

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BURO STAIRÉ MILEATA 1913-21
NO. W.S. 030

ROINN  COSANTA.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 630

Witness

Commandant James Fulham,
"Brosna",
25 Clonmore Road,
Mount Merrion,
Dublin.

Identity.

Member of Fianna Eireann, 1912- ;
Member of 'C' Company, 4th Battalion,
Dublin Brigade, 1917 - .

Subject.

- (a) Fianna Eireann, Dublin, 1912 - ;
- (b) 4th Battalion Dublin Brigade, 1917-1921.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil

File No. S.1893

Form B.S.M. 2

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NO. W.S. 530

STATEMENT BY COMMANDANT JAMES FULHAM,

"Brosna", 25 Clonmore Road,

Mount Merrion, Dublin.

Fianna Éireann.

Late in the year 1912 or early in the year 1913 I joined Fianna Éireann. We met about twice a week and at week-ends at 34 or 32 Camden Street. We were drilled there by Con Colbert and Seán Kavanagh. We also had lectures from Colbert and from one of the Mellows brothers. We met there people who afterwards played a prominent part in the political life of the country - Countess Markievicz, Con Colbert, Liam and Barney Mellows. On Sundays we had a route march to the Pine Forest. I don't think we carried out any serious military exercises. My recollection is that we went out for the day and we simply enjoyed ourselves. I was selected for a signalling class and I was taught the Morse Code. As I was very young at the time I didn't take seriously to this form of training and like many of my comrades we began to take less and less interest in the Fianna and finally left it. We didn't realise or appreciate the training that these units were providing for us.

Irish Volunteers.

During the summer of 1917 I joined "C" Company of the 4th Battalion, Irish Volunteers, Dublin Brigade. The Company Commander at the time was Garry Byrne and I think John Joyce was right or left half Company Commander. Our training ground was Larkfield, Kimmage, or the Sandpits, Crumlin. I think we met twice a week and on an odd Sunday for route marches. Our training was based on

the then current British Training Manual, also the organisational Extended order drill, close order foot drill and lectures on the rifle, first aid and signalling were the chief aspects of our military instruction. In addition to being a member of the Volunteer Unit at that time I was also a member of the Éamonn Ceannt Sinn Féin Club which had its headquarters in James's Street. These premises were also used from time to time by prominent people in the political life of the country for lecture purposes. In addition to lectures on political matters, lectures were also given on military matters to Volunteers. The club membership was not mainly confined to members of volunteer units. It also included young men who had nothing to do with the military side of affairs at the time. I remember on one occasion Joe McGrath coming in the club and asking for a show of hands as to the number present who were members of the Volunteers. I remember on that particular night the man who occupied the chair was a relative of Liam T. Cosgrave. He was known to us as "Uncle Pat". The subject of his lecture that night I think was "The Manchester Martyrs". The club room was pretty packed when Joe McGrath, who was then a political organiser, called for the show of hands already referred to and my impression of the incident is that about half of those present put up their hands. When Joe McGrath saw the poor response he showed his displeasure and disappointment and appealed to the assembly at large to all become members of the Volunteers. I cannot say whether the appeal was successful or not but I believe it was. Joe McGrath was, I think, at that time Battalion Commander for a short time and when he came into the hall on that particular night he questioned the chairman (Uncle Pat) about something that was to be done of a political nature and which was not done. The chairman replied, "The flesh is willing but the spirit is weak". Joe McGrath rejoined

with the words "To use an American phrase, that's some weakness". With that he called for the show of hands to find out how many men were Volunteers in that gathering.

One activity that emanated from this club was the instruction regarding a plebisite to find out whether the number of people in any area were in favour of an Irish Republic. For this work Volunteers went out in pairs and were given so many names and addresses of houses to call to. I remember being issued with a paper containing several names and addresses. Our instructions were that we were to call to those houses and ask the occupants or owners if they were in favour of an independent Irish Republic. If in favour we asked them to sign the document we had with us. If the reply was in the negative I cannot remember what instructions we had regarding it. It was understood that the people were ignorant of political events at the time and we were instructed that if they asked the question "Does this Irish Republic mean that we are getting Home Rule?" we were to say "Yes", but not to argue about it. We were to be diplomatic and suggest to them that it meant complete freedom. Of the number of houses that we visited I think about fifty per cent of them were in favour of an Irish Republic. Some of them were staunch Home Rulers and would not agree to a Republic. Others simply signed the document we presented them with just to get rid of us, not caring whether it was an Irish Republic, Home Rule or any other kind of Republic for that matter. In the James's Street area in particular, we met quite a number of hostile householders who were relatives of British soldiers then fighting in France. Some of them literally threw us out of the house, saying that "My husband or my son or relative went to France to fight for King and Country". "He didn't go in there", pointing to the South Dublin Union, "like some of you fellows".

Our crack to that was "Maybe he will be there when he comes back from France".

Armistice Night 1918.

On the 11th November, 1918, when the 1914-1918 War ended, unofficial victory celebrations were held in the streets of Dublin. Groups of us were mobilised and ordered to carry sticks and to proceed to various points in the city to preserve law and order. In other words we were to regard ourselves as custodians of the peace. When we got as far as College Green we found the whole place was packed with people all celebrating, singing and displaying Union Jacks. We could get no further and our group became disorganised. Shortly after that we saw a fairly big party of Volunteers marching, I think from Grafton Street direction. The crowd surged round them and booed them, but the party didn't become totally disorganised and an amusing recollection I have is that some of the women who before the Volunteer party came along were carrying Union Jacks, now dropped them and fell in behind the Volunteer party shouting "Up the Rebels".

I observed that several groups of Australians and some American troops were sympathetic to the Sinn Féin Volunteers. Some of them actually carried Tri-Colours and marched with the Volunteers.

Raids for Arms.

Some time following that incident instructions were issued that Company Commanders should provide themselves with arms, with the result that we were detailed to raid various private houses in our Company area for shotguns, rifles or any other form of armament we could come by.

We were supplied with lists of houses that should be visited. I cannot say what the Company overall haul of arms was, but our collection amounted to two or three pistols, a revolver and a shotgun (four weapons in all). In one of these houses the owner refused to hand up the weapon that he was known to possess. We had to use a little bit of persuasion by presenting a revolver to him and then he handed over the weapon that he had. Our instructions going out on these raids were that we were not to threaten or warn people if we possibly could. We were to use tact and discretion, and it was only as a last resort that we were to hold up any man and threaten him with arms. As a result of these raids the Company fared off pretty well in the line of arms such as they were.

General Election Duties.

During the Election of 1918, my Company was detailed for election duty. We were assigned in groups to various polling booths armed with sticks. I don't know if we got any definite instructions but I think we were to regard ourselves as sort of on police duties. Things went very peacefully for us. We weren't called upon to use our sticks in any way. I can only recollect one incident of attempted interference. Polling Booths were closed and when the ballot boxes were being collected and brought to a checking centre, word came through that a mob was being mobilised to interfere with the transfer of the ballot boxes. I think this incident was supposed to occur in the vicinity of James's Street and Volunteers were hurriedly mobilised to counter it, which they did. I think that the group saw that the Volunteers were ready for them and they decided to cry off.

Company Council Meetings - Activities Reviewed.

In the year 1919 definite instructions were issued that Volunteers were not to parade in Company strength; that in future they would parade in half companies or sections, the officer in charge of the right or left half having usually selected the parade centre.

Company Councils were held weekly. These consisted of three Company Officers, Company Adjutant, Company Quartermaster, four Section Commanders and at times a representative from the Battalion Headquarters, usually the Intelligence Officer. I attended these meetings in my capacity as a Section Commander. The business discussed concerned activities of the past week and the week to come. When the routine business was discussed and it was decided that a special job was to be brought off all members of the Council would withdraw and only the Section Commander of the section that would be detailed to carry out the job would be present with the Company Commander. The Company Commander would give him full details as to the job in mind. One might get an instruction like this from the Company Commander - "No.3 Section Commander remain behind". He would then say "You will take out a patrol next week", and he would define the route and the time that you were to go out and dismiss. He might ask then what men the Section Commander was taking out and if he thought they were not reliable men he would mention this fact.

Conscription Crisis.

For some time prior to the passing in the British Parliament of the Compulsory Military Service Act for Ireland, all Volunteers were instructed to have in their possession three days' iron rations and provide themselves with strong

boots or shoes, breeches and leggings, trench coats, haversacks, etc. I couldn't say why these instructions were issued but the majority of us felt that in the event of conscription being applied the Volunteers were to leave their homes and occupations and take the fields. In any case we felt that as Volunteers we were not to allow ourselves to be conscripted. The conscription crisis was responsible for a big influx of men to the Volunteers. I distinctly remember being at the Éamon Ceannt Sinn Féin Headquarters in James's Street one evening when a big body of young men came up to our headquarters and asked to be taken into the Volunteers. They seemed to think that they had nothing to do only have themselves enrolled and have themselves issued out with arms. In fact they were disappointed when told this could not be done. They were not enrolled there and then. Their names and addresses were taken and they were informed that they would be contacted in due course. Presumably enquiries were made about them but in any case the majority of them were called in due course. They were always kept apart, however, from the regular category of Volunteers, and when the conscription crisis passed the majority of them left the Volunteers.

Company Funds.

For the purpose of buying arms for the Company we ran céilís and an odd concert and a Fete in Croke Park. In order to allay suspicion from the prying eyes of the enemy we called ourselves "The Seaforth Choral Society" or some such name. Our functions were usually fairly well supported.

Secrecy regarding Volunteer Activities.

Many lectures were given to Volunteers regarding the dangers of talking too loosely in public about Volunteer activities. In this connection a member of "C" Company, the late David Sears, wrote a small sketch entitled "Babbling Tongues". He depicted in this sketch, Volunteers in a Fish and Chip Saloon partaking of supper in a cubicle. During the course of the supper they talked in stage whispers about an exercise coming off the following week-end. In the next cubicle there was a detective eating and taking notes at the same time. The play ended up by revealing that the detective had overheard the conversation, whispered though it was, with the result that when the exercise did take place on that Sunday the Crown Forces made a swoop and made several arrests. Another short example that was emphasised was, say - three Volunteers walking down the streets of Dublin, and during the course of conversation one of them might mention the word "mobilisation". Secret Service men or their agents or touts on overhearing this word, could place an intelligent construction on it, which might lead to the Volunteers being shadowed. These were the kind of examples that were emphasised in lectures on the question of keeping closed mouths about all Volunteer activities.

Press Propaganda against a Volunteer Parade.

I remember on one occasion when all Battalions of the Dublin Brigade were ordered on a route march on a specific Sunday. The 4th Battalion was formed up on the Crumlin road and marched in the direction of Naas. Arms were not carried. A few days prior to this hints appeared in the Dublin daily papers regarding this intended route march and they appealed to young men not to turn out as the British

were determined to take action; that in such an eventuality bloodshed and wholesale arrest would undoubtedly follow. I think the papers that carried this publication were "The Irish Independent" and "The Freeman's Journal". I don't think this publicity had any material adverse effect as far as my Company was concerned. It turned out in strength. I don't know how the information got to the papers in advance, possibly it was through the Castle Authorities. Viewing it in retrospect I think that it was a ruse to try and stampede the parade.

Discipline.

While the majority of Volunteers were, on the whole, fairly well disciplined, there were of course, exceptions, and I think it would be just as well to set down here how offenders were dealt with. A Volunteer guilty of an act of indiscipline who was earning his living in full-time employment would be paraded and warned. If the warning went unheeded and he was again found guilty of a breach of discipline he was then suspended for a number of months. This had the effect of completely ostracising him from his comrades and from his unit. This, it was known, he felt rather keenly. In the case of men who were not in regular civilian employment who committed any breach of discipline, the procedure was that they were kept in custody in a hut or barn in Crumlin or it might be in stables. This meant that another Volunteer had to keep guard on him. Such periods of detention lasted three or four days according to the nature of the offence. The main idea underlying these short periods of detention was to show Volunteers in general that the Company could enforce discipline in accordance with its own rights. The only serious charge of indiscipline I remember was in the case of two men who were going out or

coming from a job one evening. They had a private row and one attempted to draw his gun on the other. A number of us were close by when this happened and we immediately separated the two, thus preventing any of them from drawing their guns. A courtmartial charge followed. The courtmartial was held in, I think, Galbratha. A number of witnesses were called to prove the offence and the result of the trial was that the two men were suspended for a number of months. However, as both men were regarded as first-class Volunteers they were eventually reinstated.

Company Intelligence.

David Sears was the Company Intelligence Officer. On one particular occasion instructions were issued to all men of the Company that they were to remain up out of bed on a given night in their own homes or wherever they might be lodging. They were to take up position in a window overlooking the street they lived or lodged in and check on the number of enemy troops, police, known agents or detectives passing, and submit a report the following day to David Sears. I submitted my report which was almost negligible. I think there were only four or five policemen passed up my street on that particular night. I don't know what the idea of keeping this all night vigil was for, but in any case it was an instruction and we had to carry it out.

Weapon Training.

I cannot remember having received any instruction in the service rifle (Lee Enfield) but I do remember being taken out, probably twice, to a field in Crumlin, say, Saturday afternoon, and I fired three rounds on each occasion out of a miniature rifle (.22).

There might be one revolver handed round from man to man to hold, look at and practise upon, and we would be shown how to load it and unload it, and thereafter it was mainly opening the right forefinger and aiming at a line in the wall, keeping the finger on the line and moving it up and down slowly, and occasionally closing the eyes and opening them to bring out instinctive aiming. Most men in the Company received this form of instruction. Grenade training followed similar lines to the revolver. We were just shown a dummy grenade with a pin in it and we would take the pin out. We never actually threw these grenades. I remember on one or two occasions a grenade target being improvised at a field in Kimmage. A small box was being drawn along the ground slowly by men and Volunteers were instructed to throw sods or stones, roughly the same weight as a grenade into this box. It was explained to us that if we could succeed in getting such missiles into this box our chances of getting live grenades into a passing lorry were good.

Munitions.

A number of us were engaged from time to time in making what was commonly known as buckshot in Keogh Donnelly's Abattoir in Cork Street. We had keys of this place and we went there on any night for which we were detailed where we found the material for the making of this buckshot was already there. The buckshot was made something like this: we had moulds and the standard shot of ordinary shotgun cartridges and lead was melted down and our job was to pour the stuff into the moulds and when this cooled down it was taken out as buckshot. Similarly in the case of grenade filling we packed the gelignite into the cases by means of sticks, under the supervision of an experienced Volunteer from the Company. It was a crude way of manufacturing

ammunition but it was the best we could do under the circumstances. To add to the material for making ammunition we were instructed to collect lead wherever we could lay our hands on it and in addition places were raided for empty artillery shell.

Plans for Attack on British Troops at Crumlin - May 1921.

In the month of April or May, 1921, information reached the Company Commander that it was usual for a British Army military party to travel by lorry from Baldonnell at a certain hour each day. The Company Commander decided to lay plans for the holding up of this party with a view to capturing their arms and ammunition. As a preliminary I was sent to the vicinity of the Half Way House on the Crumlin road to observe the movements of this party, and report any further details regarding strength, equipment, etc., and to note the definite time of the day that the car passed in this vicinity. Over a period of a fortnight roughly, I went out to the Crumlin road on a number of occasions. Final plans were discussed in Keogh Donnelly's I think. Roughly these were that the ambush party would consist of three sections or groups of selected men and that they would take up positions on the Crumlin road on the city side of the Half Way House. Positions were allotted to each group astride the road. A cable was to be brought to the ambush position and fixed across the road loosely a short time before the car was due to arrive. Immediately the car would be sighted the cable was to be drawn up tightly and simultaneously with this the Company Commander would blow his whistle and we would all fire a volley and demand the immediate surrender of the party. He was more anxious to get the arms than to inflict casualties. We had a Ford car standing by ready to take

the arms when captured. I was to occupy a rather isolated position away from the main party, behind a wall, and my instructions were that if any of the military tried to escape by that road I was to prevent them from doing so. Just as final arrangements were made it was discovered that the Active Service Unit intervened and carried out the ambush themselves. The Company Commander was very annoyed as he had gone to a lot of trouble in preparing and planning this operation. He also felt that it would enhance considerably the prestige of the Company had it been carried out. I believe myself that Captain O'Brien knew beforehand that the Active Service Unit were interested in this British party but he felt that it was an operation more appropriate to the Company than to the Active Service Unit and, therefore, decided to go ahead with it. However, as I have already said, he was forestalled.

Shadowing of Suspect.

Sometime in the spring of 1921, I was instructed to proceed to a stable in Bridgefoot Street. On arriving there I saw another Volunteer whom I knew, and a man who appeared to be of the tramp class lying in straw. The Volunteer was obviously guarding him as he was sitting down with the gun in his hand. The Company Commander was there also and he told me to take over and to sit there and watch the man. After some time the Battalion Commander arrived. As far as I recollect it was Seán Dowling. He had some discussion with the Company Commander and I was told to go outside. While outside I thought I heard the prisoner praying. He told them, I think, he was a Roman Catholic. I believe this man said he was an Australian. He was released after some time and I was instructed to follow him. They told me that he was supposed to go to a hostel in Meath Street and

I was to see if he did go and report back. I shadowed him to the hostel and saw that he went in there. I reported back to the Company Commander. Afterwards we heard the British had raided the hostel that night and this man was taken away. The Battalion Commander was very annoyed about it because I think they were then certain that he was a British agent.

Sergeant Igoe.

At a Company Council meeting a photograph of an R. I. C. Sergeant in uniform was passed round to those present at the meeting. We were told to examine the photograph thoroughly and get a good mental picture of the photograph. We were then asked if we would recognise this man if we saw him in the flesh, and if we did we were to shoot him on sight as it was explained to us that this man was a menace to the I. R. A. in Dublin and that it was imperative that he should be eliminated as quickly as possible.

Raid on Custom House Guard.

Early in the year 1920 approximately fifteen to twenty men from the Company were selected for a raid on the British Military Guard in the Custom House. One of our Company Officers, Paddy O'Brien, was I think employed as a clerk in the Custom House at that time and I think it was he gave the idea to the Company Commander that it would be well worth while taking this British guard by surprise and capturing their arms. Knowing the Custom House so well he gave full particulars of the position of the guard, and the strength of the guard-room. Also he made a close check up on the movements of members of the guard throughout

the day. With this information at his disposal the Company Commander (John Joyce), I think, selected his men and outlined plans for a surprise attack on the guard. I do remember there was a rehearsal and the general lay-out of the place was given to us. The guard-room in the Custom House was on an upper floor and it could be approached from both sides by stairways. We were to divide ourselves into two parties, and walk casually up the stairs as if we were members of the Custom House staff. Both parties were to meet on the landing at the same time near the guard-room. This was planned to come off at lunch hour between 1 and 2 when it was felt that the guard might not be as alert as at other times, and it was known that during this hour some of them left for refreshments outside. My job was to stop in the main hall of the North Wall entrance to the Custom House and at one o'clock I was to close the door and prevent people entering or leaving. I had special instructions as to what to do with the man who was standing by the 'phone. I was to warn him not to use the 'phone and if he refused I was to take whatever action was necessary to prevent him doing so. We were armed with revolvers but it was pointed out that the main idea of the job in mind was to procure arms and if possible we were to get them without casualties. On the day in question we assembled in Liberty Hall. We were addressed there by John Joyce who gave us our final instructions. We left in parties and arrived at the Custom House. I took up my position in the hallway and the remainder passed on up the stairway. I was about to carry out my orders when the last man up the stairs came back hurriedly and said "Come on. Get out of this". I obeyed his instructions and afterwards learned that the plans for disarming the guard could not be proceeded with as when the two groups had got just to the top of the stairway they discovered that the guard appeared to be

reinforced or was in the process of being changed, which meant that there were two military guards there at the time, and the original plan could not be carried out. Later I read a press report in the "Freeman's Journal" reporting this raid and saying that the British searched the building but found the birds had flown. How they knew of our presence there none of us was in a position to say.

Proposed Raid on British Mail Armed Escort.

It was observed that a British small lorry or truck arrived at James's Street Post Office very often to collect mails. The movements of this lorry and the habits of the escort were studied. Generally the British troops were careless. Some of them would sit in the lorry with their arms aside. Others would get out and walk round the pavement, smoking. One or two of the party would go into the Post Office to collect the mails and would remain there for some little time. When all this information was collected it was decided that an attempt to capture their arms would be carried out. Six or eight of us were selected for this raid and strange as it might seem the man in charge was an ordinary Volunteer by the name of Seán Burke. Roughly the plan was that one man carrying a Peter-the-Painter would take up a position on the opposite side of the road to the Post Office near a lamp standard, about fifteen yards away, and that he would open fire on the British party if resistance was offered. Another Volunteer and myself were to enter the Post Office by a side entrance and when the British soldiers were inside we were to close the doors and hold everybody there. Similarly, another pair of Volunteers were to close the front entrance. This would have the effect of isolating the party of soldiers inside from the soldiers outside. Another party

of Volunteers outside covered by the Volunteer with his "Peter-the-Painter" were to rush the British guard on the truck and disarm them. Volunteers had already taken up their positions as planned at the side door ready to enter the Post Office at the psychological moment when the military car would arrive. Suddenly Paddy O'Brien, the Company Commander, signalled to us to get away. We did so as quickly as we could. We learned afterwards that what really happened was that O'Brien had received a danger signal from one of the scouts. What actually transpired was that he had seen a car coming along but this time it was being escorted by an armoured car.

Company Patrols.

"C" Company like other Companies of the Battalion, provided street patrols. These patrols worked mostly at night time and patrolled a given section of a prescribed route in a prescribed time. We might remain out an hour, an hour and a half or even only a half an hour. We were armed with revolvers and grenades and a patrol group would be about six to eight strong. We moved in pairs, spread out in pairs at intervals, on one side of the street. Our instructions were that we were to attack any British party we saw travelling by lorry, preferably a lone open lorry. In such an eventuality we were to open fire on it with grenades and revolvers and cause as much casualties as we possibly could. While I took part in many of these patrols we weren't given the opportunity of attacking any suitable target.

Plans for Rescue of Prisoners from Arbour Hill Prison.

Sometime early in 1921 plans were drawn up for the break-out of some Volunteers who were prisoners in Arbour

Hill. Those prisoners were regarded as first-class Volunteers and the idea was conceived from within that some attempt should be made to effect their rescue. As far as I recollect the plan was that when the British military guard was changing the group of Volunteer prisoners who were to make their escape would rush the guard with a view to disarming them and getting their weapons and then make their way to the front entrance and so effect their escape. It was anticipated that British reinforcements would then be brought on the scene from Collins Barracks nearby. With the aim of disrupting reinforcements crossing the road a number of us were detailed to take up positions in the vicinity of the back gate of Collins Barracks and attack such reinforcements with grenades and revolvers. No definite date to my recollection was decided on. The actual break-out hinged on the prisoners rushing the guard and favourable circumstances within, so for three different days a number of us went down to the vicinity of Collins Barracks gate but nothing happened. The rescue never came off after that.

Arrest.

I had been told that a list of names had been captured during a raid on Dr. Kelly's house or digs early 1920, and that my name was included on this list. The names on the list were of men of the Battalion who would be ready all the time for operations.

During the last week of November 1920, my sister sent me word that my mother was not well and that I should come and see her. I was "on the run" at the time. I was persuaded to stop at my mother's house on that particular night that I went to see her. My sister thought it would make her happy if I could stay. Sometime after midnight

the military raided the place and took me into custody. At the time the military were carrying out intense searching of the area and were blocking off whole streets for searching. I was taken to Portobello Barracks, kept there a couple of days and then transferred to Arbour Hill. I was there for about three days when my name was called out to report to the Camp Commandant's Office. On appearing before him he asked me what was my name and without any further comment an N. C. O. or Sergeant Major said "Just follow me". I followed him out and he opened the main door and to my surprise I found myself free. At the time there were quite a number of "C" Company men in Arbour Hill. On the day of my release the Company Commander got in touch with me again and gave me a list of names of members of the Fianna and instructed me to get in touch with them and organise a new section to replace the Volunteers who were already detained. About four days following my release my sister told me that men with an English accent who were obviously not Volunteers, called to my house and enquired if Jimmy Fulham was there and where was he. Obviously they were enemy agents and I think the idea was that my release was to provide them with an opportunity of observing my movements with a view to tracking down more important men in the Volunteer Movement. When I was released I could not understand it because I was a Section Leader and ordinary Volunteers, including about sixty per cent of my own section, were still detained in custody. So I assumed the motive for my release was as already stated - to give enemy agents a chance of keeping tabs on me.

Defective Revolver Ammunition.

I remember at one time we were warned about defective revolver ammunition. We were told that a number of revolvers

had been damaged as a result of firing this ammunition, and it was strongly suspected that the military authorities were surreptitiously allowing this ammunition to get into our hands with a view to damaging our revolvers.

Stripping of Soldiers.

At a Company Council meeting we were told that in future soldiers on ordinary leave at night time would be held up and stripped of their uniform. They were to be left their underclothing. Some members of the Council objected to this form of operations. In fact most of us did object to it. The reason for the objection was that we thought it was a mean form of tactics. The Company Commander pointed out to us that the enemy could operate all day against our troops and our men, raiding, arresting and shooting, and could by night proceed to their recreation down into the city, whilst our own men had to keep "on the run". He considered that it was our duty to put these people in the same position as ourselves - keep them off the streets - to keep them "on the run" in a sense.

While I didn't take part in the stripping of soldiers, I know that it happened in one or two cases in our Company area. As far as I remember there was no actual order issued to stop this type of activity but after a time it seemed to peter out of its own accord.

Provocation by Black and Tans.

As activities against the enemy forces increased the Black and Tans in addition to patrolling the streets in lorries started to patrol them in mufti in pairs. On two occasions I was stopped by two Tans and badly beaten up. A short time later two Tans were courtmartialled and

executed in our area and I believe that these men were the fellows that beat me up. I was not present at the execution of these men but I was told by the Company Commander who was there, that they died very bravely. They refused all offers of spiritual assistance. They stood rigidly to attention before the execution squad. One of them is reputed to have died singing "Let me like a soldier fall". I cannot say definitely why these men were courtmartialled and executed, but I was told that it was on account of their holding up and beating people and that they were believed to have entered a small shop and taken money from it.

Arrest of Seán MacEoin.

When Seán MacEoin was arrested in March, 1921, for a period of three weeks, some twenty men from the Company were ordered by the Company Commander to stand-to in a field in the vicinity of Dolphin's Barn where we went every day for approximately three weeks. We played football and received instruction on the revolver. After about a week or so we were told that we were there for the purpose of either rescuing Seán MacEoin at Chapelizod or intercepting Crown witnesses that were coming up to give evidence against him. I cannot recollect precisely what we were supposed to do but these two things stick out in my mind. The idea was that about eight of the stand-to party were to go to the Strawberry Beds or the Wren's Nest in the vicinity of Chapelizod where they would be issued with arms. After about three weeks of this stand-to eight of us were detailed one day to proceed on bicycles to a place called the Strawberry Beds near Chapelizod. We remained there for a couple of hours. We weren't given any instructions and were then withdrawn. After that the stand-to party

was dispersed. As I have already said I cannot say definitely what part we were to play but I do know that it did concern the arrest and trial of Seán MacEoin.

Training Camp and Proposal to start a Flying Column.

In the spring of 1921, the Company Commander told me that I was selected to go to Wicklow because a camp was being formed there with the idea of establishing a Flying Column. He told me I was to properly equip myself with suitable clothing for open air activity. I commandeered the items of equipment that I was advised to get and also a bicycle and reported in accordance with instructions given to me to a rendezvous in Dolphin's Barn. Eight or nine other men of the Company were selected along with myself and we proceeded by bicycle to Crooksling Sanatorium where we met the local Volunteer Commander, Gerry Boland. He directed us to a place called Ballynockan, a small village on the mountain side some miles beyond Blessington. When we arrived there we were taken over by a man named Garrett who was an ex-British soldier. This man occupied an isolated house on the mountain side and lived there with his wife and family. We started training in May and sometime later the Company Commander "C" Company, Captain O'Brien, and Volunteer Seán MacCurtain and some others joined the camp. An intensive training programme was drawn up by the Company Commander. Volunteer Garrett was ordered out of the place with his wife and family and we took over the house. From time to time individual Volunteers came out from the 4th Battalion and received a little training and proceeded back home. At this time I was appointed as instructor. I was appointed as instructor in musketry drill and physical training. The average strength of the 4th Battalion who were permanently in camp was from 12 to 15 men. We were

armed with rifles, shotguns, revolvers and some grenades. In the evening local Volunteers would report to us for instruction and training. After about a month's training the Company Commander said to me that all this training was leading up to an attack that was being prepared on Hollywood R.I.C. Barracks. This attack never materialised for some reason or other. The Company Commander told me that he felt the police garrison was too strong. My impression, however, is that there was some friction between the local Volunteers and the 4th Battalion because I heard some local Volunteers say that "their peaceful village was to be disturbed by a proposed attack". They were expecting if this attack came off, there would be reprisals by the Black and Tans.

While in camp we sustained ourselves on commandeered spring lambs and bread and groceries were supplied by the local Volunteers. We had an ex-British Army cook who killed and dressed the lambs for us. In addition we were allowed a ration of ten cigarettes a day which were sent out from town to us. These cigarettes had been confiscated from the Navy and Army Canteen Board Stores. When the attack on Hollywood R.I.C. Barracks didn't materialise we had instructions to vacate our camp and proceed in the direction of Ballinascorney Gap with the intention of operating on our own. We remained there for a couple of days and then we marched back towards Tallaght and occupied Hobbs Lodge in Glenasmole. We continued our training there and this place was now established as the 4th Battalion Training Camp. Men came out from time to time in small parties, got some training and returned to their units. Captain O'Brien was Camp Commandant and I was appointed Camp Adjutant. Our stay at the camp was interrupted for a short period. One night Captain O'Brien said to me, "We have to move into town to take part in a general hit-up of Auxiliaries and Crown Forces

in Dublin Castle area". We had no idea then that there was a Truce near. I don't think any Volunteers had any idea of a Truce at this time. He (O'Brien) told me that the enemy were working very fast in locating our dumps and arresting our best Volunteers and that it was up to us to make an all-out effort against them. This was probably the reason for the all-out effort. On a certain evening, the date of which I cannot recall, the Glenasmole group were detailed to take up positions at the Empire Theatre and other Volunteers of "C" Company at Mason's corner nearest the Castle. The men at Mason's corner were armed with grenades, and we at the Empire were armed with revolvers. We had approximately eighteen rounds each of ammunition. The plan was for the revolver men at 7 o'clock to move as close as possible to the Castle gates and shoot all enemy in sight, or all men in uniform. The men with the grenades were instructed to bomb any lorries leaving the Castle. We were then to proceed up Dame Street firing and go into George's Street still firing on any enemy we saw. We were to keep on the Castle side of Dame Street and move into George's Street, where we were to conceal our weapons and disperse. A couple of hours before the scheduled time I was standing at Keyes' shop in James's Street when the Company Commander approached me and told me that the operation for which we had been detailed was now cancelled. That night I was instructed to return to Glenasmole, and on the way I was joined by other members of the original group. We remained in Glenasmole until the Truce.

Following the Truce, G.H.Q. took over Glenasmole officially and established it as a G.H.Q. Training Camp.

I was then officially appointed Adjutant of the School
or Camp.

SIGNED

James Fulham

JAMES FULHAM

DATE

3/1/52

3/1/52.

WITNESS

William Ivory Comdt.

(William Ivory, Comd't.)

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