

W.S. 1,011.

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BUREAU STAIRS MILITARY 1913-21
NO. W.S. 1011

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21
STATEMENT BY WITNESS.

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 1,011

Witness

Patrick Garvey,
Clash East,
Tralee,
Co. Kerry.

Identity.

Member of Irish Volunteers,
Tralee, Co. Kerry, 1914 - ;
Brigade Adjutant later.

Subject.

Irish Volunteers, Tralee, Co. Kerry,
1914-1921.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil

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ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BUREAU STAIRS MILEATA 1913-21

No. W.S. 1261

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STATEMENT OF PATRICK GARVEY,

Clash East, Tralee, Co. Kerry.

I was born in July 1890 at Duagh, Castlegregory, Co. Kerry. I was sent to the local national school at Aughasla. I left the national school at 15 years of age and then won a County Council Scholarship - the first scholarships offered in County Kerry. I was then sent to the intermediate school - later known as Jeffers Institute - for four years. After leaving school I was idle for some years, but eventually came to Mr. McSweeney's of 32, Castle St., Tralee, as a book-keeper, in the year 1913.

In the year 1914 I had become aware when Seán McDermott held a meeting in Tralee that a centre of the I.R.B. had been formed in Tralee.

In the autumn of 1913 the first Volunteers were formed in the town. The principal men at their formation were Austin Stack, Tom Slattery, Dermot Crean and a curate at St. John's, Tralee, named Fr. Charles Brennan. I did not become a member at first.

In the summer of 1914 I became a member of the Volunteers. The company officers were Michael Cotter and Michael Doyle, and the drill instructor was a man named Ned Leen. All of these three men were ex-British soldiers. The strength of the company was between 400 and 500 men, and included men from the surrounding districts of the town in the parish of Tralee. In all there were four companies, A, B, C and D, in Tralee and surrounding districts at the time. Shortly after their formation

the Volunteers rented a disused skating rink which ever since is known as "The Rink", where they met and drilled with wooden rifles.

A few months after joining the Volunteers I was accepted in the I.R.B. and soon afterwards became treasurer of the Circle. A man named John Joe Rice was the Centre at the time. Other members were Paddy Raymond, Paddy Henegan, J. O'Sullivan and P. Browne.

The Gaelic Athletic Association and the ~~American Alliance~~
~~American Alliance~~ *Irish American Alliance* had been in existence previous to 1913 and on the formation of the Volunteers the senior members of these two bodies gave great assistance in their formation.

We had weekly subscriptions among ourselves for the purpose of buying equipment and rifles, and about this time managed to buy an odd revolver and a few Lee Enfield rifles from British soldiers home on leave. We also purchased a few of the rifles which had been landed at Howth and a number of shotguns.

At the outbreak of the 1914-18 war some of our drill instructors, as well as many of the Volunteers, were called up for service as they were on the British Army reserve. This gave a temporary set-back to the drilling of the companies, but it turned out to be a blessing in disguise as the companies had to find men who were under no obligation to the British Army authorities to take over the job of drilling and instructing in the use of arms. This the companies succeeded in doing.

After Redmond's speech at Woodenbridge in Co. Wicklow, and later when he advised the Volunteers to join the British Army, a split came in the Tralee companies. The

C Company, which comprised men principally in the centre of the town, remained loyal to Redmond and broke away from the other three companies. Eventually C Company disappeared altogether.

Early in 1915 the British authorities started a recruiting campaign in the area, so we in the Volunteers started a counter recruiting campaign with the result that recruitment for the British Army broke down in Tralee and Co. Kerry generally. A man named William Partridge of Dublin was one of the men who spoke at meetings for the recruitment of Volunteers. James Connolly also visited Tralee at this time and held a public meeting for the purpose of organising the local workers in The Transport Workers' Union. Connolly at this meeting also appealed for men to join the Volunteers. By the end of 1915 the Volunteer strength in Tralee and surrounding districts had risen to over 1,000 men. We continued to parade and drill all that year.

Early 1916 was a continuation of the recruitment for Volunteers as well as drilling, route marches and scouting. I attended monthly meetings of the I.R.B. At these meetings I soon discovered that events were moving rapidly to a climax. In February of this year the ^{*Irish American Alliance*} ~~American Order of Hiburnians~~ invited Patrick Pearse to deliver a lecture in the town in aid of the Magaley Indemnity Fund. Magaley, who was in charge of a Volunteer Cycle Corps formed a short time before, had been arrested and was serving a sentence of three months for shouting in the public street "Up the Kaiser". Pearse agreed and on the last Sunday of February 1916 was in Tralee where he reviewed the Volunteers in the local sports' field. He exhorted them to be ready to fight as England was

preparing to move her forces against the Volunteers. Pearse delivered the lecture (which was "on the nature of freedom") in the evening at The Rink, the headquarters of the Volunteers in the area.

On St. Patrick's Day, 1916, a church parade in honour of the National Apostle which was attended by all the Volunteers in the area was held.

All through the months of March and April we had intensive drilling and parading. We had mock attacks and practice shooting with a rifle or two at Curraheen. In all this route marching and parades we were always followed by two members of the R.I.C., particularly Sergeants Nezer and McKenna who were later killed in action against the I.R.A.

About this time Austin Stack was instrumental in forming a Civilian Administrative Committee for the County of Kerry. The then County Secretary, P.M. Quinlan, was made ~~secretary~~ ^{chairman}. Quinlan, who was an I.R.B. man, had previously served a term of imprisonment. The purpose of the Civilian Administrative Committee was to look after the management of the county in the event of the contemplated rising being a success.

On the Tuesday evening of Holy Week I attended a Circle meeting of the I.R.B. The Centre, Alphie Cotton, attended. He informed us that the Easter manoeuvres which we had read about a few days previously in the public press was to be something more than manoeuvres. He in fact implied that a rising was about to take place and that there was to be a general attack on the British forces in the country.

On the Good Friday I, with other members of the I.R.B., went for a walk outside the town until the afternoon. We discussed what was to happen the following week. In these discussions we learned that arms were to be landed at Fenit sometime on Easter Sunday. Although not aware of any detailed plans for the landing of the arms, we had come to the conclusion that some of the Tralee Volunteers would be detailed for protection of the men landing the arms at Fenit and that we would be supported by units from outside districts.

We returned to Tralee in the afternoon and learned that Stack and Con Collins had been arrested in the town. Con Collins had been arrested first. The R.I.C. then sent a message to Stack saying that Collins wanted to see him at the barracks. Stack went to the barracks and was detained there with Collins. I also learned that another man had been arrested by the R.I.C. stationed at Ardfert and taken into Tralee Barracks.

It being Good Friday most of the Volunteers were out of town. That evening we were mobilised at The Rink and paraded round the town at the double. Dan Healy, the Battalion O/C, had charge of the parade. When we returned to The Rink, our headquarters, we were dismissed. I remained at The Rink for a short while and learned that the prisoner taken in from Ardfert was Roger Casement. So on the Good Friday the police had Stack, Con Collins and Casement in custody!

I left The Rink soon after this and went to the A.O.H. hall in the Square where I saw a man who was a stranger to me. After a few minutes one of my pals told me that the stranger was Captain Monteith.

On Saturday morning I learned that Roger Casement had been removed by British military on the 10 o'clock train from Tralee.

On Saturday night Monteith had been taken to The Rink. A guard of local Volunteers armed with rifles was placed on The Rink that Saturday night as soon as he arrived there. Few of the Volunteers in and around that night knew who Monteith was.

On Easter Sunday morning the Company assembled at The Rink. I would say that there were three hundred men present on that Sunday morning. These included men from Ballyferriter and Dingle led by Paddy O'Brien, a national school teacher. Most of the men that morning were armed with rifles, revolvers or shotguns. I was aware by now that the manoeuvres called for that day had been called off. The guard on The Rink was strengthened early that morning. I saw cycle scouts being dispatched to outlying districts but I am not aware of the messages being dispatched. About lunchtime the Volunteers were allowed some time off for dinner and a further meeting was called for the afternoon. At dusk the Volunteers formed up in sections and marched off in the direction of Ballymacelligott. Monteith was among them. In all about 200 men took part in the parade. Other Volunteers were left behind in the town for the purpose of preventing any attempt being made by the R.I.C. to follow Monteith and effect his arrest.

A few miles outside the town we were halted and Monteith was handed over to the Ballymacelligott Company who had come out to meet us. After half an hour we were reformed into sections and marched back to town when we were dismissed.

All Easter Monday and all Easter Week we were waiting for some news or instructions but nothing came so far as I am aware. On the Saturday night of Easter Week after the surrender in Dublin the Companies were mobilised at The Rink with all arms in the area. All guns were then broken and two Volunteers were detailed to take the broken guns to Ballymullen Military Barracks. The two Volunteers procured a donkey and cart and carried out the order late on Saturday night.

During the week following Easter Week all the prominent officers in the area were arrested.

After the surrender of the broken arms and the arrest of the officers the British authorities closed The Rink. From then to the end of 1916 when the internees were released there was very little doing in the Companies, but the Volunteers kept together in a loose formation and kept in touch with other units in the county.

About June of 1917 all of our officers had been released and were back home in Tralee. It was then that the Volunteers were reorganised. Many of them who had remained aloof after Easter Week returned and rejoined. We held several meetings all that year, principally in the Hibernian Hall, No. 4 The Square, Tralee.

In 1918 I with other members of the Company, was active in procuring arms and ammunition anywhere we could find them. I also helped in the making of shotgun ammunition this year as well as taking part in parades and military manoeuvres. During the threat of conscription in the early months of this year the membership of the Tralee Battalion increased by about 400,

the strength of the battalion having risen to 900 men approximately. The battalion at this time apart from A, B and D Companies in the town of Tralee, included Ballyroe, ^{Blennerville} ~~Blennerville~~, Fenit, Oakpark, Curraheen and Ballyseedy Companies adjacent to the town.

The year 1919 was a continuation of the activities carried out in the year 1918. During the year I was appointed collector for the Dáil Éireann loan. Some short time afterwards the digs where I resided at ^{Mrs.} ~~Miss~~ Hawneys, near the R.I.C. barracks, was raided by the R.I.C. I was not at home at the time but they searched my room and went through my belongings. Later in the year we got back into the I.R.A. a few of the men demobilised from the British Army who were in the Volunteers in the year 1914 when they were first formed. They were very helpful in drilling the Company and teaching the I.R.A. men the use of arms. I was informed by these men who had been in the Munster Fusiliers that on their demobilisation they were addressed by a senior officer of the regiment and advised to have nothing to do with Stack and the I.R.A.

In February 1920 an attack had been planned on the R.I.C. barracks at Camp by the Brigade Staff. A man named Dan Jeffers, Captain of B Company, Tralee, had charge of the attack. I with some 40 men, twenty-one of whom were armed, were selected for the attack from the Tralee Battalion.

I was armed with a Lee Enfield rifle and with about eleven other men occupied a position behind a hedge about 21 feet on the northern side immediately in front of the barracks. The man in charge of my section was Jim King. Other I.R.A. men in the section were David Walsh, Willie Cronin and Gerry Sullivan. The eastern side was covered

by four or five men who laid a home-made mine against the gable end of the barracks, the southern side being covered by about ten men. All of these twenty-one I.R.A. men in the northern and southern positions were armed with rifles, revolvers or shotguns.

The order was given to open fire. Our section, as well as the section on the south side, opened fire at once. The R.I.C. replied immediately, at the same time sending up several Verey lights. They were the first I had seen or heard of them. Firing became intense and after twenty minutes the home-made mine which had been laid at the gable end of the barracks exploded and blew a hole in the barrack wall. There was a lull after this for a few minutes. The R.I.C. were then called on to surrender but they replied with fire. After about an hour the attack was called off. I with the other Tralee men in the attack returned to Tralee. Later I learned that two of the R.I.C. were wounded. The Camp R.I.C. Barracks was evacuated immediately after this attack. Other I.R.A. men with me in the attack, in addition to those in my section already mentioned, were Tom Greaney, John O'Sullivan, Eddie Bower and Jim Mullins, all from the town of Tralee. To the best of my knowledge the mine used in this attack was made from the wheel-box of a donkey's cart which was filled with gelignite, into which a detonator with fuse attached was inserted.

On Easter Saturday night the 3rd April, 1920, I was detailed with about twelve other I.R.A. to raid the Income Tax offices in the town for the purpose of destroying income tax records. I was on guard duty that night armed with a revolver. The Brigade O/C, Paddy Cahill,

was in charge. Other men present were Joe Griffin, who was himself an Income Tax Officer in Tralee, Jim O'Connor, Eddie Bower and John O'Sullivan.

The Brigade O/C with the help of one of the officials of the Tax Office, I think it was Joe Griffin, had little difficulty in opening the door of the offices which had been closed about two or three hours earlier. Having collected most of the documents Cahill and those with him took them out into the yard of the Custom House. The remainder were placed in a pony's cart and taken to an outlying district. The documents in the yard were then set alight and were soon destroyed. Those that were taken away in the cart were destroyed a short distance outside the town.

In July, 1920, I took part in a successful attack on a British military guard at Tralee Railway Station. The military guard comprised about twenty men in all. Our men numbered twenty-five. The Company Officer, Gerald O'Connor, John O'Connor, John O'Sullivan, together with myself and other selected men of the Company, had planned the attack for about a week before.

John O'Connor, 1st Lieutenant, took charge. Two men, John O'Sullivan and Gerry Moriarty were detailed to go on to the station platform to disarm the sentry on the approach of the usual passenger train from Fenit. O'Sullivan and Moriarty were assisted by a number of Fianna boys on the platform. These boys could move around without undue notice. The main body of about twenty I.R.A. met at Ballyroe about a mile from the railway station.

It had been arranged previously with the driver and fireman of the train whose names were Lynch and Mulchinock

respectively and who were friendly to the I.R.A., that the train would be flagged at Ballyroe and that they would bring it to a standstill at this point. Everything went according to plan. When the train came to a halt, it was boarded by the I.R.A.; two of them, John Slattery and Joe Sugrue, got on to the footplate with the driver and fireman.

The train restarted and proceeded towards the station. When near the station it was slowed up and halted by the driver directly opposite the military outpost where the sentry, a sergeant, was on duty armed with a rifle. As we stepped from the train O'Sullivan and Moriarty produced a revolver; each held up the sentry and disarmed him. He was taken completely by surprise, as were also the military in a nearby railway carriage which they used as a hut. A total of eleven rifles, some ammunition and equipment were seized in the carriage. I with the other I.R.A. in this incident got safely away with all the seized stuff which, at the time, was a great prize having regard to the scarcity of arms in the Company at the time. All of us/^{who} took part in this successful operation were armed with revolvers.

About the end of this month - July 1920 - the Reverend Father Ferris, C.C., of St. John's Presbytery, Tralee, and now P.P. of Ballylongford, who was always very outspoken in support of Sinn Féin and the I.R.A., received a threatening letter informing him that he would be shot if he did not cease his activities in support of Sinn Féin and the I.R.A. The Brigade O/C, Paddy Cahill, immediately issued an order for a guard of I.R.A. to be placed on the Presbytery. I took part in this guard duty for a fortnight. The guard was for two hour periods. We were armed with revolvers and hand grenades.

At this time I happened to call to the Stationmaster's office in Tralee of the Tralee and Dingle Railway, where I chanced to see a box marked explosives consigned to the District Inspector R.I.C. at Dingle. I measured the box and had one made like it within a couple of hours, which I filled with bricks and stones. I took the dummy box to the station, removed the labels off the real box and placed them on the dummy. I then picked up the real box and took it away with me. When I opened it I discovered it was full of shotgun ammunition and cartridge cases.

On the eve of the burial of Terence MacSwiney on the 31st October, 1920, after his death on hunger-strike some days earlier, an attack was carried out on a Tan patrol in the town of Tralee. The Brigade O/C had received an order from G.H.Q. to attack an enemy post in the area that night. I heard later that this was a general order to all brigades in Ireland for this particular night following the death of MacSwiney.

The Battalion Staff decided to attack the Tan patrol in the town as a result of this order. At this time I had become a Section Leader. I was ordered to mobilise my section at the Market Square adjacent to the centre of the town. We armed ourselves with rifles but before my section had taken up positions around the laneways and side streets off the square another section in a different part of the town had opened fire on the patrol.

In the attack on the patrol a few of the Tans were wounded. Two were taken prisoner and disarmed. The remainder, including the wounded, managed to reach the barracks. A short time after the attack my section was dismissed. Later the two captured Tans were executed by order of the Brigade Staff.

That same night the Tans burned down the County Hall in the town which had been built only a short time before, the old building which had previously been used as a County Hall, the business premises of Brosnans and Slattery's in Rock St., the 1916 shop, as well as the business premises of Dunnes in Castle St. For the following week indiscriminate shooting by the Tans continued in the town, attempts being made to fire other buildings. The townspeople went through a week of terror, many of them being held up at the point of the gun and brutally beaten.

Among the civilians shot dead that week were a man named John Conway and Tommy Wall, an ex-British soldier. Those suffering gunshot wounds included a Mrs. O'Leary and a man named Simon O'Connor.

During this week all the prominent I.R.A. in Tralee left the town as it was not possible to do anything to restrain or attack the Tans. At this time the military were as always in Ballymullen Military Barracks. On the same road in which the military barracks was located, about 400 yards nearer town, was the County Jail occupied by the Tans. Across the road from the County Jail, only 50 yards away, was a Technical School which had been taken over by the Auxiliaries. In addition to the Auxiliaries in the Technical School a further section occupied a building on the corner of Denny Street. The Headquarters or No. 1 barracks of the R.I.C. was of course always occupied by the R.I.C. I would say that the strength of the Tans and R.I.C. at the time was approximately 100 men, while the Auxiliaries numbered about 130. The military numbered at least 1,000 men.

It was during this week that the Brigade O/C, Paddy Cahill, formed a Brigade Active Service Unit from among the most active members of those I.R.A. who were on the run or who had left home during this week of terror. I did not become a member as I did not leave home that week having been advised by the Brigade O/C not to do so but to remain in Tralee as he intended to appoint me Brigade Adjutant.

The No. 1 or the North Kerry Brigade as it was more popularly known, comprised seven battalions at this time. They were: Tralee, Dingle, Castlegregory, Ardfert, Lixnaw, Listowel and Killorglin Battalions. I am unable at this stage to even hazard a guess as to the strength of any one of these battalions at this particular time.

The Brigade Officers were: P.J. Cahill, O/C; Joe Melinn, Vice O/C; Dan Sullivan, Adjutant; Willie Mullins, Q/M and Tim Kennedy, I/O. In regard to the Vice O/C, Joe Melinn, I would like to mention for record purposes that at this particular period he had become more or less inactive and was Vice O/C in name only. A man named Thomas O'Donohoe, a gaelic teacher, was in fact the Brigade Vice O/C though in an acting capacity only.

The Tralee Battalion Officers were: Dan Healy, O/C; Michael Doyle, Vice O/C; Mick Fleming, Adjutant, P. Barry, Q/M; Thomas Foley, I/O.

The Dingle Battalion Officers were: Mick Moriarty, O/C; Jim Fitzgerald, Vice O/C; Maurice Keane, Adjutant.

The Castlegregory Battalion Officers were Tadhg Brosnan, O/C; Michael Duhig, Vice O/C; Dan Rohan, Adjutant; Eusebius Somers, I/O.

The Ardferd Battalion Officers were: Tom Clifford, O/C; Pat McKenna, Vice O/C; Jim Carmody, Adjutant; Batt. McElligott, Q/M.

The Lixnaw Battalion Officers were: Tom Kennelly, O/C; Tom Shanahan, Vice O/C; Pat Mangan, Adjutant; T.P. O'Shea, Q/M. Another man on this Battalion Staff at the time was a Steve Grady. I think he was an Assistant Vice O/C but I am not sure.

The Listowel Battalion Officers were: Robert McElligott, O/C; William O'Sullivan, Vice O/C, Jack Whelan, Adjutant; Dick Woulfe, Q/M.

The Killorglin Battalion Officers were: Tom O'Connor, O/C; Batt. Dwyer, Vice O/C; Dan Mulvihill, Adjutant. This battalion subsequently formed part of the Kerry No. 2 Brigade.

Early in December 1920 the Brigade O/C sent for me and informed me that I had been appointed Brigade Adjutant. Dan Sullivan, the previous Brigade Adjutant, was on the 'run' like other prominent I.R.A. men of the town. Sullivan, who was Chairman of Tralee Urban District Council, had been a member of the Ancient Order of Hibernians and was one of the first members of the I.R.B. in Tralee. He had helped in the formation of the Volunteers in the area. Cahill it appears considered he was too well known to the enemy for security reasons and decided to replace him.

I immediately set to work to reorganise the Tralee Battalion. As most of the known men were on the 'run' I concentrated on men who had never previously been prominent in I.R.A. activities. I managed to get together

the most sincere and reliable men in the battalion area, and by December the 20th had reorganised each Company in the battalion on a sound and reliable basis.

The Fianna O/C, Mike O'Leary, had to leave the town at the same time as the other active or prominent I.R.A. He was much wanted by the enemy and had joined the Brigade Active Service Column. He sent the Fianna Vice O/C, Paddy Daly, to me, who offered me the assistance of the Fianna boys whom he placed at my disposal night and day.

These boys were exceptionally good in talking or bringing dispatches and collecting information. They watched and trailed suspects and reported the movements of the Tans and military, especially the officers of the two forces. As Brigade Adjutant I was now responsible for the transmission of orders and issue of dispatches to the Brigade O/C, the Active Service Column and the different battalions in the brigade area. All orders from G.H.Q. or confidential information were received and dealt with by me at the time.

Around this time an employee in the Tralee Post Office was very useful in furnishing copies of coded enemy telegrams passing from Dublin Castle to Tralee. He was assisted by messenger boys who were of the Fianna and by a night-duty man named O'Carroll, an ex-British soldier. Copies of these telegrams collected by these employees of the Post Office were quickly in my hands.

The Brigade I/O, Tim Kennedy, had managed to obtain the key of these coded messages which were in letter or figure code. He passed the key to me. I decoded the telegram copies and transmitted the information so obtained to the Brigade O/C. One of the letter codes was "Persian

Gulf". One particular message which I decoded was a suggested large scale round-up of the I.R.A. in the Dingle Peninsula.

Another employee or overseer became very hostile so I took action and had him warned of the consequences. The result was that he himself began to deliver messages which he had decoded and for which I think he now enjoys an I.R.A. pension.

Another hostile employee in the Post Office was a lady named Gallagher who had been the recipient of a gold watch and belt for her assistance to the enemy at Knocklong Station on the occasion of the rescue of Seán Hogan by members of the I.R.A. She was under close observation.

On the 18th February, 1921, I was called to a brigade meeting at Upper Camp. Commandant Byrne of G.H.Q. was present at the meeting, which had been called specially for the formation of a Flying Column for the area. The Column as the Active Service Column had been in existence for some time before this meeting, but it appears that Commandant Byrne wanted to meet the officers and men of the Brigade Staff and to get a report on the arms in the area, the number of men available, as well as the number of enemy outposts in the brigade area. One man, T. Brosnan, Battalion O/C Castlegregory area, was able to report that he had no enemy outposts in his battalion area.

Early the following morning at about 8 a.m. a man named Michael Robert McElligott, Battalion O/C Listowel area, and myself left for home on our bicycles. It was a Saturday morning. At Derrymore, which is eight miles due west of Tralee, we sighted a cycle corps of

military approaching. We were only 400 yards away when we saw them. We dismounted and ran for cover. They opened fire. I knew that two of the Tralee area Battalion Officers named Fleming and Barry were staying in a nearby house owned by a man named McKenna.

I said to McElligott: "As we have nothing on us we should hañt". The military could easily have shot the two of us. I stood. McElligott kept running. In a minute or less he was wounded. I was taken to the officer in charge, searched and questioned about my business out that hour of the morning. I said: "I left Tralee this morning. I am a traveller working for the Co-operative Wholesale Society of Manchester which has branch shops in the town of Tralee". They took me back about a mile of the road I had come. I discovered from their conversation that they were patrolling the roads for trenching. The officer detailed a number of his men to take me to Tralee County Jail, which was manned by Tans. A man named Gilchrist was District Inspector of the Tans at the time.

I was not charged but was questioned about my meeting with McElligott. I was able to ward them off by saying that I had met him casually on the road. I had previously gathered from the military that McElligott was known to them as an I.R.A. man.

At midday on the following day, Monday, some friends visited me in the jail and informed me that McElligott had died. The military had sent an ambulance for him and conveyed him to the military hospital at Ballymullen, where he died on Sunday morning.

On the 27th February I was released from the County Jail and went at once to my lodgings which was only a few yards from No. 1 R.I.C. Barracks.

Early in March I was instrumental in forming a Battalion Flying Column, a body independent of the Brigade Flying Column. They were composed almost entirely of men who were working at their daily tasks in and around the town of Tralee.

One of the first actions of this Battalion Flying Column was an attack on a military train at Tubrid Railway Station, six miles from Tralee, on the 12th March, 1921. The column were armed with rifles and revolvers and inflicted casualties on the enemy. I cannot give details as I was not in the actual attack.

The driver of the train on that occasion was a man named James Smee. He was thanked by the enemy for his bravery. As a matter of fact he was a Volunteer and was always very friendly and helpful to his comrades. He only did his railway duties that day. G.H.Q., however, apparently got the enemy report of the attack and the part that Smee had played therein, and asked me to furnish particulars which I submitted in due course. I mention this story in justice to the man.

On the Saturday night of the 21st March, 1921, an I.R.A. man and officer of the Lixnaw Battalion, as well as secretary of the local Farmers' Union, named William McCarthy was arrested in the Railway Hotel and taken to the R.I.C. barracks in Bridge St. He had only arrived in the town that morning. Next morning his dead body was found in the Green, now the Town Park. I had not met him and did not know him personally.

On this same night, the 21st March, I was in St. John's Church in the town. At about 9.30 p.m. while I was there the church was lit up by Verey lights from the corner of Denny St. where the Auxiliaries were stationed. The Verey lights were followed by twelve bullets which came through the roof on the vestry side. The explanation of the Verey lights and shooting was that while the Tans were shooting McCarthy in the Green, the Auxiliaries were under the impression that they at the corner of Denny St. were being attacked by the I.R.A. They sent up the Verey lights and started firing at random, the stray bullets penetrating the roof in twelve places.

Following the finding of McCarthy's body, it was taken after a day or two to the railway station to be put on a train for his home in Lixnaw. The coffin was draped with the tricolour. While the funeral cortege was proceeding to the station an I.R.A. man named John Sullivan, who was a Lieutenant of B. Company, was ordered by a sergeant of the Tans to remove the flag off the coffin. This he refused to do. A Tan then stepped forward and removed the flag.

When the train had left carrying the body, Sullivan was arrested and taken to the Auxiliaries Headquarters and interviewed by Major McKinnon, D.S.O., M.C. He was offered a smoke and asked why he did not remove the flag. Sullivan was then released. As he was leaving the barracks he was told by McKinnon to tell his friends that he - McKinnon - or the Auxiliaries did not shoot McCarthy. I am of the opinion that McCarthy had been given away by someone in his home town to the Tans.

About this time Major McKinnon who was in charge of the Auxiliaries in the town and had been responsible for the shooting of two I.R.A. men named Moss Reidy and John Leen on Christmas Eve 1920 at Ballymacelligott and had taken part in several raids on the homes of I.R.A. men and the ill-treatment of their families and in the beating of prisoners arrested in the locality, went to a Dublin hospital for a serious operation for cancer of the stomach. I conveyed the information to G.H.Q., but in spite of intensive inquiries at the Dublin hospitals by members of the Dublin Brigade he could not be traced in Dublin. He returned, however, to Tralee, and on the 15th April, 1921, was shot dead while playing golf on Tralee Golf Links by four or five of the Battalion Flying Column which I had formed in early March. One of the I.R.A. men involved in the execution was named Con Healy.

Many ex-British service men were co-operating with the I.R.A. at this time, but owing to the attention of the Tans did not remain active. Some few of them, however, who never joined the I.R.A. were dangerous and were spying for the enemy. One of these, John O'Mahony, an elderly man, always reputed to be a police tout, had been sentenced to death at a courtmartial held by the Brigade Column. I was not present at the courtmartial. The order for the execution of O'Mahony, which came through me from the Brigade O/C, Cahill, was carried out by the Battalion Flying Column on the 7th April, 1921, at Rahonane, Tralee.

Shortly afterwards another order was received by me from the Brigade O/C to execute another ex-British service man named Denis O'Loughlin. O'Loughlin had a short time previously joined the Tans. I conveyed the order to the Battalion Flying Column who carried out the order.

O'Loughlin was executed in the public house of a man named Knightly in Castle St., Tralee.

Knightly's public house was later burned down by the military as an official reprisal.

The shooting of McKinnon brought about a great change in the attitude of the pro-British element in the locality. They had always been glad of his company at golf, tennis and tea parties, but after his death kept away from his associates and friends.

In so far as the townspeople were concerned, such as the shopkeepers, their assistants and the workers in factories, the death of McKinnon brought about a more co-operative attitude towards the I.R.A. Information when available in regard to the activities of enemy forces, such as proposed raids, was readily passed on to the I.R.A. with enthusiasm. People generally were eager to subscribe to our weekly collections in aid of the I.R.A.

After the death of McKinnon a Captain Petrie was appointed in his place in charge of the Auxiliaries. He was a careful and cautious man and preferred a drink in safe company to golf or tennis.

At the latter end of April 1921 an order was received by me from the O/C 1st Southern Division to forward a brigade levy of £115 to Divisional Headquarters, £100 being for the purpose of equipping a proposed munition factory in some part of the county Cork and £15 towards divisional expenses. I forwarded the sum requested by cheque. I was instrumental in having this cheque drawn on the account of a Mr. James O'Hara, Pawnbroker, of Tralee. We had given him the cash. The £115 had been levied off

the battalions: £25 from the Tralee Battalion and £15 from each of the other six battalions.

The cheque was subsequently discovered among other documents on Seán Moylan when arrested later. From information which I received later I learned that this particular cheque was afterwards cashed in Kanturk by a British officer, into whose hands it came after the arrest of Moylan. Two years after the money was returned to us by the manager of the Provincial Bank, Tralee.

On the evening of the 6th May, 1921, John O'Sullivan and myself were coming into town. When about 300 yards from the R.I.C. barracks we saw a picket of 30 Tans leave the barracks. It was gone curfew time although we were not aware of it. The picket was in charge of a Head Constable Benson. We could not take cover. The Tans approached and ordered us to halt. They then questioned and searched us. We said we were sorry but that we were out with two lady firends. They replied: "Carry on", so we got in safely to our digs 300 yards away.

This picket in the course of their patrol proceeded to Caherina, about half a mile from the barracks. As the picket approached Caherina a few men who happened to be on the road at the time saw them approach and managed to get into a house and safely away. The woman of the house was a Mrs. Nora Conway. A short time after the men had gone through her house she put her head 'out the door' to see if the picket were approaching. The Tans opened fire. Mrs. Conway dropped on the floor wounded. Subsequently two men neighbours went to the barracks in spite of curfew and asked to have the woman removed to hospital. Her husband, a railway fireman, was on duty that night in

Killarney. Benson replied to the two men: "It's a trap to ambush our men" (Tans). From his attitude he didn't care what became of the woman. However, a Sergeant Leonard volunteered to investigate the shooting. The woman was later removed to hospital but was dead when she got there.

Following this shooting I called a meeting of the Battalion Flying Column and fixed Saturday the 14th of May for the unit to attack the three principal officers of the Tans, named Head Constable Benson, District Inspector Gilchrist and District Inspector Reilly. The attack was timed for 1 o'clock. On this particular morning, which was market-day in the town, the Tans rounded up a number of the farmers visiting the market. They seized a cartload of cabbage plants and at the point of the gun marched the farmers and their carts to the R.I.C. barracks. Then they ordered the farmers into a plot of ground adjacent to the barracks and compelled them to plant the cabbage plants. The farmers had no option but to comply with the order of the Tans. In all about twenty farmers took part in this enforced tillage operation.

Eighteen of our men armed with revolvers took up positions in different parts of the town about midday. The Fianna officers were in on the attack supporting our men and reporting the movements of the Tans.

At 2.15 p.m. Benson appeared on the street. He proceeded alone towards his home for dinner. At Pembroke St. he was shot dead by our men. After the shooting our men scattered. Being market-day the town was full of farmers, including those who had earlier that day set the cabbage plants for the Tans. Immediately after the shooting of Benson there was pandemonium in the town. Farmers unyoked their horses from their carts, which they abandoned

in the open streets, and mounted their horses bareback and raced for the open country in all directions.

That Saturday evening I was arrested with others and lodged in Tralee County Jail. On the following Sunday I was charged with murder. Benson's body was removed on the Monday after. We who had been arrested were then let out for exercise in the yard of the County Jail. In a week afterwards we were released. Strange to relate there were no reprisals by the Tans after the shooting of Benson.

Benson was succeeded by Head Constable Brosnan, who came from Co. Clare. Soon after his arrival I received a message from the Co. Clare I.R.A. that he was friendly disposed towards the I.R.A. The result of Brosnan's influence was that he had a steadying control over the Tans who afterwards quietened down somewhat.

At the time of my arrest subsequent to the shooting of Benson, while in the County Jail I met one of our men, a man named George Nagle who had been arrested sometime earlier. Nagle informed me that an ex-British soldier named John Fitzgerald had pointed him (Nagle) out to the Tans as an I.R.A. man. Apart from this our scouts had him under observation and were aware that he had been helping the Tans for some time. Nagle's story was the first definite proof we had of Fitzgerald's activities. I reported the matter to the Battalion Commandant, Michael Doyle, and to the Brigade O/C. He was courtmartialled. An order came from the Brigade D/C to shoot him. I conveyed the order to the Battalion Flying Column. Fitzgerald was duly executed at Ballybeggan Racecourse on the 6th June, 1921.

All during the period there were three R.I.C. men named Murphy, Rourke and Leonard who were friendly to the I.R.A. and from time to time saved our lads beatings at the hands of the Tans or indirectly passed on to us news of an impending raid by the Tans. One particular incident which I can recall is that in the case of Murphy who informed his lady friend, a ~~Miss~~^{Mrs.} Raleigh, later Mrs. Murphy, that the Tans were about to raid the house of a Maurice Lawlor near Ardfert about six miles from Tralee. Maurice Lawlor's house was much frequented by the I.R.A. I was informed almost immediately and was aware that a number of our men were there at the time. I had the information conveyed to Lawlor by one of our scouts. When the Tans got there our men had fled.

Late in May or early in June Liam Lynch, O/C 1st Southern Division, Commandant Price of G.H.Q. and other Divisional Officers visited the area. On their instructions I called a brigade meeting, which was held at Derrymore, eight miles from Tralee.

At the meeting we learned that the Brigade O/C, Paddy Cahill, had been suspended on the grounds of inactivity. Lynch ordered Tadhg Brosnan, Battalion O/C Castlegregory area, to take over the job of Brigade O/C. Brosnan refused to do this on the grounds that he was unfit for the post and that Cahill was the most capable man in the brigade. I was asked to carry on as Brigade Adjutant as usual which I did until the Truce, as did the Brigade I/O, Tim Kennedy.

The upshot of Cahill's dismissal as Brigade O/C and Tadhg Brosnan's refusal to take over the post, was that Andy Cooney, now Dr. Cooney, of G.H.Q. who was in East

Kerry at the time, became Acting Brigade O/C. The Brigade Flying Column on the order of Liam Lynch was then disbanded. The dismissal of Cahill was the cause of a lot of unrest among the I.R.A. of the brigade area generally up to the Truce. Tadhg Brosnan and members of the Flying Column, however, subsequently carried out a successful ambush on a Tan cycle patrol at Castlemaine early in the month of June. Tadhg Brosnan had charge of the attack. In the attack a District Inspector and nine Tans were either killed or wounded.

The change in the Brigade Command upset the officers of the different battalions in the area considerably. They were of opinion that they had got a very raw deal as they had not been consulted in the matter, though as soldiers and on the insistence of Cahill they carried on their duties. Even to this day there is resentment.

I was disappointed as I was anxious that the Dingle R.I.C. Barracks would be attacked and knew that Cahill was preparing for such an attack as well as an attack on Killorglin R.I.C. Barracks.

I worked with the new Brigade O/C, Andy Cooney, until the Truce, when H. Murphy was given command of the brigade.

As I was associated with the Brigade O/C and staff and battalion officers, I wish to record that when Cahill and prominent officers and men could not remain in Tralee and be effective they went to stay at farmhouses in the vicinity for a while. Afterwards the O/C, Paddy Cahill, had a headquarters established in Keel, which for secrecy was named "The Hut". "The Hut" was a large wooden structure built at the back of a massive rock in the

mountainside. It was well camouflaged and safe from enemy surprise. It commanded a view of Dingle Peninsula and Castlemaine Bay, while to the back it afforded a way of retreat, if necessary, through the wooded heights of Derrymore. The officers of Castlegregory, Dingle, Killorglin and Tralee Battalions were constantly there and had complete control of the western district except for the two outposts of Dingle and Killorglin, of which the enemy garrison in these towns were carefully shadowed with a view to a coming attack.

On the order of Liam Lynch "The Hut" was abandoned and the men returned to their battalion areas. The Tralee men, however, remained in the Castlegregory area which had no enemy quarters and was in proximity to Tralee town.

We were very keen on the proposed attacks I have stated. I was in touch with the officers of the brigade as we were expecting a big comb-out by the enemy of the Dingle district at the time. The enemy did not hear of the change in command of the brigade and it was not known to the rank and file of the I.R.A. either until the Truce. Fearing any thoughtless member would talk, all officers of the brigade and battalion staffs kept the news of Cahill's removal as Brigade O/C secret until the Truce on the 11th July, 1921.

There was no meeting of the I.R.B. held until after the Truce.

This concludes my notes on the period covered as well as I can remember. As I was Brigade Adjutant and as such was in close co-operation with the Brigade I/O,

Tim Kennedy, and had access to all documents received or transmitted to G.H.Q. during the six months prior to the Truce, the facts I have related are absolutely true in every detail.

Signed:

Patrick Garvey

Date:

15th September 1954

(Patrick Garvey)

15th September 1954.

Witness:

John J. Daly

(John J. Daly)

