, were they alright, and she said there was nobody in the house. I returned, after Mass, to Tankardstown, and informed the Column.

Dr. O'Donnell called to Tankardstown a little later, and after debating what was to be done, he offered to drive Donnchadh O'Hannigan, myself and some others to Ballylanders.

Having arrived, I found the house still smouldering. My father and mother were in the village with my aunt, Mrs. Denis O'Grady. Her son, John, had noticed suspicious people in the village the night before and gave warning to my father and mother, who then left and went across the street to Mrs. O'Grady. The building was well burned out when I arrived on Sunday, but was still smouldering. My father saved some account books and documents and took them from a safe on the premises. We then returned to Tankardstown.

I think it was a day or two afterwards that we attacked a police and military patrol at Bruree.

On 28th or 29th July, with Mick Scanlon, who was a National teacher in Kilmallock, but from Galbally, and a brother to Jimmy Scanlon who took part in the rescue of Hogan at Knocklong, I went to Kilfinane and stayed in the house of Mrs. O'Rourke in the Main Street. After arriving there, we were asked if the Column would take charge of General Lucas, that he was to be brought to David Condon's in Ballinamina. I said that the Column could not do that kind of work, that it was a job for the local Company. The house he was being brought to was a very fine farmer's place about a mile and a half from Kilfinane and North of the town.

The following morning after awakening, Mrs. O'Rourke's daughter, Kathleen, brought the newspaper to our bedroom and said that General Lucas had escaped. He was in a farmer's house between Herbertstown and Limerick and about one hundred yards from the main road North-East of the former. Apparently he had made his way across the fields to Pallasgreen police barracks and when being escorted to Tipperary military barracks later, the escort ran into an ambush.

Some time in August, 1920, East Limerick Column were staying in Ballycahill, about a mile and a half South of Hospital, at Teresa Crowe's, Hanley's, another family of Crowes, Riordan's and Casey's, when a dispatch came from Liam Hayes, Kiltelly, to have the Column move on to that place for an ambush at Ballinamona, about two miles North-East of Hospital.

The Column mobilised and moved off that night, led by Jim O'Brien of Lizzard, Galbally, across the fields, and later arrived at Liam Hayes' house.

I might mention that Liam Hayes was subsequently Major General Hayes, Adjutant General of the National Army.

I read all the Intelligence reports for the previous week and learned from them that every day two or three military lorries travelled from Pallasgreen barracks, the D.I.'s headquarters for East Limerick area. There was another D.I. at Bruff in East Limerick.

The Column were dispersed to their billets at a late hour and we were on the march to Ballinamona at about four o'clock the following morning.

Donnchadh O'Hannigan, Tomás Malone, myself and the usual members of the unit, as well as members of the Kiltteely Company in charge of Liam Hayes, took up positions on the main Hospital to Limerick and Pallasgreen road, about a mile and a half from the former and convenient to Ballinamona cross. A car with a ladder attached was placed at a gateway in charge of Tomás Malone, who had a sword as well as a pistol.

We waited there for many hours. No enemy troops came, except one soldier on a bicycle and in uniform but not armed. He was permitted to travel on, and when he arrived near the gateway Tomás Malone went out and gave him "hands up", raising his sword. The soldier fell on to the road. On being searched, he was found to have a dispatch from the O.C., Pallasgreen, to the O.C., Hospital, which was of no consequence. He had also twenty Verey Light cartridges.

Incidentally we had received a dispatch a few days before from Seán Wall, the Brigadier, which stated that he had had a dispatch from Michael Collins at headquarters asking for some Verey Lights that were urgently required by them. We dispatched the twenty Verey Lights captured from the soldier to the Brigadier to fulfil this demand.

We stayed in the ambush position until a late hour in the afternoon and it was then decided to withdraw. We were afraid, so many people having passed during the day, that we could stay too long. We packed up and marched to Ballygreeman near Bruff that evening, and passed through Madam O'Grady's demesne at Kilballyowen.

Father Dick McCarthy, the Catholic Curate of Kilmallock, who later was a Chaplain in the National Army, was available that day near the ambush position in case his services would be required.

I think it was late in September or early October, 1920, that the Active Service Column was demobilised. It was decided that we would take a rest for a period of two or three weeks. I am satisfied now that this was a mistake, but I was not then. A brick-lined underground magazine was built in an out-house at a farmer's house about two miles South of Kilfinane at Thomastown. Denis Nunan, a member of the Column, lived in the house but it was not his property. All the arms we had, except small pieces, were placed in the dump, and the Column dispersed. I think I and some others went to Lyons's and Lee's of Tully.

Some short time afterwards Tomás Malone, David Cremens, Donnchadh O'Hannigan and myself, and I think Father Dick McCarthy, were driven by Tomás Malone in a car to Cork city, where we stayed with a brother of Tomás Malone, named Séamus, in Douglas Street.

My brothers, Peter Crowley and Jack, with Michael O'Reilly and Christopher Upton, all from Ballylanders, were then on hunger-strike in Cork prison.

I think it was on the following day that I was given a suit of clerical clothes belonging to the Rev. Father Duggan, who was Chaplain to Cork prison, and late in the evening I walked, in my clerical garb, up Washington Street, accompanied

by Máire Malone, Tomás's sister, and my sister Bridie and some others to the prison gate. I met my mother at the gate and went inside, giving my name as Father Paddy Lyons.

When admitted, there was a British military officer inside between the two gates. I also saw a warder there whose name was O'Shea, from Cahirciveen, who was in Limerick prison when I was a prisoner there over three years before. He it was who took me in charge and led me through the inner gate and around a rather dark thoroughfare to the prison hospital. On the way he asked me how I was. I did not think he would have recognised me, as when he came to Limerick jail as a warder in 1917 I had about six weeks' growth of beard. He was thoroughly reliable and a good Irishman. He had admired the strikers for their great determination, and was of great assistance to them while the strike lasted.

Each hunger-striker was in a separate cell, and their doors were left open. My brother Jack, Michael O'Reilly and Christopher Upton appeared to me to be much less wasted than my brother Peter. Of course, Peter was the youngest on strike. There were two nuns attending them.

After being with Peter for some time I came back again to see Jack, and then a warder came in and said, "Peter has got a change". I assumed that the excitement of seeing me had not done him any good, but he rallied again after about four or five minutes.

After saying goodbye to the hunger-strikers, somebody came into the hospital and hurried me away. When I got outside the gate I was put on a side-car and rushed away back to Douglas Street. I did not understand the reason for this, but there must have been some good reason.

I think it was the following day that Father Dick McCarthy and myself called to the office of Frank Daly, manager of Sutton's, Ltd., Grand Parade, Cork. Frank had a civilian suit of clothes ready in the office for Father Dick and he changed into them at once. I think it was Mick Scanlon and myself who then took Father Dick's cases to the docks, where a Moore and McCormack liner was berthed. Father McCarthy was to travel to America on this boat as a steward. This had been arranged by Frank Daly.

Father Dick had an American magazine explaining all about the Thompson sub-machine gun, which it illustrated, and which we learned of for the first time, and he said that he would arrange the purchase of some in America when he arrived.

Having bade farewell to our passenger, we returned to Douglas Street, and Mick Scanlon (a brother of Jimmy who took part in the release of Hogan at Knocklong) and myself went to Glanmire station and booked for Kilmallock.

Having arrived there safely we went directly to Quinlivan's of Laurencetown, between Kilmallock and Kilfinane, and stayed together that night in Mr. Quinlivan's

house. The following day we left there and went to Mrs. Burke's of Laurencetown, and from there to John Kearney's of Tiermore, Kilmallock. We returned to Mrs. Burke's later that night. She was living in this house with her brother, two daughters and a niece.

We were talking to the people of the house in the parlour later, and the house-dog out in the yard gave a bit of an alarm. Scanlon and myself prepared to leave by the back window, but Mrs. Burke said that it was probably some of the local lads coming in. Eventually we found that the police and military from Kilmallock were there. Scanlon and myself were going to get out the back window when we got the order to get back or they would shoot. We then saw that the game was up. We scrambled into bed in case it might be just an accidental call. The police and the military entered. We got up and were taken out along a boreen, I suppose about half a mile long, to where the lorries were on the main road between Kilfinane and Kilmallock. We were taken into Ashill Towers, which were then occupied by the military in Kilmallock town. The date of my arrest was 19th October, 1920 .

Having been put into the guard-room, the officer, whose name I remember was Kellegher, treated us very badly. He ordered the guard to tie wire round Scanlon's wrist. They had only one pair of hand-cuffs, and those were put on me behind my back. My two feet were tied with wire. Another chap named Peter Quinlan, who was captured before they arrived at Burke's house, was also made a prisoner. They did not tie him up as they did Scanlon and myself.

When they had secured us we were thrown into a lavatory where we were left all night. The following morning when the guard was being changed, the soldier or corporal in charge of the oncoming guard asked who tied us up like that, and we said that the guard that had been there when we came in the previous night had tied us up, so he ordered the other soldiers to take off the handcuffs and the wire off our feet and hands. He then ordered the soldiers to bring us some tea and bread and butter. After some time the officer came in and told me to get ready, that I was going for identification.

I had, when arrested, given my name as William O'Grady, Ballylanders, who was a National Teacher and a first cousin of mine. At Burke's the night before I understood that Sergeant Maguire of Kilmallock, who was for a considerable time in Ballylanders barracks, was there, but he did not come forward to identify me.

I was put into a motor car, a Ford car which had a body built by O'Gorman's of Clonmel. I was put sitting in the back seat and a soldier came along and threw his revolver in beside me. I could see that it was not loaded. He jumped in after me and the driver drove off to Kilfinane to have me identified.

Arriving at Kilfinane R.I.C. barracks I was taken into the day-room and Sergeant Kennedy who had been in Galbally was asked by the officer if he knew me and he said he did. He said, "He is Timmy Crowley of Ballylanders". I said, "Are you sure?" and he said, "Of course I'm sure. Didn't I buy a pair of shoes in the shop from you about 6 weeks ago?"

The officer then asked me did I still state that I was William O'Grady and I said no. I said, "My name is Crowley". That being done, I was put into a cell and left for about an hour and a half, and some kind people in the town brought me some food.

Subsequently a small Crossley tender arrived from Kilmallock with what I recognised were Black and Tans and some soldiers. I was taken back in the car to Kilmallock, and when I arrived outside Ashill Towers I saw Mick Scanlon in another lorry - a large Crossley tender.

We started off then for Limerick Prison, and when we arrived at Bruff, the tender in which I was stayed there and I was transferred to the lorry in which my friend, Mick Scanlon was travelling. He was up at the front of the lorry and I was at the rear, so I had no opportunity of having any word with him. We got a puncture within about six miles of Limerick and we were taken out on to the road and kept separate. When the puncture was mended we were put back into the lorry, pretty much as we had been, and eventually drove through to Limerick, passing a horse fair which was at the top of the town, in William Street. We made slow progress going down through the town, but eventually we arrived outside William Street barracks.

I, being at the tail of the lorry, was off first. I had a pair of hand-cuffs on me - the only pair they had at Ashill Towers. No hand-cuffs were on Mick Scanlon, so he was pretty free. I stood waiting for Scanlon to get off, and when he came to the back of the lorry he jumped to the ground and ran. He proceeded up Little Catherine Street

and turned to his right, the soldiers firing rapidly after him I could see, however, that he was not hit before he got into Thomas Street. A soldier or an officer, I forget which, came up to me, put a revolver to my head and told me to get inside. This was after I had seen Scanlon escaping.

I was put into a dirty cell in the barracks and left there all night. There was no light in this room, and there was a lavatory there which stank. Being tired, I lay down. I found a policeman's coat in the dark which I put over me.

Some couple of hours later, a man was put into the cell. He kicked up an awful furore. He started kicking the door and shouting to be let home to his wife and family. I told him to keep quiet. He did not keep quiet, and then a policeman or a Black and Tan came along outside the door and told him to stop making noise. He said he wanted to get home to his wife and family, and the policeman said, "If you don't keep quiet I'll go into you and I'll give you what you're looking for". After that the man quietened down. He came over to where I was and started feeling around and said, "Who is that?". I said, "Isn't it equal to you who I am. Can't you lie down there and be quiet?" He said, "Who are you?" and I said, "Can't you lie down there and be quiet?". He said, "You are a Peeler," and I said, "I'm not a Peeler. I am a prisoner the same as yourself".

Then it seemed to dawn on him that he knew my voice and he said, "Aren't you Tadhg Crowley?", and I said, "I am. Lie down there and be quiet". He said, "Don't you know me? I am Owen Coll". He was working in the County Council office. He lay down quietly and we talked as low as we could.

Eventually we went asleep.

The following morning the policeman came in and told Coll that he could go home. He had a scarf on him which had been knitted by his wife. It was what he called a Volunteer scarf at the time - grey-green, the same colour as the Volunteer uniform. This he gave to me and told me I would want it. He was then discharged.

Some people, I think it was Fitzpatricks, near the barracks, sent me in breakfast, and after some time I was told to get ready. I went out and was put into a lorry. A large number of people had assembled outside the barracks and they shouted, "Up the rebels" and so forth. Sergeant Horan, an R.I.C. sergeant and a famous character in Limerick, immediately told the police to disperse the crowds, so the crowds went helter-skelter in front of the charge.

When the police returned after charging the crowd, the lorry proceeded and landed me up in Limerick jail.

While in Limerick jail - I think it would be about the month of December - looking out of my cell one day through a spy-hole, I noticed a large number of prisoners, I should say about eighty or ninety, being brought in from a dance that had been held at Cahirguillamore House, near Bruff in East Limerick. The military and police apparently got to know that this dance was being held and they came along that night. Even though great precautions were taken and a watch was being kept by the guard that was put over the place, those at the dance were surprised by the military and police, who came there in great force. Martin Conway,

a friend of mine with whom I went to Rockwell College, was in charge of the local Company, and had made arrangements for the protection of the people at the dance. In the course of the firing, he and I think some other one of the Volunteers were shot. Martin was fatally wounded and died in a short time. Then the Crown forces closed in on the house where the dance was being held. They tore away staves of the stair-cases and used them as bludgeons, with the result that practically every prisoner who came into the jail was bandaged.

Robert Ryan of Loughgur, presently T.D. for East Limerick, who was a great friend of mine, was shot through the top of one lung. He survived and I am glad that he is still alive to tell of his experiences.

I am not sure whether I had been court-martialled at that time, but I think I had.

I was taken one day from the prison to the New Barracks, as they were called then, now Sarsfield Barracks. There were three officers at the court-martial. A policeman named Mulvey was the only witness that was brought to bear witness against me. He made his case and stated that he had recognised me on the occasion of the ambush at Ballinahinch when we disarmed four police from Kilfinane. The court-martial did not hold for very long, and eventually I was brought back again to Limerick prison. I think it was some time early in January, at least it was after January 1st anyway, when my pals Tom Murphy and David Tobin had been shot in Glenbrohane by Crown forces. An officer came to the prison one day and announced my sentence. He said, "You have been found guilty of an attack on His Majesty's Forces and you have been sentenced

to fifteen years' penal servitude". I said, "Is that all?" and he laughed. He said was I not satisfied that I had got enough.

I think it was some time in January, 1921, a couple of weeks after Tom Murphy and Davy Tobin being shot, that about 16 or 17 other prisoners and myself were taken from Limerick prison with an escort of - I am not sure whether it was two armoured cars, but there was certainly one armoured car and several lorries of Black and Tans. Those had come from Dublin that morning with a number of bomb-proof lorries which they called cages, and after delivering them we were put on board the lorries and taken by road to Mountjoy Prison in Dublin.

I think we were only about four days in Mountjoy when we were shifted in a sloop of war to England.

I might mention that when I was in Mountjoy I one day met Ned ^{FOLEY} ~~Tobin~~ of Duntreleague, Galbally, and Paddy Maher, both of whom were tried, I think, first in Dublin and then in Armagh, charged with being participants in the attack on the R.I.C. at Knocklong when Seán Hogan was taken from an R.I.C. escort and two policemen killed. Foley and Maher seemed to be under the impression that there was no hope for them, and I tried to satisfy them that when they had not been executed already there was no fear that it would happen now, but they said they were prepared to go. They offered me cigarettes, of which I had plenty at the time. Eventually I said good-bye to them, and did not hear about them until many months afterwards when they were executed.

I might mention that Ned Foley took part in the attack on the train at Knocklong, but that Paddy Maher had no knowledge of the event at all, and he was not present.

I should have mentioned that there were about sixty or seventy prisoners altogether from different parts of the country. Some were not penal servitude prisoners, but a good many of them were. Before we were shifted to the boat, Auxiliaries came around the prison yard and they searched between the lines of prisoners looking for somebody. A man was standing alongside me. His name was Joe Murphy of Cork. He was sentenced to penal servitude for having thrown bombs at a lorry in Douglas Street in Cork. I sensed danger and came to the conclusion that it was Murphy they were looking for, so I took off the scarf which I had got in William Street barracks in Limerick from Owen Coll and I gave it to Murphy, telling him to put it round his neck. Then I gave him my hat and I took his cap.

The Auxiliaries went round between the lines of prisoners on several occasions, but apparently they could not recognise their man. Murphy gave a false name. Afterwards in Dartmoor he was satisfied that only that I gave him the scarf on that night and the hat which I was wearing, he would have been detected. Well, he lived along with us and was released from Dartmoor at the same time as myself after the Truce.

I should have stated that it was to Portland Prison we were taken. We arrived in Portland Bill and were marched up the hill into the prison. On arrival we were issued with prison garb and our fingerprints taken.

I might also mention that when we arrived there, Robert Barton was in a separate cell doing punishment, and up to the time of his release, before the signing of the Treaty, I had never met him in the prison. Seán Hayes of West Cork was released from Portland about the same time.

After being in Portland for about five months I would say, probably in June 1921, we heard a rumour that Portland was to be turned into a Borstal Institution for boys and that we were to be shifted to some other prison. We had a Commandant in Portland whose name was Charlie Somers; I think he is at present working as a Civil Servant in the Department of Industry and Commerce, Dublin, a brother to Miss Somers who was Secretary of the Irish Industrial Development Association, when it was rumoured that we were to be transferred. It was said that we would have to go in chains and in prison clothes. Somers went to see the Governor on this matter, and told him that under any circumstances we would not agree to be transferred in prison garb and tied to chains. A compromise was made, however, and we were allowed to wear our own clothes, and we would, the Governor said, be hand-cuffed in pairs.

On the day that we evacuated the prison, we were marched down the hill down to Portland Bill, and we were put on board the Super Dreadnought "Valiant". Our men when they saw the guns, and we got plenty opportunity of seeing them, came to the conclusion that in fighting England we were fighting a lost cause. I remember saying that after all if a person had a rifle or a revolver inland those ships could do them no harm.

We were taken on the "Valiant" to the harbour at Plymouth, at which the "Valiant" put in and discharged us. We were put on a train and taken up through the moors to Princetown where the prison was.

We were then changed back to our prison garb again. We had agitations there for political treatment, and votes were taken as to whether we would go on hunger-strike or not.

About this time Charlie Somers went to see the Governor, and wrote me a note before he went to see him. Our comrades who were in for setting fire to docks in London, Liverpool and other places went on hunger-strike that morning. Somers said it was possible that when he would go to see the Governor he would not be allowed back again, and he directed me to carry on in case that he was shifted to some other prison.

I immediately took over and held an election. I was appointed Commandant of all the prisoners - I think there were about 267. I appointed two Vice Commandants, one of them Charlie Ryan, who was a post office official in Belfast, and the other George Bingham of Dublin. Any matter on which I should have to go to see the Governor, one of these went to see him instead, the idea being that if action would be taken against the man who went to see the Governor as the Commandant, the prisoners would not be left without the Commandant, who would still remain. It was kept secret who the Commandant actually was; as a matter of fact, up to the day that the first batch of prisoners left Dartmoor in January, 1922, the prison authorities had no idea until then who had been in charge for the past five or six months.

I might state that during the whole time that we were in prison, both in Dartmoor and in Portland, we were not permitted to talk to one another, and very often when caught speaking to one another, three days solitary confinement on a bread and water diet was the punishment, which happened to most prisoners repeatedly.

On the day we were leaving Dartmoor in January, 1921, we drilled the boys in sections inside in the hall from which we left. The prisoners left in three different batches.

~~Prisoners from Bruff~~ Prisoners from Bruff went the first day, another group went on the second day and we went on the third day. I put one man in charge of each batch, and I took charge of the final batch myself.

We lined up in the prison yard, and I drilled the number of men I had - which was about sixty or seventy I would say. Having brought them to attention, I then addressed the Governor and the Deputy Governor, who was a son of Lord French, and told them that, on behalf of the Irish Republican Army, we protested against our comrades who had been arrested in England being detained and not being liberated the same as we were, on the same day. I then gave the order, "Irish Republican Army, stand at ease", and then "Attend. Move to the right in fours". "Form fours". "Right". We marched to attention out through the town of Princetown, and eventually arrived at the railway station where we went on board a train and were taken down to Plymouth, where we got a great reception from the Irish people in that town.

Signed; *Tadhg Bowles*

Date; *3rd Oct 1950*

Witness;

J. J. [unclear] Col.

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