

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BUREO STÁRCE MILÍT
NO W S 810

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COSANTA.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 810

Witness

Tim Herlihy,
16 A Devonshire St., North,
Cork,

and seven others.

Identity.

Members of 3rd Battalion,
1st Cork Brigade, 1920.

Subject.

- (a) Formation of Irish Volunteers,
Srelane, Co. Cork, 1916;
- (b) Activities of 3rd Battalion, Cork I Brigade,
1919-1921.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil

File No S. 2121

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3RD (OVENS) BATTALION. CORK I BRIGADE.

ORGANISATION AND MILITARY OPERATIONS FROM NOVEMBER. 1916,
TO 11TH JULY. 1921.

STATEMENT BY

TIM HERLIHY,	16A DEVONSHIRE STREET, NORTH, CORK.
DAN KEANE,	26, PARKOWEN, QUAKER ROAD, CORK.
TIM O'KEEFFE,	149, BANDON ROAD, CORK.
JIM AHERN,	'MARTINA', VICTORIA CROSS, CORK.
DICK COTTER,	'LAKELANDS', BLACKROCK, CO. CORK.
PAT CRONIN,	MODEL FARM ROAD, CARRIGROHANE, CO. CORK.
JERH. CARROLL,	MAIN STREET, CARRIGTWOHILL, CO. CORK.
DAN FORDE,	TULLIG, BALLINHASSIG, CO. CORK.

In the district which was later known as the 3rd Battalion area, and which subsequently enclosed a roughly rectangular area stretching from just East of Carrigrohane, Westwards along the River Lee to South of Coachford, then South across the railway line just West of Crookstown Road Station and East along the Brigade boundary to some miles North of Kinsale Junction, then North East, leaving Waterfall to the West and so around to Carrigrohane, a few men in Srelane formed the first Volunteer Company early in November, 1916.

This Company was originally organised by the Herlihy brothers, Tim and Jeremiah, by Mick O'Regan, D. Flavin and a couple more; in fact, the strength of the Company when first formed was six. These six Volunteers got in touch with Volunteer Headquarters in Cork, the first contact being made with Florrie O'Donoghue, Brigade Adjutant, and were duly recognised as the Srelane Company. Cork Volunteer Headquarters sent out an organiser and military trainer -

Leo Murphy of Fianna Eireann. The training consisted mostly of drill at first for the purpose of discipline and as the Company gradually increased in strength by twos and threes from the original six it was able to be organised on a proper basis.

Then Peter O'Donovan was sent by Brigade Headquarters to instruct in tactics, and Florrie O'Donoghue used to carry out inspections and give talks on the objects for which the Volunteers were formed. Leo Murphy continued as instructor to the Company.

The first public parade of the Srelane Company was held one Sunday in January, 1917, greatly to the astonishment of all the people outside Knockanemore Chapel, the parish church for Ovens and Srelane. Subscriptions by members of the Company had been spent in purchasing slouch hats for all and the Officers had Sam Brown belts. All carried hurleys. The Company went on a route march after Mass from Ovens round by Kilcrea Abbey and Srelane. There was another route march on the following Sunday and drilling was carried out at Farnivane in the presence of two R.I.C. men who followed the Company on its march but did not otherwise interfere.

Up to March, 1917, Srelane Company had increased tremendously in numbers and was eventually divided into two Sections, Srelane and Killumney. Killumney then became an independent Company. Now the Volunteers, a good number of them, had arms and ammunition, though the arms consisted principally of shotguns. Being a farming district, every farmhouse had a shotgun and even though

these may have belonged to the head of the house, it was the Volunteer son or sons got possession of the family shotgun and eventually they were all collected together and put into the Company dump.

During the threat of conscription in April, 1918, 100% of the men in the area joined the Volunteers and all prepared to resist conscription determinedly.

Now the British authorities prohibited meetings and games. However, a camogie match and aeridheat (which were organised to get money for the arms fund) were advertised to be held at Garryheston one Sunday in May, 1918. The function was prohibited by the British and so the word was passed around and everyone went to Coakley's field at Begley's Forge and the camogie match was started. Tim Herlihy was the referee. Soon some R.I.C. men were on the scene and regarding him as the man responsible, as indeed he was, for he was O.C. Srelane Company, they tried to intercept him as he ran up and down the field, apparently intent on the game but really evading them. They dashed here and there after him but the players got in their way and they were being made a laugh of by the onlookers. Then the military came and with fixed bayonets dispersed the crowd. The Volunteer Band from Cork was in attendance and two of its members, Wickham and McCorry, were arrested and got a month in jail for unlawful assembly.

It is interesting to mention that in this same year, 1918, the Volunteers of the two Companies planted a tree for each one of the 1916 leaders who had been executed.

The trees were planted near the main Cork-Macroom road between Srelane and Farran on Gerald Desmond's land, the first farmhouse along the road after Srelane. A grove of trees grew up here during the later years.

The chief activities of a military nature during 1918 were parades for drill and tactics, but when 1919 came raiding for arms started. The R.I.C. had orders from the British Government to collect all privately owned arms but in our area they were forestalled, the Volunteers doing the collecting before them. Houses of loyalists which were raided were Clarke's of Farran, Hornibrook's of Killumney, McGivern's of Waterfall and also Castle White at the same place. A good supply of arms was collected. When the Volunteers came to Hornibrook's house, however, he spoke out of a window to them and said he would resist. In the course of his declarations, he quoted Mr. Gladstone as having once said that every man's house was his castle and so he was going to defend his. And so he did and defended it well. He was a good shot but after half an hour's fight the Volunteers forced their way in and compelled his surrender. No one was hurt on either side but three revolvers with about 300 rounds of ammunition for them and two shotguns were secured.

From 1916 to 1919 in the area which was to be known later as the 3rd Battalion, 1st Cork Brigade, things were generally quiet, but now and again the military and R.I.C. enforced their rule, which acted as a stimulus on the civilian population. There was a spirit growing in the area and organisers came along from outside, principally

from Cork City, so things went on until 1919 when the 3rd Battalion was formed with Leo Murphy as Commandant.

The Battalion was made up of Companies from 'A' to 'F' and, while operating as such, consisted of from 300 to 350 Volunteers. At its formation, the Battalion was badly equipped with arms, etc., but raids carried out by each Company in their own area did much to help, but the captures were, on the whole, only shotguns and an odd revolver.

In the meantime, the Battalion was going through a course of training, the usual drill that went to the making of a Volunteer and fitting each man for sterner work later.

It might be no harm to mention that in the area there was one Military Barracks (Ballincollig village) garrisoned by the Manchester Regiment, commanded by an Officer named Dowling ('C' Company Area), one R.I.C. Barracks one mile to the West ('B' Company Area), which was Headquarters, with a complement of about 30 men, and a sprinkling of Black and Tans, under a D.I. To the West of this, about 8 miles, was another R.I.C. Barracks in Farran ('E' Company Area), held by 8 or 9 men, to the East of Ballincollig Barracks, about 5 miles from Cork City. All those led in a direct route from Cork to Macroom on the old coach road. Scattered through the area were the loyalists and supporters who had to be dealt with, sometimes burned out or deported. Those actions often led to raids by the military and R.I.C., especially in and around Waterfall and Ballinora ('C' Company).

The usual Battalion Council meetings were held regularly, but the venue was changed to meet occasions.

In May, 1919, the 3rd Battalion was organised. Florrie O'Donoghue, Cork I Brigade Adjutant, supervised an election of Officers at Srelane in that month. Tim Herlihy was elected Battalion Commanding Officer. The 3rd Battalion now comprised three Companies - Srelane, Killumney and Ballinora. Tim Herlihy then organised Aherla, Farran and Farnanes and this number of Companies made up the 3rd Battalion during the remainder of the period up to the Truce in July, 1921.

From the 1st April, 1919, to the 31st March, 1920, Tim Herlihy perfected the Battalion organisation. The following was the Battalion Staff and Officers and N.C.Os. of the six Companies at this time, the first-mentioned names in the list represent the holders of the appointments during the period above-mentioned, the others being successors at later dates :

Battalion Headquarters' Staff: (with succeeding Officers).

O.C. Tim Herlihy. Leo Murphy. Michael O'Regan.
V/O.C. Jerry O'Shea. James Foley. M.O'Regan. M. Foley.
Adjutant, Willie Cotter. Daniel Keane.
Q.M. Tom Hickey. M. O'Regan. T. O'Keeffe. B. Colley.
Signals. John Sullivan. Jeremiah Hurley.
Engineers. Michael O'Connell.
I.O. Tim O'Keeffe. James Ahern.
Liaison and
Communications
Officer between
I and III
Brigades. Dick Cotter.

'A' Company.	<u>Srelane.</u>
Strength:	72
O.C.	Tim Healy. J. O'Brien.
1st Lieut.	D. Flavin.
2nd Lieut.	J. O'Brien. T. Hallissey.
Adjutant.	Jack Herlihy.
Q.M.	Jerh. Herlihy.
Signals.	Jerh. Hallissey.
Engineers.	Paddy Galvin.
I.O.	Denis O'Sullivan.
Section Leaders:	Tim Hallissey. Matty O'Leary.

'B' Company.	<u>Killumney.</u>
Strength:	68
O.C.	Sonny O'Connell. Thomas Keohane.
1st Lieut.	Jack Delaney. Larry Scannell. Tom Donovan.
2nd Lieut.	Larry Scannell. - Coakley. Connie O'Sullivan.
Adjutant.	Patrick Coakley.
Q.M.	Tim Coakley.
Signals.	Danny Scannell.
Engineers.	Patrick Collins.
I.O.	John O'Connell. Georgie O'Brien.
Section Leaders:	Tim O'Brien. Jack Cotter. Jimmie Callaghan. Jack Sullivan.

'C' Company.	<u>Ballinora.</u>	
Strength:	57	
O.C.	J. Murray.	
1st Lieut.	P. Donovan.	D. Mahony.
2nd Lieut.	Dick Lucy.	P. Donovan.
Adjutant.	F. O'Sullivan.	J. Lynch.
Q.M.	M. Murphy.	T. Riordan.
Signals.	Daniel Forde.	
Engineers.	C. O'Shea.	
I.O.	J. Murphy.	J. Ahern.
Section Leaders:	J. Horgan.	D. Forde.
	D. Donovan.	J. Ryan.

'D' Company.	<u>Aherla.</u>	
Strength:	46	
O.C.	James Foley.	Patrick Cronin.
1st Lieut.	Patrick Cronin.	
2nd Lieut.	T. Foley.	
Adjutant.	P. Walsh.	
Q.M.	John Burns.	
Signals.	J. Lynch.	
Engineers.	T. Mahony.	
I.O.	Denis O'Callaghan.	
Section Leaders:	John Lynch.	Jack Dineen.
	J. Ahern.	Jim Coughlan.

'E' Company.	<u>Farran.</u>	
Strength:	50	
O.C.	Seán Hayes (later O.C. Bn. Column.) Dan Desmond.	
1st Lieut.	Dan Desmond.	
2nd Lieut.	Patrick Murphy.	
Adjutant.	Patrick O'Leary.	
Q.M.	Denis Desmond.	
Signals.	Michael Murphy.	John Flynn.
Engineers.	Richard O'Regan.	John Murphy.
I.O.	Michael Ahern.	
Section Leaders:	John Murphy.	Patrick O'Leary.
	Patrick Rice.	Michael O'Callaghan.

'F' Company.	<u>Farnanes.</u>	
Strength:	70	
O.C.	Jeremiah Carroll.	
1st Lieut.	John Lane.	
2nd Lieut.	Michael O'Connor.	
Adjutant.	Denis Hennessy.	
Q.M.	Cornelius Lynch.	
Signals.	Daniel O'Connor.	
Engineers.	John O'Connor.	
I.O.	Daniel O'Mahony.	
Section Leaders:	Daniel Lyons.	Jeremiah Healy.
	Laurence O'Leary.	Richard Walshe.

The 3rd Battalion found an ideal Headquarters at Cullinanes (Old House) near Aherla. It was at this house that prisoners from both the 1st and 3rd Brigades were detained. Transgressors against the common law as administered by the Irish or Sinn Féin Courts and also spies and informers were brought here. Here also many spies were courtmartialled and shot later in the war.

In November, 1919, when Tom Hales was O.C. Cork III Brigade he sent some prisoners to 3rd Battalion Headquarters for trial. These were the first offenders tried by an Irish Republican Court, probably, in Cork County. Séan Buckley of Bandon was Chairman of the Court between April, 1920, and the end of March, 1921. Other Court members were Willie Walsh of Bandon, Michael Coholan, nephew of the Bishop of Cork, and John Scannell. All cases were equitably dealt with and the Court administered justice impartially, as the members well understood local conditions. The British Courts ceased to function as all local cases were brought before the Sinn Féin Court. Protection during the Court sittings and police duties were provided by 'D' Company, in whose area the Courthouse was situated. This Company also guarded prisoners, whether criminal or political.

Thompson and the Herons, senior and junior, must have been the first prisoners to have been expelled from Ireland by a Republican Court. They were strongly suspected of being spies for the British but there was not sufficient evidence to convict them, so, instead, they were expelled from the country. They had been passed on from the III

Brigade for safe keeping while awaiting trial. Another prisoner, MacGibbon, against whom suspicion was not so strong, was given the benefit of the doubt and was released.

O'Brien and Beasley were the first men tried by the Court at Cullinanes on a criminal charge, that of robbery. They had taken a large sum of money, but it was recovered and so they were released.

In May, 1920, the Battalion was responsible for a diversionary attack on Farran R.I.C. Barracks. This was simply for the purpose of holding down the garrison here and to try and draw the military from Ballincollig Barracks towards the South West and thus away from Blarney (on the opposite side of the Brigade area) where a big attack was being carried out the same night.

In the first week in June, 1920, Brigade H.Q. ordered Tim Herlihy to mobilise the 3rd Battalion to co-operate with the 2nd Battalion to capture Farran Police Barracks - the last British stronghold from Ballincollig to Macroom. Blocking the roads at strategic positions near Ballincollig, the O.C. 3rd Battalion placed an armed outpost of 12 men, 6 rifles, 3 revolvers and 3 shotguns. Two of the shotguns were converted rifles - a terrific weapon with buckshot. The 7th (Macroom) Battalion was guarding roads leading from Macroom.

A one-storied house, owned by Mrs. Murphy, joined the double-storied Barracks. Evacuating the Murphy family, Aherla Company, O.C. Jimmy Foley (deceased), carried an explosive charge of guncotton and sandbags into position

by the Barrack wall in Murphy's room.

A picked storming party of 2nd and 3rd Battalion men was ready. The explosion was terrific but unlucky - a heavy range in the Barrack side retarded the shock, which blew the roof completely off Murphy's room. A beam of the roof was actually blown through the roof of a house at the other side of the road, 25 yards away; but the breach made in the wall of the Barracks was only a crevice above the range. We did fire through that slit and our chaps outside blasted the windows and door. The R.I.C. immediately sent up Verey lights. Called on to surrender, they refused.

Eventually, we had to break off the fight for fear of reinforcements, but we withdrew in good military order. Next day, 6th June, 1920, the police evacuated Farran Barracks and went to Ballincollig R.I.C. Barracks.

Following the evacuation of Farran Barracks by the police, it was partly destroyed by explosives and then finally was burnt out on the 12th June. There was the usual military activity after this event, as a reprisal, a clubroom in Srelane, in 'A' Company area, being burnt.

The Cork and Bandon railway passes through Waterfall ('C' Company) and from mid 1920 to the end of that year raids were carried out on the trains and mails taken. As a result of one of these raids, two British Intelligence Officers were discovered and were summarily dealt with. Now and again shots were fired just to draw the R.I.C. to investigate. So, after one of these raids, Head Constable Larkin and Sergeant Bloxham cycled to Waterfall but were

caught in an ambush quickly prepared and Bloxham was shot dead, his arms and bike being taken, while Larkin got away uninjured. After the shooting of Bloxham the R.I.C. got out of hand and after his funeral swooped on the village of Ballincollig with red paint and marked about half a dozen houses for burning. Strange to relate, although there were seven Volunteers living in the village not one of their houses was marked. The houses down for destruction belonged to pro-Britishers. However, the houses were not burned.

In the Autumn of this year, after Terence MacSwiney, Lord Mayor of Cork and our Brigadier, had died on hunger strike in Brixton Prison in London, the 3rd Battalion in force attended his funeral in Cork. It was reckoned that the Battalion paraded 508 men strong.

At this time after nightfall shots were fired occasionally about 200 yards from the Military Barracks at Ballincollig just to keep the military guessing; so the usual patrols followed, but there was an Intelligence System in operation in the Barracks, carried out by the local Volunteers, which nipped them in the bud, by sending out word prior to their moving out of Barracks. There was a Captain Thompson, I.O. Manchester Regiment, who used to go into shops and houses in Ballincollig village, brandishing a revolver and saying that if anything happened to him the village would go up but he was caught at Carrigrohane on his motor bike and shot dead, his arms and bike being taken. No reprisals took place but there was tension for a while. This was in November, 1920. Captain Thompson was shot dead by Leo Murphy and two other Volunteers on the Model

Farm Road. Thompson had previously raided Leo Murphy's mother's house. He was drunk at the time and boasted that he was out to get all I.R.A. leaders as he had got the leaders in Egypt. He treated Rose Murphy very roughly and this helped to cause her early death. When captured he tried to save himself by informing his captors that a cease fire was coming and that Ireland was getting Dominion Home Rule. He said he had this from Dublin Castle. This special pleading didn't work, however, and he was shot out of hand.

Captain Thompson was succeeded as I.O. by Captain Vining. It was he who shot Leo Murphy on 27th June, just a fortnight before the Truce. Leo Murphy was then O.C. 3rd Battalion, having succeeded Tim Herlihy, who was taken prisoner by the British. Apparently Vining was acting on information supplied him about Leo Murphy's movements for he and about five other British Officers drove up in a car to Donovan's public house at Waterfall one evening and surrounded the house. There were about forty-four in all in the pub, the great majority of whom were elderly men who had been attending a bowling match in the locality. Of all the crowd there were only a few Volunteers. Two of them escaped, but Leo Murphy, who tried to shoot his way out, was shot dead. Another Volunteer, Charlie Daly, who was unarmed, was taken away by Captain Vining and his party and his dead body was found at Douglas the next morning. He had been shot. Daly belonged to the 2nd Battalion (Cork City).

On 4th October, 1920, the Battalion endeavoured to carry out an ambush of British military travelling by lorry along the Bandon road just South of the Chetwynd Viaduct on the Cork, Bandon and South Coast Railway. The Volunteers were in position but were surrounded by military from Cork, it was assumed from information given, and with difficulty got away with all their arms and ammunition, all but one man, Jeremiah O'Herlihy, who was wounded after being taken prisoner and died later in hospital in Cork. Over six feet, with a magnificent physique, a sincere Volunteer, Jeremiah O'Herlihy, O.C. Signals, 3rd Battalion, died for Ireland October 14th, 1920.

Jeremiah O'Herlihy held a position commanding a clear two mile view of the road each way from our ambush position. His duty was to signal the enemy approach. We believe his sense of duty made him hold his position too long. Captured by the enemy, they pretended to release him, then, when he had walked off some distance, they fired on him. Shot in the throat, he rolled down about 50 yards of the steep field to the fence. There they left him for dead. A brave local woman found him late that evening, contacting Cork Fire Station Ambulance which conveyed him to the Union Hospital, Douglas Road. We had him removed to the Mosphere Private Hospital, Dyke Parade, owned by two very gallant lady nurses, Mrs. Blonden and Miss MacGee. He died nine days afterwards. The Battalion gave him a military funeral to his native Carrigadrohid.

Among the British forces who attempted to surround the 3rd Battalion at the Viaduct, October 5th, 1920, was

a squad of Auxiliaries. Capturing a number of civilians on the Cork-Bandon road they carried them to Lynch's outhouse, situated half a mile from Waterfall, $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles from the Viaduct. This outhouse was divided into two compartments, one for cattle, the other containing old damp hay. The "Auxies" thrust their prisoners into the cattle compartment, padlocking the door. They then set fire to the old hay and stood some distance away to enjoy the sport.

The hay was slow to fire but dense smoke rose up in the sky. Apparently seeing the smoke, a military officer rushed his men for the house and, after a bitter show-down with the "Auxies", the Officer, to his credit, released the smothering prisoners.

Leo Murphy and Willie Cotter were going through Washington Street in Cork one evening and went into a publichouse. They were followed in by Sergeant Dodds of the R.I.C. who was working for British Intelligence. He attempted to get into conversation with them but they paid no attention and after a while left and went off towards the Mardyke Parade. Eventually he tried to corner them but they rushed him, knocked him over and his head came with such force against the pavement that he was killed outright. Murphy and Cotter took two guns they found on his person and departed.

There was an order from Brigade not to attack enemy lorries coming in from the country towards Cork for fear of there being prisoners in them as in the event of this happening the prisoners were bound to suffer one way or the

other. Generally there were prisoners being carried, so the decision was a wise one. However, this did not apply to outward bound enemy vehicles, and Tim Herlihy established himself in a sniper's post at Castleinch and sniped enemy lorries from across the Lee when they were travelling on the road to Macroom from Cork. He made himself such a nuisance that one night after curfew the British carried out a big round-up in this area, surrounding the district by means of troops on bicycles, dressed in shorts and wearing canvas shoes. Lightly equipped, they were very mobile and were all around the area before much notice could be given to those Volunteers in it. A big comb out then followed by troops on foot.

Here are Tim Herlihy's own words for what happened and later, principally to himself.

From a chosen position at Castleinch, I sniped at 450 yards range across the River Lee enemy lorries going from Cork to Macroom. The British returned my fire fiercely, accelerating out of range. I never ascertained definitely the seriousness or number of casualties I inflicted on them, but we heard reliable reports of wounded military reaching Macroom.

In retaliation the enemy soon raided our area, after curfew, a change from their usual morning raids. Composed of a bicycle unit and foot troops, dressed in shorts and wearing canvas shoes. Mobile, lightly equipped, they quickly and silently infiltrated our area. They ordered my father, who was outside our house, to get indoors, firing

three shots over his head. It was those shots, breaking the silence of the early night, that saved myself and a large section of the Srelane Company meeting in a concealed field about 300 yards away. (The speed and silence of the enemy had immobilised our scouts). After hairbreadth escapes we wormed our way through the British lines; crossing the Lee, we found refuge in Carmoda Wood. From our high position, Carmoda, Coachford side of Lee, we watched the British searching the Castleinch area for us all night long.

In June, 1921, with a squad from Srelane Company I captured three British soldiers of the Essex Regiment after a chase from Ovens. We found them hiding in Kilcrea Abbey. They surrendered without a fight. They had been detailed from a special branch organised by the infamous Major Percival, who had committed many wanton murders in West Cork. Our Brigade H.Q. had the three Essex Regiment men shot.

That week the British made their biggest round-up raid ever of our area. They arrested young and old. Fortunately, most of our Volunteers escaped the net. This time I was out of luck. Escaping from a large column I ran into a small squad.

Near Ballincollig the British lined up all of us, their prisoners. Then, with R.I.C. helping them, they picked out Jeremiah Herlihy, Tim Healy, Dan Carroll and myself.

We were confined in Ballincollig Military Barracks until after the Truce, July 11th, 1921. While there we

received much rough treatment and just escaped death on two occasions. Once a bunch of drunken armed soldiers tried to break into our cells. The Sergeant of our guard stopped them after a real hard fight, while we prisoners in the cells, arming ourselves with anything we could find, stood close to the walls ready to sell our lives dearly.

I was in Ballincollig Barracks when the Truce came on July 11th, 1921. A few days after we were taken to Victoria Military Barracks, Cork (now Collins Barracks). Several hundred of our chaps confined here were in fine spirits and morale.

Removed from there to Cork Jail three weeks after, we were again removed (in the very early hours of the morning) by boat from Cork Quay to Spike Island.

In Spike Island were quite a large number of our boys, many high-ranking officers; Dick Barrett, Tom Crofts, Bill Quirke of Tipperary, Henry O'Mahoney were the selected leaders. We resisted the British by every means at our disposal, while the treatment the British meted out to us prisoners was brutal. A hunger-strike lasting eight days was, I believe, stopped from outside. Then we broke up and burned our huts. I took part in a fierce fight against soldiers armed with batons; our boys had pieces of boards. Casualties on both sides were serious. The soldiers were called off by a high-ranking British officer in kilts. Rushing into the compound, I heard him shout

"Soldiers, stop at once". "Don't fire", he ordered the machine gunners overlooking our position.

Eventually the soldiers drove us out of our partly destroyed huts and into the compound nearby. Here they lined us by force in some kind of order. Surrounded by guards with fixed bayonets and machine guns, we were held here until about 5 p.m. Then we were marched out under heavy guard to the "moat". This moat was a space about 15 yards wide between high walls running a circle about our huts and compound. Here we suffered a wet night (without water or food since morning) hunched against the walls for shelter.

I belonged to No. 9 hut and being a happy family we managed to keep together in the "moat". Watching the movements of our guards stationed high above us, we noticed two particular soldiers watching one position as if they had special orders. Eventually we noticed those two soldiers moving our way. Soon we saw they were following Dick Barrett, Tom Crofts, Bill Quirke (Tipperary) and Henry O'Mahoney. We informed Dick Barrett of the special watching soldiers. "Good", he said, "we'll stay here until dark, then we will slip off and fool 'em". When darkness came we followed Dick Barrett and Co., slipping away one by one. Unfortunately, some more of our boys took our evacuated position. These men, weary, sat down, backs against the wall, legs out. Then about 2 a.m. those two soldiers opened rapid fire on that position, hitting one man, shooting off his big toe. Soldiers

charged in but at the cry "man wounded" a stretcher came after a long delay and the wounded man was taken away. Sad to say, he died from the effects.

It was while Dick Barrett and Co. were out in the moat that night they saw the possibility of escaping.

It was from my hut, No. 9, they made their dramatic escape. Jim Cashman made the ladder of boards from the huts. We prised the stones from the wall back of our hut, waiting tensely for some hours in case they had to return before building the hole again.

Some time after we were taken to Maryborough Jail. We were released in Christmas week, 1921.

Here ends Tim Herlihy's personal statement.

Towards the end of March, 1921, a Battalion Column was formed. Each of the six Companies supplied a few men and with some from the Battalion Staff the total came to twenty. Every man was armed with a rifle. Leo Murphy was O.C. Column. It kept on the move all the time as a flying column should do and yet it could never effect much owing to the way the whole Battalion area was held down by the huge enemy garrison in Ballincollig Barracks which was situated almost in the centre of the area. In Ballincollig they had an excellent knowledge of the area for miles around and on account of the road net and the big amount of transport they could saturate the countryside with troops in a matter of minutes. Then, too, with the

main road from Cork to Macroom running through Ballincollig there were constant convoys of troops and police (Auxiliaries, old R.I.C. and Black and Tans) travelling on it both ways night and day and the Column, under the circumstances, could only have a nuisance value and indulge in sniping or attacking the odd enemy patrol that might penetrate to the more remote parts of the Battalion area.

Dick Cotter, who lived on the boundary between the 1st and 3rd Cork Brigades, had been appointed Liaison Officer between the two Brigades and was also in charge of communications. His duties were important ones and are detailed as follows in his own words :

I, Dick Cotter, was appointed Liaison Officer and in charge of communications by Tim Herlihy, O.C. 3rd Battalion, 1st Cork Brigade, at the request of Dick Barrett, 3rd Cork Brigade.

Living as I was on the boundary of the 1st and 3rd Brigades (Ballinphellic, Ovens) conveniently near O'Mahoneys, Belrose, 3rd Brigade Headquarters, I knew how to contact 3rd Brigade H.Q. quickly. I was the last link of despatch carriers.

So I was continuously on the move, these being my duties :

Despatches to and from 3rd Brigade.

Keep 3rd Brigade informed of enemy movements in our area.

Direct and guard 3rd Brigade men passing through to Cork or Blarney Station (Rly.)

Borrow or loan arms.

Transit wounded of 3rd Brigade to Hospital or to safe houses in our area.

Receive and guard 3rd Brigade prisoners. We held the prisoners at Cullinanes (old house) which was ideally situated in a deep valley near Aherla.

Incidents I can vividly remember: Carrying verbal information received from F. O'Donoghue, 1st Cork Brigade, to Comdt. C. Hurley, 3rd Brigade, that a 3rd Brigade Officer, Jim Hurley, Clonakilty, of whose places of refuge the British had information, was to be raided for the following morning and shot at sight.

Carrying an urgent despatch to 3rd Brigade H.Q., O'Mahoneys, Belrose. Riding a spirited Arab cob, I reached Kelly's Cross, about 400 yards from O'Mahoneys, about 9 a.m. Around a bend in the road I was confronted by an enemy outpost 50 yards away, who immediately opened fire. My pony reacted instantly, whirling around, almost unseating me, dashed around the bend up the road like the wind. Bullets did come uncomfortably close but I got clear away.

That night I contacted 3rd Brigade H.Q. at Crookstown and delivered the despatch to Seán Buckley, Brigade I.O.

That British outpost I escaped from formed part of

Major Percival's Essex Regiment Column. That morning they had actually captured Tom Barry at Mahoneys, Belrose, but he, however, outwitted them and got away. Percival's Column burned O'Mahoneys, Belrose, and several houses in that area.

Two of the wounded in Upton ambush, Jack Hartnett and Danny O'Mahoney, were brought to Bebee Ford's, Ballinphellic. I helped to guard them. On Dick Barrett's instructions I went to town for a doctor. Dr. Dundon refused to travel out to them with me but Dr. Hegarty came gladly. When I explained the nature of their wounds he advised an ambulance for hospital. We went to the Fire Station. Yes, one man would drive but he advised me our only hope of getting through would be early next morning. I went out with Dr. Hegarty who did his best for the wounded but said a hospital was necessary as both men would have a serious operation. Next morning, about 6 a.m., I directed the ambulance to Bebee Ford's for the wounded, and my sister, who had been helping Bebee Ford nurse them, went back in the ambulance to the South Infirmary where the 2nd Battalion took over responsibility for their safety.

Dick Barrett asked me to safeguard Brigade Comdt. Charley Hurley, also wounded at Upton and then staying at Timothy Sullivan's house, Cloughdough. The Sullivans, Tom Kelleher and I shifted Charley by night in a horse and trap (he was wounded in the head as well as having a badly sprained ankle) to various safe houses, eventually to Mahoneys, Windsor, where he remained some days guarded by

'B' Company, 3rd Battalion, 1st Cork Brigade. Sean Buckley and I brought Charley to my own house, then down to Bebee Ford's, where I parted with them. Charley told me he was recovered enough to be back on active duty. He was, unfortunately, killed next morning at Humphrey Ford's house, Ballymurphy, about half a mile away from Bebee Ford's house.

At the Viaduct ambush I was a forward scout for the 3rd Battalion. From a position overlooking Waterfall, I saw the British in larger numbers than I had ever seen before converging on our rear. Rushing, I gave timely warning to the O.C., Tim Herlihy, who got his Column away safely except one man, O.C. Signals, Jeremiah Hurley, Srelane. 'I believe his sense of duty made him hold his signalling position too long. He was captured and the usual British trick, pretending to leave him go, as soon as he was a distance firing on him and leaving him on the field with a bullet through the throat. He died nine days later in the Mosphere Hospital, Dyke Parade, Cork. The Battalion gave him a military funeral.

A lucky escape for me occurred after the ambush. There was a man called Chambers, a Protestant farmer and known to be a grabber. He lived at Ballinora, Waterfall. An uncle of his name McGivern saw the preparations for the Viaduct ambush being carried out on his own land. He was under observation by us so he got a message sent by Chamber's sister, his own niece, and she passed through our ranks without us being aware of her mission to have the military at Ballincollig informed of what was afoot. This resulted in our withdrawal from the position as already described.

Chamber's sister was married to a neighbour of his named Roberts and that day both Chambers and Roberts went off to Ballincollig on some supposed business about a motor byke. It was most likely bringing the information about the ambush preparations. Chambers had been arrested by the I.R.A. directly after on suspicion and had been under guard by myself as well as others. He escaped, however, at a time when I myself was not on duty.

When the encircling military attacked us at the Viaduct, I was confronted by an advance party of an Officer and two privates and I fired point-blank at them and got away.

Three days later I was conveying despatches from Liam Deasy to the 1st Brigade, via Miss Horgan of Ballinora. I found myself in a field digging potatoes for Miss Begley who wanted them for a meal for the expected 3rd Brigade Column billeted in the area near Ballymurphy. I was suddenly surrounded by a raiding party of military but managed to cover over the despatches in the clay. I was taken prisoner and brought to Ballincollig and in due course was courtmartialled on a charge of attempted murder, that is, of being concerned in the Viaduct ambush.

While awaiting courtmartial I was astonished to receive a visit from Chambers dressed in a British Sergeant's uniform. He warned me to say as little as I could at the courtmartial and he would stand by me. At the courtmartial he said he had made a mistake and that it was my brother who had been guarding him before he escaped from the I.R.A., and

that I was not implicated.

Another thing that helped to save my life, I believe, was that the Officer whom I had fired on at the Viaduct was Captain Thompson, the I.O., and since my capture he had been shot and so was not forthcoming as a witness.

I was duly released.

As a matter of interest, when Chambers escaped from the I.R.A. prison he made his way to Bandon Barracks and subsequently was travelling in one of the lorries ambushed by the 3rd Brigade Column at Toureen. He was dressed in civilian clothes that day and was the only man in the lorry who wasn't hit. Perhaps the ambush party took him to be a prisoner.

Dick Cotter's personal statement ends here.

Early in 1921 things were getting a bit hot and the military were all out for big things but owing to information gleaned in Ballincollig Barracks and dispatched either to Headquarters (Miss Wallace, Paul Street, Cork) or to Ballinora, those surprise raids were nullified, although at times not acted on.

As 1921 wore on things were tightening up very much. Of two spies, one lived in Carrigrohane and was arrested and handed over to the 1st Battalion (Cork City) and duly shot. The other came into the Military Barracks from the Bantry area; our section working in the Barracks got him; he got a fair trial but wouldn't divulge anything; he was also

executed. Details regarding these two are given in the 'C' Company account further on.

It was a tough job collecting the levy in Ballincollig area but it was done. In a few cases where the levy wouldn't be paid cattle were taken and sold, only two fields away from the Military Barracks.

Later on in 1921, about May, roads were trenched, trees knocked, and this only about one mile from the Barracks, also bridges spanning the Cork and Macroom line, all in 'C' Company area, so that a false sense of security was afloat.

At this time false alarms were circulated in Ballincollig Barracks by the Military and it was pretty hard to get inside the ring but on that fatal night of June 27th, 1921, those rumours were circulating again. It was late that evening when we got on the right track and sent a despatch to Comdt. Leo Murphy warning him of the raid. He got the despatch in Waterfall but he was one of a batch of men at a bowling match. As already described, the military carried out their raid at the pub from the Cork direction in Waterfall and rounded up the lot. Leo made a getaway but he was fired on, wounded and captured, and, it was believed, killed in one of the lorries that brought him to Ballincollig Barracks. It is believed, too, he tore the despatch in little bits whilst trying to escape. The Truce came on a couple of weeks later.

There was one fatal shooting accident whilst the Column was in training camp. J. Foley ('D' Company) died from wounds.

The Battalion Officers at the Truce were :

M. O'Regan, Comdt.	Ovens, Co. Cork.
M. Foley, Vice Comdt.	Aherla, Co. Cork.
D. Keane, Adjutant.	Farran, Co. Cork.
T. O'Keeffe, Q.M.	Ballincollig, Co. Cork.
J. Aherne, I.O.	Ballincollig, Co. Cork.
M. O'Connell, Engineers.	Ballingulley, Ballincollig, Co. Cork.
D. Buckley, Transport.	Scornaugh, Ovens, Co. Cork.
J. O'Sullivan, Signals.	Castleinch, Ovens, Co. Cork.

It is very hard to piece things together after a lapse
of thirty years.

The following record is included of 'C' Company of the
3rd Battalion by Tim O'Keeffe, subsequently to become
Battalion Quartermaster, and by Jim Ahern, later Battalion
Intelligence Officer.

1916 - 1917.

The first Company of Volunteers was formed in Ballinora
by John and Paddy McAuliffe, the Lane brothers, Jack Horgan,
Dan Mahoney, P. Donovan, Jack Lynch and others. An
organiser from Dublin, named McSweeney, was contacted and a
Training Officer, Mick Hyde, was sent from H.Q. He belonged
to the Ballinhassig Company. The two Companies carried out
the usual routine work together, drilling, route marches, etc.
In the Winter of 1917 a cattle drive was carried out on the
lands of persons supplying meat to the enemy at Ballincollig
Barracks. Ballinora and Ballinhassig Companies took part
in the raid and the cattle were driven as far as Bandon. In

1918 the Ballinora and Ballincollig areas were well organised. As a result of the threat of conscription by the British, large numbers joined the Volunteers and Committees were formed to collect any arms they could get. Most of them were handed up for the asking but in other cases they had to be raided for.

1918-1919.

About August, 1918, a Company election was held to elect a Captain by F. O'Donoghue, Brigade Adjutant. Volunteers present were from Ballinora and Ballincollig: T. O'Keeffe, F. O'Sullivan, J. Murphy, Jerry O'Shea, J. Ahern, D. O'Sullivan and P. Murphy. Jerry O'Shea was elected Captain. Leo Murphy became Captain after him.

A raid was carried out for arms at Roberts, Ballinora, by Leo Murphy, D. Mahoney, J. Lynch, J. Horgan, P. O'Donovan and others. Two shotguns, one revolver and some ammunition were taken.

About 1919 the 3rd Battalion was formed and Ballinora and Ballincollig became 'C' Company.

About December, 1919, the I.R.A. Court was set up and 'C' Company elected their own police, who carried out the duties offered to them.

More raids for arms were carried out at Chambers and McGiverns, Ballinora, and Buttimmers, Ballyshoneen, who refused to hand them up, and were taken by force by Leo Murphy, P. Donovan, J. Lynch, D. Mahoney, Jerry O'Shea, T. O'Keeffe, J. Murphy and others.

Blocking of roads at the burning of Farran Barracks. 'C' Company from Ballincollig and Ballinora were about one mile from Ballincollig Military Barracks felling trees. In charge were city officers, who brought out hand grenades. Leo Murphy, J. Lynch, D. Mahoney and Jerry O'Shea, who were badly burned and had to rest at Barrett's house at Wilton for a few months, took part in the burning.

About the end of the Summer, 1920, a raid for mails was made at Waterfall, which resulted in the capture of a letter from Nagle, a local postman, to a man by the name of O'Sullivan, an ex-British soldier. They arrested Nagle, who gave all information, also a photo of O'Sullivan and details of the place in Cork City where he was to meet him. Leo and some others went there instead of Nagle and shot him dead. Later Nagle was also tried and also shot. Nagle had been in the R.I.C. and actually had a brother still in the Force and stationed at Tuckey Street Barracks in Cork City.

Chambers and Roberts, Protestant farmers and neighbours, went to Ballincollig about a motor bike and reported about the Viaduct ambush. Chambers was arrested by the I.R.A. but escaped and went to Canada with Roberts, who later became a Sergeant in the British Army. A house at the Viaduct was to be occupied by R.I.C. but was burned down by 'C' Company.

In December, 1920, Leo Murphy was elected Battalion Commandant and Jack Murray (Captain), Dan Mahoney (1st Lieut.) and P. Donovan (2nd Lieut.) succeeded in those appointments in 'C' Company.

In 1921 Captain Thompson, Intelligence Officer of the British at Ballincollig, went to Cork City about 11 a.m. in the morning with two lorries of Black and Tans and returned about 4 p.m. on a different road, called the old road. Information was sent to P. Donovan by J. Ahern and T. O'Keeffe, who informed Leo Murphy, so he and D. O'Mahoney and J. Murray ambushed him near the Model Farm. One lorry passed and they heard Thompson's motor bike coming and held it up, took him inside the fence and shot him and took his revolver and bike and made off. Later the military took his body away to the Barracks. About the same time a spy named Lynch living on the Carrigrohane road in a house which was also occupied by Patrick O'Sullivan (a brother of Joe, who was executed for the shooting of Sir Henry Wilson) had to go on the run. This man was an Englishman; so J. Ahern and T. O'Keeffe watched his movements and saw him entering the Orderly Room of the Military Barracks on several occasions and reported to Leo Murphy, who informed the Brigade. He was arrested shortly afterwards and shot by 'H' Company, 1st Battalion, whose area he was living in. He was buried about 20 yards from the Republican Plot. Patrick O'Sullivan went back to England after the Civil War.

Another spy named McCarthy, where from we don't know, was with the I.R.A. prisoners in Ballincollig Barracks. He was there about three weeks when we heard from a prisoner to look out for him. We reported the matter to Leo Murphy, who said to arrest him. So one evening he came out of the Barracks and as there was no one around but J. Ahern he had to follow him to the city, on account of having no arms,

where he met a Volunteer in Washington Street, Frank O'Donoghue, 1st Battalion, who came with him. They captured the spy in Patrick Street near the Lee Cinema. We walked him to Clarke's Bridge where we got a side car and took him to the old Carrigrohane road. There we met J. Murphy, T. O'Keeffe, D. O'Sullivan and F. O'Sullivan. We sent O'Donoghue back on the side car and we took the spy in a horse and trap to Killumney and handed him over to Leo Murphy and others and in a few weeks after he was shot by Leo Murphy, Dick Murphy (1st Battalion) and others and was afterwards taken to Ballincollig Barracks and was buried at Carr's Hole, Douglas Road, Cork City. He never spoke a word while a prisoner.

About May, 1921, Leo Murphy, J. Murray, J. Lynch, P. Donovan, Dan Donovan of 'C' Company and C. O'Connell and others got in touch with F. O'Sullivan, T. O'Keeffe and J. Ahern about a quarter of a mile outside Ballincollig village with the intention of shooting some Tans or R.I.C. but they never showed up that night, so they raided the train the following day at Waterfall. When news came to Ballincollig that day Head Constable Larkin and Sergeant Bloxham proceeded to Waterfall. When about half a mile from there they were ambushed by Leo Murphy, J. Murray, Dan Donovan and Jerry O'Shea. Bloxham was shot dead but the Head Constable escaped. The Sergeant's revolver was taken.

A very difficult job was collecting the arms levy around Ballincollig as the majority were on the enemy side. One case in particular was the taking of sheep from Frederick

Down, a J.P., living quite close to the Barracks. The sheep were about 50 yards from the Barrack wall. Those who took part were C. O'Connell, T. O'Connell, J. Delaney, J. O'Callaghan from 'B' Company and J. Murray, Captain, T. O'Keeffe, C. O'Shea, J. Murphy, P. Murphy, D. O'Sullivan and J. Ahern from 'C' Company; Leo Murphy was in charge. They were sold at Coachford Fair but were captured when they arrived at the Cork station so a second raid took place about two weeks after with great success. The same men were on the job.

All enemy transport arriving and departing to and from Ballincollig Barracks, their strength, how armed, number of the lorries and the direction in and out were noted and a weekly report went to Brigade H.Q. and sometimes daily. We also got equipment for the Column but no arms.

The biggest raid for mails was at Bishopstown railway siding near the Waterfall road, about three miles from Ballincollig on the Cork and Macroom line. Money and mails belonging to the R.I.C. of several Barracks were captured. Leo Murphy was in charge of the raid, also J. Horgan, D. O'Mahoney, J. Lynch. All roads were blocked from Ballincollig Barracks to the Bandon area in the nature of trenching of roads, knocking of bridges and felling of trees.

As a counterstroke to the Dripsey executions, the 3rd Battalion Column moved towards Ballincollig about half a mile from the Barracks on the South side to ambush soldiers and Black and Tans but they were all kept inside for a few days so the Column had to retreat West again. They were in

charge of Leo Murphy, about 20 all told.

In June, 1921, Leo Murphy was killed and Jack Murray, Captain of 'C' Company, and a lot of others were arrested so another election was held and resulted as follows :

Captain.	Daniel O'Donovan.
1st Lieut.	Patrick O'Donovan.
2nd Lieut.	Richard Lucy.
Adjutant.	Francis O'Sullivan.
Q.M.	Michael Murphy.

This concludes Tim O'Keeffe's and Jim Ahern's record of 'C' Company of the 3rd Battalion. They supplied the map showing Battalion and Company areas and which accompanies this statement.

Dan Forde, a Section Leader of 'C' Company, and who took part in practically every activity of that Unit, including most of those under arms, supplied the following brief account of operations, a number of which are already detailed in that part of the statement given by T. O'Keeffe and J. Ahern above.

Dan Forde himself was in the Volunteers from 1916 on and was then only 14 years of age. He was at school up to 1921 and was, before becoming Section Leader in 'C' Company, a despatch carrier up to 1919. He used his schoolbooks tied on the handlebars of his bicycle as a passport whenever he was held up by British military on his way home from school and often used to be allowed pass on that account. Only rarely was he ever held up and searched. No despatch

carried by him was ever discovered, for he used conceal them in the handlebar of the bike or in one of his boots.

He was just after doing his Matric. in school in June, 1921, when he was arrested with a number of other Volunteers at a Company Council in the publichouse at Waterfall the time that Leo Murphy was shot. Courtmartialled, he was sentenced to fifteen years imprisonment but was held in the Military Detention Barracks in Victoria Barracks in Cork for some months and on 22nd December, 1921, was moved to Cork Gaol. He was released on 21st January, 1922.

When the Ballinora Unit was first organised in April, 1916, Dan Forde, despite his youth, took part in the parades for drill and in the night patrols held two or three times a week, which took place on the roads in the Company area.

These activities went on up to April, 1918, and subsequently the Unit was reorganised and formed into 'C' Company and became part of the 3rd Battalion.

An armed party, numbering 19, from 'C' Company took part in the driving of cattle off the lands of Messrs. Hosford and Magner, both of whom were supplying meat to Ballincollig Barracks. This may have been late in 1917 or early in 1918.

In January, 1919, the Muskerry Hunt was stopped in the Company area as a protest against the detention of I.R.A. prisoners. British Officers were hunting with this pack. Volunteers holding up the hunt were armed.

Raids for arms were carried out at various loyalists'

houses in June, 1919, two revolvers and ammunition and two shotguns being obtained.

Shotguns were given up voluntarily by 14 friendly disposed people, including the Revd. Fr. O'Donovan of Ballincollig.

Some 13 members of the Company raided for a motor car at Colonel Onslow's house at Inchigaggin near Carrigrohane but had to decamp under fire without the car as the house was guarded. A week later, however, another try was made and this time the car was seized. This was in July, 1920.

Bridges were knocked at Maglin (Ballincollig), Curraheen (Cork-Macroom Railway), No. 8 Bridge (Cork-Bandon Railway), and roads were trenched at Curraheen, Greenfield Cross, Ballyman Road, Castlewhite Road, Old Abbey Road and Windsor Road, all in the Company area. These jobs were done during the period March to May, 1921.

Dan Forde took part in the attack on Farran R.I.C. Barracks, and was engaged with other members of his Company in blocking roads and on outpost within a $\frac{1}{2}$ mile of Ballincollig Barracks. He took part in the Viaduct ambush, in scouting and intelligence work in connection with the capture of Captain Thompson, the I.O., in similar duties when Sergeant Bloxham of the R.I.C. was caught and killed, in the attack on Ballincollig R.I.C. Barracks in May, 1921, when the police refused to be drawn, in the Company Arms Levy, the sheep and cattle seizures for non-payment of the levy, the raids for mails and the destruction of military stores being carried by rail.

While a prisoner during the Truce he received word that he had passed his Matric., but as he says himself regarding his capture in June, 1921, at Waterfall, 'That finished my education'.

This concludes the history of the 3rd Battalion of the 1st Cork Brigade, all information therein being secured through the co-operation of the undersigned, some giving a general picture of the work of the whole Battalion, some giving a more detailed one regarding a particular Unit or about their own particular duties or the experiences that fell to their lot during those eventful years from 1916 to 1921.

SIGNED: *Timothy Merlihy*
(Tim Merlihy)

Daniel Keane
(Dan Keane)

Timothy O'Keeffe
(Tim O'Keeffe)

James Ahern
(Jim Ahern)

Richard Cotter
(Dick Cotter)

Patrick Cronin
(Pat Cronin)

Jeremiah Carroll
(Jeh. Carroll)

Daniel Forde
(Dan Forde)

WITNESSED:

C. Saurin
(C. Saurin)

LIEUT. COLONEL.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BUREO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21

DATE: 7th March 1953

NO. W.S. 810

MAP OF 3RD BATTALION AREA

