

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21  
BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21  
No. W.S. 873

ROINN  COSANTA.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS.

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 873

Witness

Charles Browne,  
"Dunora",  
Glasheen Road,  
Cork.

Identity.

Member of Macroom Company, Irish Vol's.,  
1914 - ;

Adjutant, 7th (Macroom) Battalion,  
Cork I Brigade.

Subject.

Irish Volunteer activities,  
Macroom, Co. Cork, 1914-1921.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

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## STATEMENT

BY

CHARLES BROWNE,

DUNORA. GLASHEEN ROAD. CORK.

ADJUTANT, 7TH (MACROOM) BATTALION,  
CORK 1 BRIGADE, AND MEMBER, BATTALION  
ACTIVE SERVICE UNIT.

### INTRODUCTION.

Prior to the formation of the Irish Volunteers in the Macroom Area, Nationalist opinion was almost evenly divided in support of the Nationalist Party of John Redmond and William O'Brien's All for Ireland Party. Political feeling ran high and was kept in almost continuous ferment by a succession of elections, Parliamentary and Local. The claims of rival policies and candidates, the arguments in favour of one side or the other, the blows all too frequently exchanged at fair or meeting, for these were days when people took their politics seriously, were a wonderment to an awakening mind, but deeper far was the thrill received at the annual torchlight procession for the Manchester Martyrs and the speeches at its conclusion which always touched the right chord. This annual parade, plus the periodic appearance of printed handbills exhorting young men not to join the British Army, was the only evidence there was that the entire populace was not lined up behind parliamentary agitation.

Came the formation of the National Volunteers which I joined in June, 1914, being then 18 years. I paraded regularly with my Company, there being four

Companies in the town of an average strength of 100 men each. The 1914 War started and then came Redmond's request for recruits for the British Army. Its effect on the National Volunteers was immediate. A large number of members who while supporting the constitutional policy had yet a profound distrust of England took exception to this course and shortly afterwards the National Volunteers ceased to exist in the Macroom Area.

FORMATION OF  
IRISH VOLUNTEERS.

On a Sunday in October, 1915, the Irish Volunteers came into being in Macroom. A unit was formed at a meeting at the Fairfield, the organiser being the late Seán Nolan, then a Staff Officer of the Cork Brigade. I joined, being then 19 years. The Officer in charge was Dan Corkery, Casement Street, Macroom, who held continuous command of the area until the Truce. The late John Lynch was second in command and these were the only officers appointed until after 1916. The number of men in the unit was about 27.

TRAINING.

Parades of the unit were held on two nights a week and a route march took place each Sunday to some village in the surrounding countryside. By this means units were established at Clondrohid, Carriganimma, Kilmurry and Kilnamartyra, and though no Battalion organisation was formed a loose connection was established with Dan Corkery in charge.

EASTER WEEK.

Prior to Easter Week an effort was made to arm the unit and a number of shot guns were collected and others purchased. Two blacksmith Volunteers, Steve and Paddy O'Connor, were employed in the manufacture of pikes and bayonets, and a few .22 rifles were obtained.

On Easter Sunday, 1916, the Macroom Unit to the number of 23 mobilised for a parade to Carriganimma. It remained at this latter place until 8.30 p.m. when it received instructions to return to Macroom.

On Monday evening news arrived of the Insurrection in Dublin and an immediate mobilisation of the Unit was ordered. An effort was made to make contact with Brigade H.Q. at Cork and a messenger arrived from there, named Tim O'Leary, with instructions to mobilise each night, when word was received of the surrender in Dublin.

On Sunday morning I was directed by Dan Corkery to cycle to Ballingearry to warn Seán Hegarty, later Brigade O.C., of his impending arrest. Hegarty was compulsorily domiciled in this area by military order. As a result of the warning he successfully evaded arrest.

ARREST AND  
IMPRISONMENT.

On the morning of May 2nd, 1916, I was arrested at my home and conveyed to Macroom R.I.C. Barracks where I met Dan Corkery, John Lynch, Steve and Patrick O'Connor, who were also in custody. A full company of military arrived in the afternoon from Cork and escorted us, handcuffed, by train to Cork Military Detention Barracks. We got a great ovation from the people of

Macroon on our way to the station. Easter Week was already showing its effect on the national mind.

We spent one week at the Detention Barracks, where we were joined by arrested Volunteers from almost every district in the County. Isolated from us in the Barracks were the Kent brothers of Bawnard, Fermoy, who put up such a splendid fight when their home was raided on the morning of May 2nd. We saw Thomas Kent exercising in the prison yard on the day before his execution for his part in the fight. On May 9th we were transferred under a strong military escort to Richmond Barracks, Dublin, our train travelling by Limerick and Nenagh and picking up at most stations further batches of prisoners. Noticeable was the lack of arrangements for food, prisoners receiving nothing between breakfast on the 9th and breakfast on the 10th.

We remained at Richmond for three days, detained under primitive conditions. A batch of roughly 25 men occupied the room where I was. There was no sleeping accommodation. A man kept on his feet until exhausted and then he curled himself up on the floor for rest or sleep. A common bucket in a corner of the room served as lavatory and there were no washing facilities.

On Friday, May 12th, we were marched to the North Wall, about 1,100 strong, and placed aboard a cattle boat bound for England. Each pair of men was handcuffed together and the space allotted to us was that

usually occupied by the cattle. We were packed together and when sea sickness developed later things became very unpleasant. We arrived at Holyhead next morning and were entrained to various English prisons, my batch going to Wakefield, where we arrived that evening.

#### WAKEFIELD GAOL.

Each county in Ireland appeared to be represented in the prisoners here. Each man occupied a cell in solitary confinement, though he took exercise with the others, in strict silence, each morning and evening. This lasted about four weeks and then came better conditions when prisoners were allowed to mix and talk freely during certain hours. Visits and parcels were then allowed and the Irish of Yorkshire saw that we were well supplied.

#### FRONGOCH CAMP.

Towards the end of June we were transferred to Frongoch Internment Camp in North Wales. There were two camps named North and South and we were lodged in the latter, which was an old distillery. The grain stores and lofts of this were our dormitories and the one where I slept held 250 men. Sleeping accommodation for each consisted of a wooden trestle and boards, a bag of straw and blankets.

North and South Camps now held the entire lot of deported prisoners, with the exception of the sentenced men. We met there men who had already become famous. As the internal arrangements for camp life were vested in a prisoners' committee, no time was lost in ensuring that

the time at our disposal would be fully occupied by lectures on military subjects, Irish language classes and concerts with a distinctly national bias, all for the purpose of equipping each prisoner on his release with the material necessary for reorganisation because it was then recognised that Easter Week was not the finish of that generation's effort for freedom but the commencement and those who had been prevented by misleading instructions from taking an active part in the fight were determined to redeem themselves during the coming years. After about three weeks in the camp, I, with about 80 others, was transferred to Wandsworth prison, London, where we spent three days. While there, we were tried before an advisory tribunal set up to determine what prisoners could be released. We were then returned to Frongoch where we spent a further period, being released about the end of July.

REORGANISATION  
OF  
VOLUNTEERS.

A short time after our return home a meeting of the members of the Macroom Unit was called. It was formed into a Company and a small number of new members was enrolled. An election returned as Officers - Dan Corkery, Captain; John Lynch, First Lieutenant; Stephen O'Connor, Second Lieutenant; I was elected Adjutant.

Contact was made with the country units and in a short time the Macroom Battalion was duly formed, first with Companies in Kilmurry, Clondrohid, Carriganinna, Ballinagree, Kilnamartyra and Coachford, and later, as

the work of organisation went on, Companies were formed at Canovee, Crookstown, Aherla, Toames, Kilmichael, Inchigeela, Ballingeary and Ballyvourney. Dan Corkery was elected O.C. of the Battalion; John Lynch, Vice O.C.; I was elected Adjutant and Harry Murphy, Quartermaster.

ACTIVITIES  
DURING 1917.

With the above as a Battalion Staff, the work of organisation in town and country went on. Meetings were called in each Chapel area, Sections and Companies were formed and officers elected. Arrangements were made for the collection of shot-guns and ammunition from friendly disposed persons and, where co-operation and goodwill were lacking, for their forcible removal. Each Company Quartermaster was made responsible for the storage and care of these and all other arms and stores held by the Company.

In the month of May in this year we lost a very fine officer in Denis Quinlan, O.C. of the Inchigeela Company. While on his way to attend a Battalion Council Meeting at The Turrett, Macroom, he was accidentally shot through the brain while examining an old pin fire revolver. This early demise of a promising soldier was deeply regretted.

During the year an order was received from G.H.Q. that open parades were again to be held. This was carried out and a direct result was the arrest of the Battalion O.C., Dan Corkery, who was held for about six weeks until his release in September from Dundalk Gaol

under the Cat and Mouse Act, subsequent to the death of Thomas Ashe who died while on hunger strike. Open drilling, however, continued and Battalion and Company parades were held regularly, often under the watchful eyes of the R.I.C. No further arrests took place, however.

ACTIVITIES  
DURING  
1918.

In January, 1918, Macroom Battalion was divided, four Western Companies - Ballyvourney, Ballingeary, Inchigeela and Kilnamartyra - were formed into a separate Battalion. This was known henceforth as the 8th Battalion. Aherla Company was transferred to the 3rd Battalion with H.Q. at Ballincollig. The remainder of the Battalion was re-organised and the Companies and Areas, together with the names of the Officers and the approximate strength of each, is given on the accompanying sheet.

In July of this year the adjoining 8th Battalion carried out a raid on a party of Police returning from Ballingeary to Ballyvourney and captured some rifles. The result was the imposition of Martial Law on the entire Macroom area, which had the effect of driving all Volunteer activities underground. Open drilling ceased and this activity was replaced with the secret parades at which care was taken to guard against enemy surprise. Special Services, each under the command of a Battalion Staff Officer, were formed. These comprised Intelligence, Signalling, Engineering,

Transport, Dispatch Riders, Police and Medical Services. An officer in charge of Training was also appointed. A number of men from each Company was selected for training with each of these Services and, when possible, material for use in such training was got together. In August, Richard Browne, the writer's brother, then a youth of 16 years, was arrested for drilling some Fianna Boy Scouts. He was, however, released after some days. Four Volunteers were arrested at Crookstown for a similar offence. They were Jerh. Leary, Daniel Healy, Jerh. Carroll and Jas. Foley.

ACTIVITIES  
DURING 1919.

Macroon still continued a Martial Law area. Permits were required by persons desiring to enter the area and such permits, in the case of those arriving by train from Cork, were examined by police, backed up by a party of armed military, at Macroon Railway Station. This party of military, which varied in number, but was usually four and a Corporal, travelled by foot to attend each train from their barracks at Mount Massey.

TINKERS' HILL  
ATTACK.

The barracks, which was once the home of the Massey family, had been taken over by the military on their arrival in Macroon six months before and stood on a wooded eminence one mile from the station and less than half a mile from the town. It was decided to attack this patrol, and S. O'Connor, O.C. 'B' Company, and the writer were detailed to carry out the operation. A watch was kept and the numbers, the time of arrival and

departure, the route traversed to and from the barracks, were carefully noted. Men were selected, all from 'B' Company, with the exception of Tim Crowley of 'A' Company. Owing to the non-existence of side arms, there being then but one revolver in the area, it was decided to arm the party with short batons and place them in position on opposite sides of a side road leading to the barracks about 400 yards away which the patrol customarily used. At this point were the ruins of a mud cabin faced by a gateway at the opposite side of the road. The last train from Cork arrived at Macroom at 7.10 p.m. and on Saturday night, January 9th, the patrol returning from this train walked into the ambush and after a short sharp hand to hand engagement were relieved of their rifles which were dumped underneath the floor boards of an unoccupied house at Codrum. In addition to T. Crowley and the writer, the men from 'B' Company who took part in this raid were S. O'Connor, Captain, Jack Kelleher, Codrum, Paddy Buckley, Dl. Mullane, Pat Manning, William Kelleher, Tom Donovan, Denis Kelleher and Denis O'Connell.

As these were the first service rifles obtained by the Battalion they were quickly put into service and selected men were instructed and trained in their use. A demobilised Irish Guardsman - Dan McSweeney - home from the battlefields of France - joined up and was appointed Battalion Training Officer and proved a useful asset then and later when the Flying Column was formed.

OATH TO  
REPUBLIC.

It was during this period that the Oath to the Republic was administered to each Volunteer. Companies were paraded and addressed by an officer from the Battalion Staff who explained the purpose of the Oath. It was then administered to each member of the Company.

In September occurred a raid by Volunteers on military at Fermoy and the capture of arms and the subsequent reprisal by the military on the people of that town. Information was received that a like reprisal would be attempted in Macroom, where, being a Martial Law area, the town was under military control each night. 'A' and 'B' Companies were mobilised with all arms available in an endeavour to deal with such a situation should it arise. Nothing untoward, however, happened.

CASTLE STREET  
ATTACK.

In October a soldier attached to Mount Massey Barracks having got detached from his patrol was held up at Castle Street and his rifle taken. Joe Turner, 1st Lieutenant, 'A' Company, with William Fleming and John O'Leary, took part in this attack. The attackers were unarmed. Immense enemy activity followed this and the previous raid.

MANUFACTURE  
OF GUNPOWDER.

A small party was formed from 'A' Company to explore on behalf of the Battalion the possibilities that existed for the manufacture of gunpowder and explosives. This party was in the charge of Daniel McCarthy, Chemist, and

good progress was made in acquiring stores of raw materials, chiefly through the agency of chemists, doctors and veterinary surgeons who were friendly, and their manufacture into explosives steadily proceeded. Experiments were also conducted by the party in testing the efficiency of the explosives.

MANUFACTURE  
OF BOMBS.

Companies were given the task of cleaning and caring the arms already acquired. They were engaged in the manufacture of bombs composed of an outer casing consisting of a discarded fruit can into which was poured cement mixed with metal broken into small scrap. An aperture was left in the centre to hold the explosive. The lid was kept tightly on by two small bolts imbedded in the cement. A small hole in the lid for the insertion of the detonator and fuse completed the manufacture and these were stored away for future use. In the ensuing activities they were rarely used, however, and were not a very effective weapon.

ACTIVITIES  
DURING 1920.

Towards the end of 1919 instructions were received from the Brigade O.C., Tomás McCurtain, for the attack and destruction of a Police Barrack in the Battalion area and the capture of its arms and equipment. It was left to the Battalion Council to decide which barrack would offer the easiest target but the action should take place on the night of January 3rd, to coincide with similar attacks in other areas.

KILMURRY  
BARRACK  
ATTACK.

Kilmurry Barracks was selected as the 7th Battalion target. This building housed a Sergeant and five men. It stood in its own grounds, gable to the road, immediately South of Kilmurry village and distant from it about 400 yards. It was well fortified with steel window shutters and barbed wire and, with the equipment we then possessed, was almost invulnerable to assault. A check was kept on police movements to and from the village as it was felt that the readiest way to its capture lay in the seizure of a patrol and the impersonation of them by Volunteers. Such a check carried out for over ten days showed that the police never left the barracks after dark and altogether showed an unusual alertness against possible attack. As the operation was timed for the night of January 3rd there was then no time to select another barracks and it was decided to quietly surround it and, if opportunity offered, to enter through the front door. Accordingly, a force of about 20 selected men armed with rifles and shot-guns were placed in position and after a short wait during which not even a light showed from the building, fire was opened on its windows and replied to at once. A demand was made on the occupants to surrender and these responded with a renewed fusillade. After about an hour it was decided to call off the attack to avoid a possible clash with reinforcements summoned by Verey lights. The attacking party which was drawn from 'A', 'B', 'C', 'H' and 'J' Companies as well as members of the Battalion Staff therefore withdrew. Their names are given in Addendum.

ATTACK AT  
MOUNT MASSEY  
GATE.

On March 15th a report was received by the writer at his place of employment that a number of rifles had been loaded at the Railway Station on to a mule cart in charge of three members of the Manchester Regiment, then stationed at Mount Massey. Urgent word was sent to a few Volunteers as it was felt that the enemy party offered an easy target, and Castle Street was hurriedly selected as the venue. Before the attacking party arrived, however, the military had passed through but were met by a second party at Mount Massey main gates. This second party, though unarmed and numbering only four, held up the enemy transport and removed four rifles. They were S. O'Connor, O.C. 'B' Company, R. Browne, Jack Kelleher, Codrum, and John Kelleher, Ballyverane, of the same Company.

BURNING OF  
BARRACKS.

In March, as a sequence to attacks on R.I.C. Barracks which took place in various parts of the country, the enemy decided to evacuate a large number of such posts and in the 7th Battalion area, Barracks at Farnanes, Tarelton and Ballinagree were evacuated and the personnel distributed to the two Barracks still held, viz., Macroom and Carrigadrohid. Towards the end of this month an order was received from the Brigade H.Q. to burn these unoccupied posts and on the night of April 3rd the three Barracks in question were burned to the ground. Kilmurry was later evacuated and burned.

Outside of Macroom, held by a garrison of 150 men of the Manchester Regiment and 30 R.I.C. men, and Carrigadrohid, five miles to the East, held by 15 R.I.C. men, no enemy force now occupied the 7th Battalion area.

RETREAT OF  
THE ENEMY.

The clearance of the R.I.C. out of this and other large areas was the first sign of defeat shown by the enemy. The spacing of this force in numerous barracks throughout the country, its maintenance there as the eyes and ears of the Army of Occupation, where, knowing the district and its inhabitants, they were able to feel the heart beats of the nation and report accordingly, had given a security to British rule down the years. The withdrawal of this force now, bearing in mind the importance of the foregoing, was a grievous tactical error on the enemy's part and can only be designated a major retreat.

The Volunteers benefited immediately. It raised their morale and the morale of the entire populace, which, from a rather hesitant tolerance of the Volunteers and their methods now gave to the Army of the Republic an unquestioning support and loyalty. It also prepared the way for the development of the Flying Column as it now gave a hinterland unpoliced and unwatched by the enemy in which training and billeting could take place and which would offer a springboard for attacks on enemy posts and convoys.

RAID FOR  
ARMS.

In May, 1920, occurred a raid for arms on a Solicitor's office at the Square, Macroom. Information was received that the place was likely to hold arms belonging to some landed proprietors who were inimical, and a squad of men from 'A' Company, namely, M. Murphy, 1st Lieutenant, Joe Turner, 2nd Lieutenant, Tadg O'Leary, William Fleming, Daniel Kelleher and Daniel McSweeney, O.C. Battalion Training, were detailed to raid. Accordingly, the office staff was held up and one Webley and one Colt revolver were taken. While the raid was in progress armed military came to the door, which was closed, but did not force an entry.

In this month also an enemy force of about sixty men from the Manchester Regiment occupied Ballyvourney and a like force occupied Inchigeela.

REPUBLICAN  
COURTS.

Republican Courts were set up at this time to arbitrate on matters of litigation. Justices and Judges were appointed to deal with various types of claims. Patrick O'Connor of 'B' Company was released from Army work to take charge of this activity. A number of men from each Company were detailed as Republican Police and carried out all police functions. The British Courts were deserted and it was a normal proceeding to have the County Court Judge or Resident Magistrate arrive at Macroom and go through the ceremony of holding a Court but without either solicitors or witnesses. All such business was now transacted under cover by the Republican Courts.

MARTIAL LAW.

In July, Martial Law, its restrictions having been eased some months before, was again imposed on the Macroom area. Increased enemy activity, including raids and arrests, followed and curfew was imposed from 9 p.m. to 9 a.m. in Macroom town.

ATTACK ON  
CARRIGADROHID.

In early June it was decided to eliminate the enemy post at Carrigadrohid. This barracks was now garrisoned by about fifteen men of the R.I.C., which force had been recently augmented by the inclusion of English recruits, known as Black and Tans. It commanded an important bridge over the River Lee and was adjacent to the main Cork-Macroom road. It was a strongly fortified two storied building but was a few feet lower than the building on its immediate right, which was the village Post Office, and it was felt that this fact provided the key to its capture.

Plans were accordingly put in train and on the night of June 9th a force of about twenty-five men invested the building, while ten men entered the Post Office building next door, broke a hole through its roof and then through the roof of the barracks and with the aid of petrol and paraffin oil set it ablaze. With the first sound of a sledge hammer on the roof the enemy opened fire, which was returned by our men, and while the blaze grew larger, taking in the greater portion of the barrack roof, the garrison below retreated to the ground floor where from behind steel shutters and sandbags they kept up a steady fire.

An effort was made by the attackers from their position on the roof of the Post Office to blow a breach in the gable wall of the barracks; the gables of both buildings were separated from each other by about two feet, the intervening space being filled with barbed wire, but the guncotton being used for this purpose slipped from its position and fell through the barbed wire to the ground.

A few tins of petrol were thrown through a hole in the burning roof and these exploded in the room below sending flames through the top windows but still the fire did not take hold of the ground floor where the garrison had taken refuge and the night wore slowly on with the intermittent crack of rifles and the flames leaping over the Verey lights which were used by the defendants to summon assistance. The attack had started about 11 p.m. and these lights were being sent up continuously and though plainly seen at Macroom, five miles away, brought no assistance from the garrison stationed there. Provision had been made against this possibility and the road between was sealed off by a strong force of Volunteers under S. O'Connor, Captain, 'B' Company. Other roads were held by the men of the other Companies of the Battalion acting under their O.Cs.

Around 3 a.m., oil supplies having been exhausted, it was evident that the attack would not attain its objective and instructions were issued by the Battalion O.C., who was in charge of the operation, to disperse.

Word was accordingly sent to the various road blocks and in the light of the approaching dawn the I.R.A. forces silently returned to their homes.

The barracks were evacuated later on this day, the building being roofless, and that night it was completely demolished by our forces. Within a week, however, the enemy occupied O'Donoghue's, a demesne house nearby, with a larger force and this he strongly fortified. He held this position intact until the Truce.

The names of those who took part in the fight will be found in the Addendum.

**ATTEMPTED ATTACK  
AT MAIN STREET,  
MACROOM.**

On July 12th an abortive attack was made on a military lorry at Main Street, Macroom. Eight men of 'A' Company under M. Murphy, 1st Lieutenant, were engaged. The driver, becoming aware of the party's intentions, accelerated and got away.

**CAPTURE OF  
MAILS.**

On July 20th the Cork-Macroom train was held up at Dooniskey and enemy mails were taken. Some weeks after they were again taken at Crookstown.

**LISSARDA  
AMBUSH.**

In August it was decided to utilise a wooded defile at Lissarda on the Macroom-Cork, Macroom-Bandon road for the purpose of ambushing a party of enemy using this road frequently. The position was inspected by the Battalion O.C. and the writer, together with 'H' Company

officers. It was found to afford a good deal of cover to an attacking party and would help in exploiting fully the element of surprise but if the enemy had a chance to recover from this his defence would be made easy by the profusion of cover and the numerous spots of dead ground available. An attack could only be successful here if a full advantage would be taken of the surprise element and a fire cover of sufficient density be directed on a force of not more than two lorries.

Trouble arose on this point with the officers of 'H' Company. A number of these had strong moral scruples against the use of arms on the enemy without at first giving him an order of "Hands up". This, we pointed out, was dangerous at any time as with his superiority in arms and equipment, plus a plentiful supply of ammunition and numerous reinforcements within easy reach, a warning would give him a decided advantage and that all we had on our side with poor arms and little ammunition was this element of surprise and that this position made it absolutely necessary to utilise it to the full. The result was that 'H' Company refused to take part in the ambush except their wishes were adhered to and while the proper course then would have been to bring in an outside Company to do the job or else call it off and endeavour to develop an attack in another Company area, this was not done and it was decided to carry on, with due regard to 'H' Company's wishes.

Saturday, 21st August, was selected as the date and, in addition to 'H' Company men who formed the bulk of the men engaged, there were men from 'B' and 'C' Companies. After a wait all day on Saturday no enemy force turned up and it was decided to again man the position on the following Monday, August 23rd.

On this Saturday night, Sergeant Maunsell, who was in charge of Inchigeela Police Barracks, was shot and on the Sunday morning one lorry containing sixteen Black and Tans, with the County Inspector, left Bandon for Inchigeela, calling there and returning via Macroom, where they smashed up the Battalion Vice O.C.'s house. Their passing was noted and a hurried mobilisation of the ambush party was ordered to meet them on their return. Only some members from 'H' and 'B' Companies were able to get into position before the enemy arrived and the fight was commenced on our side with a depleted force. A number of our men arrived just after the fight had started but could not get into their positions. The Battalion Vice O.C. was one of these.

On the arrival of the lorry at the position a farm cart, on which was tied a long tree trunk, was pushed across the road by William Powell, later O.C. 'G' Company, and the order "Hands up" given. The enemy, prevented from getting away by the road block, jumped from the lorry and sought the protection of a low piece of ground near Dr. Murphy's gate where he was protected by the surrounding higher ground. From

this position, which he reached before fire had been opened on him, he fought back and though some of the attacking force was deployed in an endeavour to subdue him or drive him out from his position he maintained his fire, suffering a few casualties in wounded but killing one man of the attackers. This man - Michael Galvin, Quartermaster of 'H' Company - was one of the Battalion's finest soldiers. Another of the attackers - Daniel O'Leary of 'G' Company - was wounded in the hand by the premature explosion of a home-made grenade.

It was now evident that the enemy could not, in the absence of proper hand grenades, be dislodged from his position, so the senior officer, P. O'Leary, O.C. 'H' Company, decided to withdraw his men and the fight terminated.

The warning notice to the enemy had proved fatal to the attackers. It had given the enemy the chance he wanted and this chance he exploited to the full. It must, however, be also noted that the hurried nature of the mobilisation left only a skeleton attacking party poorly armed as regards rifles, two only being in use. The shot-guns with which the party was almost entirely armed are only a close range weapon, effective against men in a lorry at 30 yards but useless at a greater distance. The chance to use this weapon at close range was thrown away and the ensuing fight gave no opening for its effective use. The names of those who took part in the fight will be found in the Addendum.

ATTACK AT  
MASSEYTOWN.

In this month a soldier of the Manchester Regiment was disarmed by a woman and his rifle handed in to the Republican Army. The woman was Mrs. Mary Kate O'Keefe of Masseytown, Macroom, the wife of a Volunteer, who, seeing the soldier alone after the Curfew Patrol had passed, attacked him with a hurley, knocked him out with a blow, and was gone with the rifle before he had time to recover.

ENEMY THREAT  
OF REPRISALS.

After above attack, almost within sight of the Curfew Patrol, the enemy appeared very incensed and intelligence was received that he intended to carry out reprisals on certain houses in the town. Both 'A' and 'B' Companies were, therefore, mobilised each night from September 7th to 12th and held in certain key positions commanding approaches from both enemy barracks. He must, however, have sensed something unusual because he withdrew his curfew patrols for over a week and had his men confined to barracks.

AUXILIARIES.

At this time Macroom Castle was occupied by a force of 140 Auxiliaries which had been lately recruited from the type of Englishman who had served as an Officer in the British Army during the 1914-1918 War. This class, invariably overbearing and arrogant, brought with them a show and swagger in their manner and in their dress which was meant, no doubt, to impress the Irish people. With the Glengarry cap set at a rakish angle on their

heads, their dress of officer's tunic, plus Sam Browne belt, riding breeches and leggings, with the revolver dangling on a leg holster, they endeavoured to stage a swashbuckling, daredevil approach that bespoke an utter contempt for the force against them. Added to this was the almost total lack of discipline. Beyond guard duties and patrols, which were carried out regularly, men did much as they liked and each one seemed to be a law unto himself. The force created some thorough scoundrels, though there were members of it who behaved like gentlemen at all times.

The R.I.C. force stationed at the Police Barracks were now used to guide the patrols of Auxiliaries moving in fast Crossley and Lancia tenders, each containing eight to twelve men sitting back to back with their rifles pointed outward as they sped along the country roads. The R.I.C. were greatly reduced in numbers owing to defections from their ranks of the better type of Irishman, yet they had a large number of Irish-born members and it was these, possessing as they did a knowledge of the district, having often served in it for a time, who were used as such guides and who served their masters loyally to the last. Here again there were exceptions. Sergeant Griffin, a most officious member of the R.I.C. serving at Macroom, turned a blind eye on the writer who, with the Battalion O.C., paid a flying visit to Macroom in October and walked bang into two tenders of Auxiliaries with which Griffin was acting, though they

had been actively raiding for us for some weeks. Again, Constable Sadlier was friendly and gave information from time to time which enabled us to forestall enemy round-up activities. Others there were who adopted a mark time attitude.

RAIDS.

For a considerable time the Officers of the Battalion Staff, though carrying on with their normal occupations, had to keep on the alert against possible arrest. Their homes were likely targets for enemy raids and were now never slept in; instead, a number of friendly houses were readily available and were being used continually under cover.

DETECTION OF  
ENEMY AGENT.

An instance of co-operative effort on the part of the public may be instanced here. A man named Brady, a native of Dublin, who was employed as a printer in Macroom, had been under suspicion as an enemy agent. On a night in September he was drinking with Auxiliaries at the Market Bar and was overheard by the proprietor, Mr. Shields, and two recently resigned R.I.C. men, brothers, named Vaughan, giving information that Barret's house in the South Square was being used by the I.R.A. as a billet. Word was conveyed to our men by Shields and the Volunteers using the house were alerted and when the raid took place no one was found on the premises. Brady was arrested by us, convicted after a trial and deported from the country. He returned after some weeks and again made contact with

the enemy, this time at Union Quay Barracks, Cork. He was shadowed one night as he left this post and was shot dead at Torytop Lane.

#### ENEMY RAIDS.

In September raids occurred for the Battalion O.C., the Vice O.C. and the writer and also for the O.C. 'E' Company and it was then decided that these men should give their full time to Army activities, and Battalion H.Q. was established at Murphy's, Coolnacarriga, and later at Neville's, Rusheen, and again at Delaney's, Toames, and later still, when our and enemy activity increased, it was mobilised and finally came to rest for a month or two before the Truce at O'Shea's of Derryleigh, Clondrohid, where it was in close contact with Brigade H.Q. and Divisional H.Q., both in the Ballyvourney area.

#### REORGANISATION.

For the Battalion Staff Officers concerned now followed a period of intense organising work. It was felt with relief by each that they were now able to give their whole time to the work and each Company was visited. Communications were perfected between the Companies and regular routes for the transfer of dispatches were established. Bicycles were the means generally used for this work and later, when the enemy prevented the use of bicycles in areas where he had control, runners and Cumann namBan girls were used in such areas.

The Intelligence Service was given a close overhaul and personnel were established in the Post Office Service, on the Railway, in Williams' Hotel, Macroom, from where the enemy got most of his kitchen supplies, and in the Banks and various shops which he frequented. The Engineering, Scouting and other Special Services were improved.

CUMANN NA mBAN.

The Cumann na mBan, which was a force composed of young and active girls ably led by Mrs. D. Corkery and Miss Molly Cunningham, were also reorganised to meet the new developments. In Macroom town particularly, where active Volunteers were being raided for or kept under observation, it became necessary to use the girls of this force for dispatch work, the transfer of small arms, etc., and it can be truthfully recorded that this work was well and faithfully carried out by these girls, often in the face of the greatest danger.

ENEMY STORES  
CAPTURED.

On November 11th four men from 'A' Company raided Macroom Railway Station and captured some enemy stores.

BURNING OF MOUNT  
MASSEY HOUSE.

On November 14th the military were evacuated from Mount Massey House. It was promptly burned by members of 'B' Company to prevent its re-occupation.

PROPOSED ATTACK  
ON MACROOM.

On November 16th the Battalion O.C., Vice O.C. and the writer were directed to contact the Brigade Vice O.C., Michael Leahy; the O.C. 1st Battalion, Dan Donovan; the O.C. 2nd Battalion, Michael Murphy, and

the O.C. and Vice O.C. 8th Battalion, Patrick J. and Patrick D. O'Sullivan, respectively, at O'Sullivan's house at Kilnamartyra. We went there and were told of a G.H.Q. order for the attack and capture of the Auxiliary Barracks at Macroom Castle. G.H.Q. desired that a large scale attack should be opened on this post and had in contemplation similar attacks on like posts in other parts of the country. The attack was to be undertaken by a Column from the First Brigade and support in holding off enemy reinforcements was to be given by the Second and Third Brigades. An extensive area of country was to be thoroughly road-blocked, thereby isolating Macroom for some days if necessary.

In a matter of ten days local arrangements for the attack were completed. The attacking force were to move under cover of night into a large store owned by Jeremiah O'Leary at the upper end of Castle Street and within twenty yards of the Castle main gate. At 9 a.m. each day an armed sentry took up duty outside the gate, the wicket of which was open and gave access to the Auxiliary quarters 60 yards along the drive.

Two Volunteers were to quietly disarm the sentry and units from the storming party, composed of picked men from each of the Battalions, were to rush the guard room, the hutments and the Castle itself. Supporting forces were to occupy Miss Horgan's house on the Square the wall fronting the Castle at Sleaveen Road and the approaches to the R.I.C. Barracks. Such a daring plan

had all the elements of success but it was never to develop as the attack on the patrol of Auxiliaries by the Third Brigade on November 28th at Kilmichael threw the Macroom area into a ferment for some weeks and it was months later before attention was again focussed on such an attack.

Our work in this connection necessitated travelling practically the entire 7th and 8th Battalion areas and on one occasion while crossing Toons Bridge in a side-car with D. Corkery, Michael Leahy, Dan Donovan, Patrick O'Sullivan and O'Sullivan's driver, Joe, we passed two lorries of Auxiliaries who were travelling from Inchigeela. They waved gaily at us, which salute we, not so gaily, returned, while our right hands crept towards our revolvers and we watched for a sign of action. All unsuspectingly, they speeded on their way.

The only member of the party of Auxiliaries ambushed at Kilmichael who escaped uninjured - Driver Guthrie - made his way under cover of darkness from the scene of the fight and, armed only with a revolver, retraced the way he had come from Macroom. At Droumcarra he was held up by two unarmed members of 'K' Company and shot with his own gun and buried at Annahala. The men concerned were taking no chances on his returning to Macroom and letting loose on the country on that night hordes of his comrades boiling with revenge.

When they did go out there next day they ran amok, shooting one man and burning two houses.

AFTERMATH OF  
KILMICHAEL.

On November 29th, while in bed at Murphy's house at Coolnacarriga suffering from a severe cold, word came through of the attack at Kilmichael. The Battalion O.C. was present and the thought occurred to each that reprisals by the enemy would doubtless be carried out at Macroom. We immediately left to contact 'A' and 'B' Companies and to form a fighting force to deal with any such attempt. A guard was placed adjacent to the Creamery, a building likely to be singled out, but, beyond an attack on the writer's home which was set alight by some Black and Tans and Auxiliaries after curfew, the night passed quietly. It is to the credit of the Auxiliary O.C., Colonel Smith, and his Adjutant, Major Mitchel, that on the fire at my father's house being seen from the Castle a force of Auxiliaries was immediately dispatched to put it out and there was the unusual spectacle of neighbours and enemy co-operating in passing pails of water from the mill race to the seat of the blaze, and that during curfew time. My brother Richard was raided for on this night also but got away in time and joined us in the country.

REORGANISATION  
OF MACROOM TOWN.

For the purpose of affording a more cohesive resistance to the enemy in Macroom town it was decided to place 'A' and 'B' Companies under the charge of Harry Murphy, Battalion Quartermaster, who was the only

Battalion Officer now left in the town. He resigned his post as Quartermaster and became O.C. Town and did very useful work in that capacity up to the Truce. Richard Browne was appointed Battalion Quartermaster in his place. J. Murphy, former O.C. 'C' Company, was made Vice O.C. of the Battalion to replace J. Lynch, arrested and interned.

A Town A.S.U. was formed at this time under Michael Murphy, 1st Lieutenant, 'A' Company, and composed of selected men from both 'A' and 'B' Companies. Their names will be found in the Addendum. They were supplied with revolvers and from this until the Truce they endeavoured to engage the enemy by planning a number of street attacks. They were, however, unfortunate in these, the enemy failing to appear on each occasion and, beyond an attack on a post at the Town Hall and a few raids for stores, had no gains for their trouble.

CAPTURE AND  
EXECUTION OF  
ENEMY SPIES.

In November, 1920, two enemy Intelligence Officers - Lieutenants Rutherford and Browne - were captured at Fargus by members of Coachford Company. They were dressed in civilian clothes, were armed, and were travelling in a motor-cycle with sidecar attachment. They were transferred to 'E' Company for interrogation and Brigade H.Q. were notified. They were subsequently shot as enemy spies and were buried at Laharn, Rusheen.

### ACTIVITIES DURING 1921.

#### TRANSFER OF RIFLES.

In the month of January arrangements were made with Brigade H.Q. for the collection of a number of rifles held by the 2nd Battalion at Cork and their transfer to the 7th Battalion for the purpose of equipping a Battalion Flying Column. The writer was directed to make the arrangement for the transfer and the arms were handed over to a party under him at Barrett's house, Bishopstown. In all eighteen rifles were received, with a scanty supply of ammunition, and with these and the rifles already in the Battalion steps were put under way for the training of a small Column.

#### FORMATION OF FLYING COLUMN.

The townland of Liscarrigane, Clondrohid, was selected as the venue for the carrying out of this training and twenty-four men from the Battalion Staff and the different Companies were mobilised and given a course of intensive training for a period of three weeks under D. McSweeney. The men were billeted in the neighbouring farmers' houses and each day carried out exercises on the mountainside or in the fields and roads of this remote district and when darkness fell, after the necessary arrangements for guard duty had been made, a little relaxation in the form of a dance or sing-song was usually provided by the good people of the district. This nightly amusement, though often frowned on by those in charge, was unavoidable in some districts where men were billeted directly on the farmhouses. Where possible, however, the Column O.C.,

for safety reasons and to economise in men detailed for guard duty, billeted his Column in one body in a barn or disused house. In such a case provision was made by the local Company to supply bedding material (usually a bag of straw and a couple of blankets for each man) also supplies (food) and cooking utensils.

Close touch was kept between the Battalion Column, with which was now the Battalion H.Q., and the Brigade O.C. and the Brigade Column which were billeted in a disused farmhouse at Ullanes, Ballyvourney, about three miles away. Dan Donovan, O.C. 1st Battalion, was in charge of the Brigade Column, which included men from the 1st, 2nd and 8th Battalions and numbered about thirty-five. It was the intention that both Columns would co-operate under this Officer's leadership.

In order to render both Columns safe from sudden attack, Clondrohid Bridge was demolished on February 13th and a number of roads trenched. The main Macroom-Killarney road was left open as it was the intention to use this road for ambush purposes. On February 14th the enemy raided Clondrohid in force and shot a young lad named D. Mahony who refused to give information about the demolition of the bridge.

POULNABRO  
AMBUSH.

On February 10th the Battalion Column marched to Poul nabro (known also as Coolavokig), a position on the Macroom-Killarney road about two miles East of Ballymakeera, and there, in co-operation with the

Brigade Column, took up position awaiting expected arrival of Auxiliary Forces. The position was on rocky ground and offered distinct advantages for surprise and attack. It was marred somewhat by two cottages at the Eastern end which were not of much use for the purpose of attack but which could and did subsequently prove of use to the enemy as a refuge from the attackers' fire. The total Column force consisted of sixty rifles and a number of shot-guns. It also had two Lewis guns mounted in good positions. The O.C. 1st Battalion was in charge, the Brigade O.C. being present. An observation post placed on Rahouna Hill, having a good view of the road, was in touch with the command post. A minor road lead from the Eastern end of the ambush position to the rear of the position occupied by the Column. This was blocked to prevent its use by enemy lorries. A movable block was arranged on the main road at the Western end of the position in order to bottle up the enemy transport. The Seventh Battalion Column occupied rocks at the Southern side of the road; the rest of the Brigade Column, with the Command post, was on the Northern side. The enemy did not appear on that day and when darkness fell the Column moved to arranged billets at Ardeen, about two miles away, remained within their billets on the following day and on the next day again took up position on the road. This procedure was continued until the morning of the 25th when the Column moved into position at dawn, the signallers leaving for the observation post at the same time. Through some mischance these

men did not reach their position in time to report the coming of the enemy and the first intimation the Column had of their approach was the appearance of the first of the lorries at the Eastern end of the position. As the instructions were to allow the head of the convoy to reach the road block at the Western end before fire was opened each man waited at his post for the signal to fire. One member of the Column was, however, out of place. He had slipped unobserved across the road from his position to one of the cottages and now when he heard the approach of the lorries he tried to regain his position. He was seen by the occupants of the leading lorry who opened fire on him as he climbed to his place and the lorry pulled up. The firing brought the others to a halt. The leading lorry's position was now just below the Western cottage and four more lorries were between this and the junction of the minor road. The five remaining lorries were halted East of the cross and out of sight and one of these immediately turned and raced back to Macroom from where an urgent message was wirelessed for reinforcements. When the Auxiliaries opened fire at the man running from the cottage, fire was not immediately returned by the Column as there persisted the hope that the lorries would proceed further into the position and so render themselves more vulnerable, but when the occupants began to dismount it was no longer withheld and some of the enemy were hit, while others raced for the cottages and some dead ground

around the Cross. Some hostages who were in the lorries did likewise. In all, one Lewis gun, 22 rifles and four shot-guns were in action at this vital stage and the presence of the hostages jumbled up with the Auxiliaries in the mad scramble for cover had a disturbing effect on the fire of the attackers. The Lewis gun, too, jammed at a critical time and was out of action during the rest of the engagement. The occupants of the lorries East of the Cross deployed to positions along the fences of the road in a grove adjoining and remained mostly inactive during the ensuing struggle, though they were able to prevent the encirclement of their position.

Fire was now concentrated on the cottages and dead ground occupied by the enemy and the Column O.C., in an endeavour to encircle the entire enemy force, brought the Sections not yet engaged in the fight into action. The Seventh Battalion Column were deployed to line the fence immediately South of the Western cottage. Fire was poured in through the windows and door. It was found impossible to bring the other cottage under fire as the fence commanding it was under enemy fire at both sides. The main volume of the attack was directed against the Western cottage at very close range and after some time the enemy resistance seemed to weaken and return fire finally ceased. At this critical juncture, when it was felt that the surrender of the cottage was at hand, this view being supported by the evidence of the hostages within, who were afterwards

questioned, military reinforcements to the number of some hundreds began to arrive and to deploy in an effort to envelop the entire position. Retreat was now ordered, though this order did not reach the Seventh Battalion Column for fully forty-five minutes later due to the fact that the scout was not aware of our exact position. The writer was sent across the road to investigate obvious lack of activity on the part of our men at the Northern side and returned with the news that this portion of the Column had left over forty-five minutes earlier. He returned to his unit, which retreated across the road Northwards and came under severe fire from enemy reinforcements. It was now 12 noon, the fight having lasted approximately four hours. At Coomaguire, a glen about four miles to the North West, we linked up with another portion of the Column and then moved to Coomaclohy, about one mile further on, to join the advance party which had arrived there. On our arrival we found a sharp engagement in progress between the advance party and the Killarney reinforcements who were trying to encircle them. On seeing our Sections approaching the enemy withdrew and we then linked up with the main body. The Brigade Section of the Column moved on to Coolea, four miles to the South West, while the 7th Battalion Column tramped on twelve miles to the North East to billets at Anaghanahy.

While the Column suffered no casualties, the number of enemy dead has been estimated at from seven to fourteen and included the Auxiliary O.C., Major Grant. A number of Auxiliaries were likewise wounded. The total number of auxiliaries engaged in the fight was estimated at ninety-six, travelling in ten lorries, and the number of reinforcements engaged was about four hundred.

Though no arms or ammunition were captured by the Column, the fight could not yet be considered as having failed in its objective as it taught the enemy a severe lesson and he rarely moved into this district during the future months except in very large numbers, exceeding at times two thousand men, and as the movement of such bodies could not be done without prior preparations it was always possible to anticipate his intentions by a day or two. The names of those of the Seventh Battalion Column who took part in this fight are given in the Addendum. A sketch map of the action is also included.

ATTACK ON  
ENEMY POST  
AT TOWN HALL.

On February 18th an attack was made on an enemy post at the Billiard Room, Macroom, which was situated in the Town Hall opposite Castle Gate. Two grenades were thrown through the window and fire opened. Two Auxiliaries were reported wounded. James Murphy, 'A' Company, and Denis Kelleher, 'B' Company, took part, with others of the town A.S.U. in support.

After a few days rest at Anaganahy where the Column was billeted together in a barn at the house of John A. Rourke it was decided to move it to a disused house at Laharn, Rusheen, where it would be nearer to Macroom and Carrigadrohid enemy posts - about four miles from each - with a better chance of speedy action should the opportunity offer. Accordingly, on the night of February 28th, the Column occupied a disused house in this latter townland where it carried out a course of training over a period of seven days.

On February 28th the writer, with Michael Murphy, 'C' Company, was detailed to contact some men from 'F' Company in order to ambush the D.I., R.I.C., Macroom, who, we were informed by our I.Os in Macroom, was to drive with a small party to Cork on that day. With three men from this Company we waited at the roadside at Glashagarrive all day but beyond a convoy of five military lorries saw no enemy. We had an escape from being pounded by these as, when we saw them approaching, we retreated into the house of Jim Twomey, Glashagarrive to wait until they passed by. One of our men got jittery inside just as the enemy were passing and rushed out into the yard in their plain view. Why they did not see him passed comprehension but four men waited tensely with guns drawn within the house for the sound of the expected brakes and were greatly relieved when the danger passed.

While at Lahern the Column had a visit from Father Tim O'Mahony, a Macroom man at missionary labours in the U.S.A., now home on holiday. Father O'Mahony arranged with Father Sheehan, P.P., Ahinagh, for Mass and Holy Communion for the Column on Good Friday, March 4th, at the house of this good Parish Priest and breakfast for the entire Column immediately afterwards. This showed a fine spirit of good will and co-operation on the part of these two fine priests and was a gesture that was very much appreciated.

On Saturday, March 5th, the Column was divided into four Sections of six to seven each and distributed to 'C', 'D', 'J' and 'G' Companies and a programme of training, where extra men from these Companies could be given a short course, was outlined. The Section which moved into 'J' Company had a narrow escape from capture on the night of the 6th of March when the Auxiliaries in force made a surprise raid on Toames and, though the members of the Column escaped under fire, a Volunteer from 'J' Company, named Cornelius Foley, was killed. The Battalion H.Q. was now at Delaney's house, Toames, and remained there until the reassembly of the Column. On March 10th the writer was detailed to contact men from 'E' Company in order to ambush a party of Black and Tans using the road between their post at Carrigadrohid and Macroom at irregular intervals. With Michael Murphy of the Column and four members of 'E' Company and two of 'A' Company he occupied a position for a period of two days but no enemy came into view.

ROUND-UP BY  
ENEMY FORCES.

On March 10th a round-up by a large force of enemy drawn from Cork, Ballincollig, Macroom, Bandon and Killarney took place. An intensive comb-out of the area occurred. All our Active Service Columns successfully evaded enemy contact.

BLOCKING  
OF ROADS.

At this period an intensive series of road blocks were carried out. Morrisons, Geragh, Coolcower, Toons and Dromcarragh bridges were demolished and trenches cut in all important roads.

OFFICIAL  
ENEMY  
REPRISALS.

On Friday, April 1st., official enemy reprisals were carried out in the area and the house of the Battalion Commandant, Daniel Corkery, at Macroom was bombed and destroyed, as also was the house of C. Kelleher, Kilmichael, who was O.C. 'K' Company. The writer, with James Murphy, Battalion Vice O.C., slept at the latter house on the night previous and had left it in a pony and trap a short time before the Auxiliaries arrived. Travelling through Copeen, a few miles away, we ran into a force of Auxiliaries at the Cross and got clear, mainly through the good office of John Murphy, a shopkeeper there, who vouched for our identity, though I, knowing that I was being sought for, had given an assumed name. Murphy, though knowing me quite well, overheard the name I had given and took up the cue and assured the officer in charge, with whom he appeared to be on friendly terms, that we were both hardworking local men. We were not

even searched and proceeded on our way with all speed. On the night of April 6th, information was received from Macroom that Auxiliaries had instructions to take part in an enemy round-up in Dunmanway area. A party was mobilised to cut a trench on the road leading South and in the morning the Auxiliaries were held up there for some hours and eventually returned to Macroom without fulfilling their assignment.

The enemy now adopted forced labour methods for the filling in of road trenches and bridges which seriously hampered his movements and men were taken from their homes and work and compelled to carry out this work under enemy bayonets. In this connection an interesting episode comes to light. Men from Macroom were arrested and marched to Morrisons' Bridge about two miles Northwards where they were forced to fill in the breach under military guard. A local farmer's daughter, named Kathleen O'Leary, on seeing the civilians so engaged, prepared a bucket of tea and some homemade cake and took this refreshment towards them. She was stopped by the military officer in charge, who pointed out that his men should come first and directed her to serve them. She retorted "No", that her men would have to be served first and refused to supply the others. The officer insisted that his men would have to be served first, so she replied, "In that case its no man first" and promptly spilled the tea on the ground and walked off with her

empty bucket. And so the spirit of the nation was unbowed.

ATTACK ON  
ENEMY PATROL.

On April 8th an' attack was made on an enemy party on the Carrigadrohid-Macroon road. Constable Lord was killed and another Black and Tan wounded and one revolver captured. John Powell, Lieutenant, 'F' Company, was in charge, and the names of those who took part in the attack will be found in the Addendum.

On April 12th the Column mobilised at Liscarrigane and remained there for a period of one week. At the end of that time it was again divided into four Sections and distributed to 'G', 'D' and 'E' Companies.

ATTACK ON  
EVENING PATROL  
AT MACROOM.

On April 20th an attack was made on an enemy patrol at Glengate, Macroon. R. Browne, Battalion Q.M., was in charge and the names of those who took part with him will be found in the addendum. One Auxiliary was killed and one revolver captured. On the same night the Four Mile Bridge on the main Cork-Macroon road was demolished. An enemy lorry was fired on by the writer and a party of two men on this night also on the roadside at Coolcower. The driver accelerated and got away. On May 9th I was incapacitated from active duty by an ankle injury and had to lay up at Délaney's of Toames until sent for by the Brigade O.C. on May 12th. I limped across the country, a distance of twelve miles, to Ballyvourney to see him and was

informed by him of the plans for the attack on Macroom on the evening of May 15th. This was Whit Saturday and an attack on this post was to be carried out in conjunction with similar attacks in other areas of the Division. I returned with his instructions to Battalion H.Q. at Delaneys, Toames, but had to lie up with my injury and took no part in the projected attack. On May 15th 'A' and 'B' Companies were mobilised to act as scouts to the Columns from 6th, 7th and 8th Battalions, which, with the Brigade Column, were to take part. The 8th Battalion Column, with some men from the 1st and 2nd Battalions and one Section of the 7th Battalion Column, under D. McSweeney, Battalion O.C. Training, took up positions on the slopes of Sleaveen Hill, overlooking Macroom Castle. The 6th Battalion Column occupied a position on Coolehane road, a few hundred yards East of Barnard's house. The remainder of the Brigade Column, plus the remaining three Sections of the 7th Battalion, occupied positions at Masseytown and Coolehane Road, a few hundred yards West of Barnard's house. It had been decided to draw the Auxiliaries along this road by setting fire to Barnard's house, the said Barnard being a loyalist supporter, the Column on Sleaveen Hill coming into action in order to prevent reinforcements leaving the Castle at a later stage. The Brigade O.C., Seán Hegarty, with Michael Murphy, O.C. 2nd Battalion, was in charge of the operation which was timed to commence at 7 p.m. new time. It was called off after the men had been in position and zero hour had practically

arrived. I have never heard the reason for this. In all, one hundred armed men took part in this abortive raid and at least fifty men from 'A' and 'B' Companies were on active scouting duty and did a good job in bringing such a large Column into positions within a few hundred yards of two enemy posts in broad daylight and getting them away again undetected.

ATTACK ON  
ENEMY ROUND-  
UP COLUMN.

On May 19th an enemy round-up took place at Ballinagree, Clondrohid, and Ballyvourney. A force of the Essex Regiment, commanded by Major Percival, was engaged in the Ballinagree area. A section of this party was fired on and routed by a small section of 7th Battalion Column men under J. Cotter, O.C. 'C' Company. Some machine gun parts were captured.

On May 21st the Column mobilised at Liscarrigane and was held there for impending action with the Brigade Column.

BURNING OF  
MACROOM  
UNION.

On May 28th, having some time before received information of the intended occupation of Macroom Union buildings, these were burnt by the men of 'B' Company, under D. Mullane, O.C. The buildings were within four hundred yards of an enemy post and in plain view of the occupants. The inmates, some of whom were bedridden, and the officials had to be evacuated and this was done and the building then

thoroughly set alight. It was completely demolished and, though immediate action followed, the demolishing force got safely away.

PROPOSED ATTACK  
AT CARRIGANIMMA.

On June 1st an attack was projected on Auxiliaries using the Macroom-Millstreet road and Carriganimma village was selected as the ambush position. Watch was kept for a few days on the movements of the enemy passing through the village and on the day before the Column were to move in the enemy surrounded the village in a large force. There must have been a leakage of information or else the activity of our men in or near it had been noted by some enemy agent.

CONTACT WITH  
AUXILIARY.

Contact was made by our Intelligence Service in Macroom with an Auxiliary Officer named Patrick Carroll - a native of the West of Ireland. He agreed to give any information he could obtain regarding enemy activities and as an earnest of his good faith brought out from time to time over six revolvers, with ammunition, which he handed to our agent, Miss Gretta Graham, Middle Square, Macroom. He also provided information of intended enemy activities and refused to accept any compensation.

ROUND-UP OF  
MACROOM AREA.

On June 1st our two Intelligence Officers at Macroom Post Office, Mr. Curtin and Miss Rice, succeeded in deciphering enemy messages pertaining to

a large scale round-up of Macroom-Ballyvourney area. Word was transferred to Battalion H.Q. and from there to Brigade and Divisional H.Q., both situated at Coolea, Ballyvourney. Confirmation was received from Cadet Carroll at Macroom Castle and there were soon afterwards enemy activities commandeering civilian labour for filling road trenches. On the 2nd enemy reinforcements moved into Macroom and on the morning of the 3rd further reinforcements from Ballincollig, Mallow, Buttevant, Bandon, Dunmanway, Bantry and Killarney converged on the area from Macroom on the East to the Derrynasagart Mountains on the West and from the Boggeragh Mountains on the North to the Pass of Keimineigh on the South. This area was intensively combed, while supporting enemy forces carried out raids immediately outside this large area. Owing to our forces being alerted they were able to get outside the area in time and this big enemy round-up, wherein over two thousand men took part and which lasted over five days, proved abortive. Not even one active Volunteer was arrested.

MY ARREST.

On June 4th the Brigade C.C., Seán Hegarty, moved into 'J' Company area and contacted Battalion H.Q. at Delaneys, Toames. He remained there until the night of June 8th. On this evening the raiding parties to the West returned to their bases and among them was Major Percival's Flying Column of 140 men of the Essex Regiment stationed at Bandon. This Column operated

with field kitchens and travelled on foot, often crossing country with one platoon of forty men mounted on cycles. These acted as flankers, using parallel roads to the main body. They arrived at Toames about 6 p.m. on the 8th and opened fire at Sonny Buckley, a Volunteer of 'J' Company, who was running to warn Battalion H.Q. of their proximity. He was killed and the firing being heard by the Brigade O.C., the Battalion C.C. and the writer, we had to gather up our papers and beat a hasty retreat. Having tried to get to Joe Sullivan's house of Gurraneareagh, arriving there about 2 a.m., we remained up, having arranged for a few scouts to go on duty as soon as it became bright, as it was felt that we were yet in the path of the returning enemy raiders and every safety precaution was necessary. At 7 a.m. we had a visit from William Powell, O.C. 'G' Company, with his Lieutenant, Denis Long. It was decided to move on to Kilmurry village and just as we were about to start enemy fire opened on one of our scouts. Denis Long having gone ahead, the remaining number tried to get away through the fields in order to prevent encirclement and, in the effort, William Powell and the writer were captured, having walked into an enemy party who were lying in wait for us. The Brigade and Battalion O.Cs who were some distance to the rear heard our warning shouts, doubled back and so escaped. We were unarmed and were thoroughly searched. I gave the fictitious name of William Murphy, with an address at 111 Old George's Street, Cork, and gave as an excuse for my presence in

the country that I had been at my cousin's at Copeen and was walking to Crookstown to get the train back to Cork. The Cork address which I gave was the address of Mrs. Sorensen, nee Murphy, whose brother, William, had gone to America about two years before. He resembled me in appearance.

RELEASE.

We were held by the Column for two days at Sweeney's farmhouse, Gurraneareagh, and then we marched via Newcestown and Quarry Cross to Bandon which we reached on Friday, 12th. When passing by Quarry Cross one of Percival's officers interrogated a cottier named Mat Donovan and shot him dead. On Saturday, June 13th, we were marched to Kinsale by Ballinadee and Ballinaspittle and lodged that night at the Military Barracks, Kinsale. We were held here for one week and during that period we were repeatedly questioned. William Powell was released from there, while I was sent to Military Barracks, Cork, and there questioned and photographed. The house, 111 Old George's Street, was in the meantime raided and while the Sorensens were out of home another occupant of the building vouched for the presence of a brother in the house. Afterwards, on the 30th of June, I was released, the enemy Intelligence Officers having evidently accepted the evidence in my favour. I immediately returned to Battalion H.Q. and once more took up duty.

This episode portrays a gross weakness in enemy intelligence organisation. When a person actively sought for by the enemy, and whose photograph was held at Macroom Castle, could remain in their custody for three weeks undetected it showed a lack of co-ordination between the different units, though, on speaking to an Auxiliary Intelligence Officer about it during the Truce, he told me that my photograph supplied by Cork was identified by them some days after my release.

In the meantime activities continued in the 7th Battalion area. For some months Divisional and Brigade H.Q. were situated in the Ballyvourney area and communications routed largely passed from these through the 7th Battalion area. These routes had to be kept open day and night and relays of officers passing to and fro had to be billeted and guarded. Relays of scouts had to be provided in a round-the-clock service at Carrigaphouca, two miles from Macroom on the road to Ballyvourney. It was their job to keep watch on enemy movements from Macroom and by a system of signals to pass on the information to Brigade H.Q. A large number of enemy raids were made and the Battalion Quartermaster and the Battalion Training Officer were arrested, as well as some active Column men.

On June 24th a Black and Tan named Duckham, while travelling in civilian clothes, was arrested by our men and shot dead. One revolver was taken. On

June 20th-27th armed men were placed on some of the roads leading from Macroom in an effort to attack enemy patrols using roads near the town. No enemy appeared. On July 3rd Coolcower House was burned to prevent its occupation by the enemy. From this until the Truce activities<sup>0</sup> were of a minor order.

SIGNED:

*Charles Browne*  
(Charles Browne)

WITNESSED:

*C. Saurin*  
(C. Saurin)

LIEUT. COLONEL.

DATE: 19<sup>th</sup> June 1953

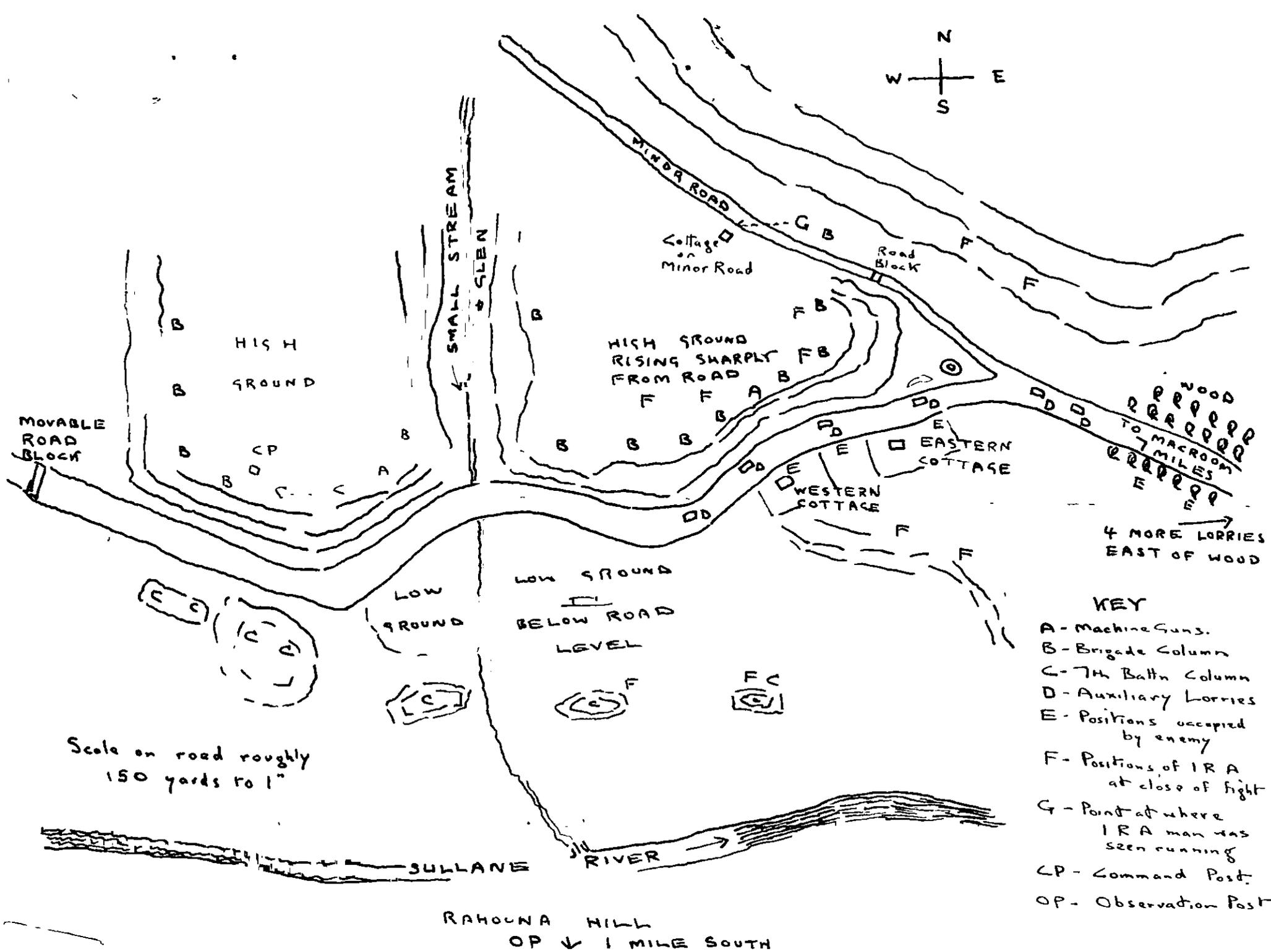
BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21  
BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21  
No. W.S. 873

APPENDUM TO  
STATEMENT BY  
CHARLES BROWNE  
~ ~ ~

SKETCH MAP  
OF AMBUSH  
AT POULNABRO,  
25<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 1921  
~ ~ ~

Copied from original  
sketch of Charles  
Browne, Adjutant,  
7<sup>th</sup> (Macroom) Battalion  
Cork I Brigade  
Copy by Lt Col.  
S. Soutin  
Bureau of Military  
History - June 1953.

~ ~ ~



- KEY
- A - Machine Guns.
  - B - Brigade Column
  - C - 7<sup>th</sup> Batta Column
  - D - Auxiliary Lorries
  - E - Positions occupied by enemy
  - F - Positions of IRA at close of fight
  - G - Point at where IRA man was seen running
  - CP - Command Post.
  - OP - Observation Post

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21  
BURO STAIRS MILEATA 1913-21  
NO. W.S. 873

RAHOLNA HILL  
OP ↓ 1 MILE SOUTH

NAMES OF THOSE TAKING PART IN ATTACKS ON ENEMY.

0

KILMURRY BARRACKS.

Dl. Corkery, O/C. Battalion: John Lynch, Vice O/C.,  
 Chas. Browne, Adjutant: Jas. Murphy, O/C. 'C' Company:  
 Denis O'Mahony, 'H' Coy., Patk. O'Leary, O/C. 'H' Coy.,  
 H. Murphy, Battalion Q.M., L. Dromey, O/C. 'J' Coy.,  
 Hugh Delaney, 'J' Coy., S. O'Connor, O/C. 'B' Coy.,  
 Jack Mahony and Ml. Lucey, 'J' Coy., David Burke, 'C' Coy.,  
 Denis Creedon, 'D' Coy., Dan Cronin, Jerh. Murphy, Tim Murphy,  
 Umera; Larry Mahony, Dl. McSweeney and Denis Murphy, all of  
 'A' Coy., Tim Seán O'Leary, 'A' Coy., Patk. Manning, 'B' Coy.

CARRIGADROHID BARRACKS.

Dl. Corkery, O/C., John Lynch, Chas. Browne, James Murphy,  
 H. Murphy, Wm. Powell, 'H' Coy., Jerh. Murphy and Denis  
 O'Mahony of 'A' Coy., Cors. O'Leary, 'B' Coy., Ml. Murphy,  
 'C' Coy., P. Manning, 'B' Coy., S. Cotter, 'D' Coy.,  
 Ed. Neville, O/C. 'E' Coy., John O'Leary, O/C. and P.K.  
 O'Sullivan and Jack Powell of 'F' Coy., Ml. Murphy, 'F' Coy.,  
 Denis Murphy, 'A' Coy., and three men from the Brigade Staff,  
 viz., F. O'Donoghue, Brigade Adjutant; Joe O'Connor, Brigade  
 Q.M., and Dan Donovan, O/C. 1st Battalion.

LISSARDA AMBUSH.

Patk. O'Leary, O/C. 'H' Coy., in charge. Denis O'Mahony,  
 1st Lieut., 'H' Coy., Wm. Powell, Maurice Hennigan, David  
 Healy, Con Murphy, Daniel O'Leary, Tadg Murphy, D.J. Long,  
 Denis D. Long, P.J. Long, Ml. Galvin, Jerh. Mahony,

LISSARDA AMBUSH. (Contd.)

Jack Mahony, Patk. Sheahan, Alex Palmer, Jerh. O'Leary,  
Patk. Desmond, Tim Lynch, Dl. Twomey, Dl. Herlihy, Tom Powell,  
Ml. Powell, Tom Taylor, Matt Murphy, Rd. Burke, Wm. Burke,  
J. Galvin, Dl. Riordan, D.J. O'Brien, Pat O'Brien, Joe Murphy,  
Cors. Mahony, Denis O'Keefe, Cors. O'Keefe, Wm. Leahy,  
Dl. Donovan, Patk. Kelleher, Jack O'Connell all of 'H' Company.  
Jas. Murphy, O/C. 'C' Coy., and R. Browne, D.J. O'Brien and  
Ml. Mullane of 'B' Coy.,

POULNABRO (OR COOLAVOKIG) AMBUSH.

D. Corkery, O/C. 7th Battalion; Chas. Browne, Adjutant;  
Rd. Browne, Q.M., D. McSweeney and Ml. Murphy, Battalion  
Staff Officers, Dl. McCarthy, Dl. McSweeney, Tim Crowley,  
Jas. Murphy and Pat Cunningham of 'A' Coy., Tim Buckley,  
O/C. and Denis O'Shea and Tom O'Connor of 'C' Coy.,  
Jerh. Cotter, O/C. with Patk. O'Sullivan, Matt Kelleher and  
David Burke of 'D' Company; E. Neville, O/C. 'E' Company;  
Cors. O'Leary of 'F' Coy., Wm. Powell, O/C. with Cors. Murphy  
and Dl. O'Leary of 'G' Coy., and D. Hennigan and Ml. Shine  
of 'J' Coy.,

GLEN GATE (MACROOM) AMBUSH.

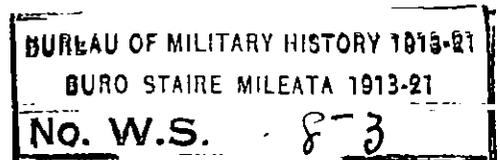
Rd. Browne, Battalion Q.M., J. Burns, D.J. O'Brien,  
Denis O'Connell, 'A. Casey, Dl. Murphy all 'B' Company.  
Cors. Healy, 1st Lieut., 'B' Coy., and Jerh. Casey acted as  
scouts.

ATTACK ON MACROOM-CARRIGDROHID ROAD. (April 8th).

John Powell, 1st Lieut. 'F' Company: P.K. O'Sullivan,  
Cors. O'Leary, Rd. Young, Patk. Kelleher, Rd. Twomey,  
Tom Moynihan, all of 'F' Coy., Patk. Murphy, Lawrence Mahony  
and Tim Murphy, of 'A' Company.

NAMES OF TOWN A.S.U.

MI. Murphy, 1st Lieut. 'A' Coy., O/C. Joe Turner, 2nd Lieut.,  
Jas. Murphy, Tim O'Leary, Tim Shawn O'Leary, DL. McSweeney (Tich  
all of 'A' Company: D.J. O'Brien, MI. Mullane, Jack Burns, of  
'B' Company.



## A D D E N D U M.

## 7TH (MACROOM) BATTALION. CORK NO. 1 BRIGADE.

## NAMES AND ADDRESSES OF MEMBERS OF BATTALION STAFF.

Dl. Corkery, Casement St., Macroom:	Battn. O/C. and O/C. of Flying Column.
John Lynch, McCurtain St., do.	Battn. V/O.C. until arrest, November, 1920.
Jas. Murphy, Mullinroe, do.	Battn. V/O.C. when Lynch arrested.
Chas. Browne, McCurtain St. do.	Battn. Adjutant.
Henry Murphy, Pearse St., do.	Battn. Q.M. until appointment as O/C. Macroom Town in Dec. 1920.
Rd. Browne, McCurtain St., do.	App. Q.M. when Murphy promoted.
Chris. Hartnett, Casement St. do.	App. Q.M. on Brown's arrest June, 1921.
Dl. McSweeney, Casement St. do.	Training Officer.
Ml. Murphy, Mullinroe, do.	O/C. Battn. Transport, and Assistant Adjutant.
J.T. Murphy, Crossmahon, Lissarda.	O/C. Battn. Medical Services.
Tom Clifford, Rusheen, Aghina.	O/C. Battn. Police.
Jerh. Murphy, Pearse St., Macroom.	O/C. Battn. Engineers.
Dl. Deasy, Sleaven Rd. do.	O/C. Battn. Intelligence.
Tim Crowley, Connolly St., do.	O/C. Battn. Dispatch Riders.
Dl. McSweeney, Chapel Cross, do.	O/C. Battn. Signallers.

## THE COMPANIES: AREA AND OFFICERS.

'A' Company: (Macroom)	Macroom Town. Part of Macroom Town East and South of River Sullane, but including district of Umera and Mashanaglass:
	John Crowley, Connolly St., Macroom. O/C. until March, 1921, then
	Ml. Murphy, Pearse St., Macroom. O/C. Promoted from 1st Lieutenant.

THE COMPANIES: AREA AND OFFICERS.  
(Contd.)

'A' Company: Joe Turner, Chapel Hill, 1st Lieutenant.  
(Macrooom). Macrooom.  
(Contd.)

Dan Cronin, Chapel Hill, 2nd Lieutenant.  
Macrooom.

Company Strength - 76.

'B' Company: Part of Macrooom Town West and North of River Sullane,  
(Macrooom) but including district of Raleigh North and Codrum  
and Ballyverane:

Steve O'Connor, McCurtain 0/C. until January, 1921,  
Street, Macrooom. then

Dl. Mullane, McCurtain St. 0/C. from 1st Lieutenant.  
Macrooom.

Cors. Healy, McCurtain St. 1st Lieutenant.  
Macrooom.

Patk. O'Brien, McCurtain 2nd Lieutenant.  
Street, Macrooom.

Company Strength - 69.

'C' Company. Area of Parish of Clondrohid.  
(Clondrohid)

Jas. Murphy, Mullinroe, 0/C. until Nov. 1920, then  
Clondrohid.

Tim Buckley, do. do. 0/C. from 1st Lieutenant.

Ds. O'Shea, Kilgobnet, 1st Lieutenant.  
Clondrohid.

Jas. Twohig, Gloundav, 2nd Lieutenant.  
Carriganimma.

Company Strength - 120.

'D' Company. Northern half of parish of Aghina, centering on  
(Ballinagree) village of Ballinagree. Including Bawnmore district  
of Macrooom Parish:

Jerh. Cotter, Bawnmore, 0/C.  
Macrooom.

Tim Hyde, Carrigagulla, 1st Lieutenant.  
Ballinagree.

Patk. Quill, Moulnahorna, 2nd Lieutenant.  
Ballinagree.

Company Strength - 70.

'E' Company. Southern half of Parish of Aghina, centering on  
(Rusheen) Rusheen:

Ed. Neville, Rusheen, Aghina.	O/C.
Dl. Twomey, do. do.	1st Lieutenant.
Jas. Walsh, do. do.	2nd Lieutenant.

Company Strength - 68.

'F' Company. District of Cannovee, Killinardrish, Caum, based on  
(Cannovee) Carrigadrohid village:

John O'Leary, Capnagroum, -Killinardrish.	O/C.
John Powell, Coolnacarriga, Killinardrish.	1st Lieutenant.
Con Herrick, Shandangan, Lissarda.	2nd Lieutenant.

Company Strength - 64.

'G' Company. Wm. Powell, Kilcondy, Lissarda. O/C.  
(Crookstown)

Ds. J. Long, Pullerick, Crookstown.	1st Lieutenant.
Cors. Murphy, Pullerick, Crookstown.	2nd Lieutenant.

This Company formed part of 'H' Company until January, 1921. It was based on Crookstown and covered districts of Belmont and Bealnablath as well.

Company Strength - 87.

'H' Company. Based on Kilmurry Village and included districts of  
(Kilmurry). Crossmahon, Poulnargid, Dooniskey, and Curraclough:

Patk. O'Leary, Crossmahon, Lissarda.	O/C.
John O'Connell, Poulnargid, -Lissarda.	1st Lieutenant.
Ds. O'Mahony, Lissarda.	2nd Lieutenant.

Company Strength - 105.

'J' Company. Based on Toames, and comprised the northern end of  
(Toames) Kilmichael Parish. Line from Dromcarra via  
Kilmichael Churchyard to Kilnarovanagh divided it  
from 'K' Company.

Nick (Louis) Dromey, Inchisine, Toames: O/C.  
John Healy, Mount Music, do. 1st Lieut.  
John Buckley, do. 2nd Lieut.  
Company Strength - 55.

'K' Company. Based on Cooldorihy and comprising Southern portion  
(Kilmichael). of Kilmichael Parish, including districts of Johnstown  
and Terelton:

Cors. Kelleher, Cushdub, Kilmichael. O/C.  
Denis Healy, Coolaclevane, do. 1st Lieut.  
Jerh. Kelleher, Terelton, do. 2nd Lieut.  
Company Strength - 117.

Coachford This Company based on Coachford was in the 7th  
Company. Battalion until January, 1921, when it was transferred  
to the 6th Battalion. While with the 7th Battalion  
its Officers were :-

James Walsh, Coachford. O/C.  
Frank Crowley, do. 1st Lieut.  
Vincent Dineen, do. 2nd Lieut.

