

ORIGINAL

W.S. 1,021

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BURO STAIRÉ MILEATA 1913-21
No. W.S. 1021

ROINN  COSANTA.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS.

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 1,021

Witness

Amos Reidy,
Rathina,
Newcastlewest,
Co. Limerick.

Identity.

Member of Fianna Eireann,
Newcastlewest, 1917 - ;

Section Leader Irish Volunteers, Galbally, Co. Limerick,
1917 - .

Subject.

West Limerick Irish Volunteers,
1917-1921.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil

File No. S. 2330

Form B.S.M. 2

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STATEMENT OF AMOS REIDY,

Rathina, Newcastlewest, Co. Limerick.

I was born on the 23rd December, 1903. I was sent to the local national school until the year 1917. I was then 13½ years of age. I was then apprenticed to the carpentry trade with my father, who was then working at Galbally in East Limerick for a Mr. Phelan who was a hardware and drapery merchant.

A sluagh of Fianna Éireann had been formed in Newcastlewest in about the year 1914. I did not become a member at first or until early in the year 1917. I remained a member of the unit until about August of that year.

In this year I joined the Volunteers in Galbally. A company had been in existence there for some time previously. A man named William Quirke of Mooreabbey, Galbally, was Battalion Commandant then, and a man named Jimmy Scanlon was the Company Captain. Other officers at this time were Jack Lynch, John Joe Brien and Ned O'Brien. My Section Commander was named Ned Foley, who was later executed in connection with the rescue of Seán Hogan at Knocklong. The strength of the company at the time was about 25 men. We drilled, had route marches and practical arms drill with wooden rifles all that year.

Early in the year 1918 during the conscription scare the membership of the Galbally Company increased to over 100 men. After the scare was over at least 75% of the new men left and had nothing more to do with the Volunteers.

We continued drilling and parading all that year.

In September of this year an aeriocht was to have been held in Mitchelstown, Co. Cork, which is about ten or eleven miles from Galbally. The authorities at the time issued a proclamation prohibiting the holding of the aeriocht in the town or surrounding district. It was being held on the anniversary of a day in Land League history when the famous slogan "don't hesitate to shoot" was the British order of the day.

The Scottish Borderers were stationed at Kilowrth Camp close by. They arrived in Mitchelstown that day in full war equipment - armoured cars, ambulances, and machine guns mounted on lorries. They searched the people in the area. I, with other members of the Galbally Company, acted as dispatch rider throughout the county taking the news that the aeriocht was to be held at Anglesboro, about six miles from Mitchelstown. That morning I cycled as far as a place called Barna at the foot of the Galtee Mountains, and other places, notifying the Volunteers in the surrounding areas of the change of venue.

The Volunteers of the Galtee Brigade assembled in a field a couple of miles outside Galbally and then marched in a body to Anglesboro. When we got there a platform had been erected, from which flags were flying. Speakers on the platform included Larry Ginnell and Dr. Dick Hayes. A big contingent of Cork Volunteers from the Mitchelstown area attended the aeriocht that day. The aeriocht passed off peacefully, and when it was over we marched back to Galbally.

In December of 1918 the general election took place. I assisted in the election campaign by putting up posters and taking people into the polling booths. The Sinn Féin candidate was Dr. Dick Hayes and the Nationalist candidate was Thomas Lundon. The Sinn Féin candidate was elected. I was stationed at a booth at Ballylanders.

On the day after the elections my father and I lost our jobs with Phelans because we had taken the day off to vote and assist the Sinn Féin candidate. The Phelans were anti Sinn Féin. After this the Phelans were boycotted by the local people over our dismissal.

We were a couple of days out of work when a man named Ned O'Brien got my father and I into Frazers who were bakers and undertakers in Galbally. We were there for a couple of weeks when we came home for Christmas to Newcastlewest and remained there.

In January 1919 I reported to Con O'Brien, the then Company Captain in Newcastlewest, and asked to be taken into the local company. He told me I would have to get a transfer from Galbally. I wrote to William Quirke, Galbally, who sent me the necessary transfer. I was then accepted in the Newcastlewest Company. Some time later, on the anniversary of Easter Week 1916, we marched to Glenquinn Castle, about six miles away, for a commemoration ceremony there. It was at Glenquinn Castle that the local Volunteers assembled in Easter Week of 1916 awaiting instructions in connection with the rising. We drilled and paraded all that year. During the year I had been appointed a collector for the Dáil Éireann loan. I, with the assistance of other men of the company, painted slogans on the walls and hoardings

of the town asking the people to purchase Dáil Éireann bonds. A short time after my appointment as collector for the Dáil Éireann loan I was appointed Section Leader of the company.

At the latter end of the year I took part in the collection of all shotguns in the area. The Company Captain about this time received instructions from the Battalion O/C, Jim Liston, to trench and cut all roads in the area. I participated in this trenching and blocking of the roads.

Early in the year 1920 the R.I.C. became very active. We could not appear in public on parades as before, but we continued to meet secretly for drills and lectures on the use of arms. The company strength at the time was 35 men.

It was after the attack by the I.R.A. on Kilmallock R.I.C. barracks on the 28th May, 1920, that the military first came to Newcastlewest. The military belonged to the Warwick Regiment and occupied the castle in the town. This castle was the property of the Earl of Devon and was being looked after by an agent named Captain Richard Curlin. It is after this castle that Newcastlewest is named.

During the months of April and May about fifteen of our men were arrested in the locality and sent to Limerick Jail. They were later charged at Adare with unlawful assembly. It appears that the charge was later withdrawn and they were all released.

The Sinn Féin Courts had been set up by this time in Newcastlewest. Fr. Michael Hayes was the judge.

I assisted in carrying out the court's findings. The court was instrumental in setting up a vigilance committee who appointed vigilance police. I, with other Volunteers, collected subscriptions in the town for the purpose of paying the vigilance police.

At this time the local British ex-servicemen became very hostile to the supporters of Sinn Féin and to the I.R.A. in particular. They were in the majority and outnumbered the I.R.A. We had to stay at night in the homes of supporters of Sinn Féin to protect them from being molested by these ex British army toughs. The R.I.C. gave the ex-servicemen full support. Two local girls who associated with the military about this time had their hair cut by the I.R.A.

A few nights before the I.R.A. attack on Kilmallock R.I.C. Barracks I, with other men of the company, removed a number of empty sand-bags from the house of Volunteer Jim Kelly at South Quay to the residence of Fr. Hayes, C.C. They were intended for an attack on Newcastlewest R.I.C. Barracks which was under consideration by the Brigade Staff.

On the night of the Kilmallock attack I, with Ned Cregan, Dungehan, Newcastlewest, and Joe Mahony of the town, with other members of the company, was on scout duty at a crossroads between Cork and Kilmallock. We were acting as scouts for the I.R.A. who were passing through the area for the attack. We were armed with revolvers and shotguns. I knew nothing of the impending attack, but next day we all knew of it.

In this same month one of the soldiers of the Warwick Regiment who was under the influence of drink,

and an ex-soldier from the town, took a walk out the road towards Abbeyfeale. The soldier was armed with a Long Webley. I, with Ned Cregan and Owen McAuliffe followed him. We were under the impression he was going to attack somebody. We had no arms. The two men looked behind them and saw us. The soldier drew his revolver and fired two shots at us which missed. Just then the ex-soldier gripped the soldier's arm and would not let him fire again. We immediately closed with him. I succeeded in taking the revolver off him, after which we let him return to the barracks. I held on to this revolver up to the Truce.

That night the R.I.C. and military raided my house but I was not at home at the time. A couple of days afterwards I was passing down Bridge St. when I met the Battalion Commandant. He said to me: "You see that bike across the road; that is Constable bike. Take it away and dump it". This I did. The R.I.C. called to my house again that night but again I was not at home. A short time afterwards the first Tans arrived in Newcastlewest. It was about the month of June or early July.

In about the month of July the R.I.C. barracks at Ardagh, three miles away, was evacuated. The Battalion O/C, Liston, had received an order from the Brigade O/C to burn it down. He took about fifteen men, including myself, from this company to carry out the order. As well as the Ardagh Company, men from other companies were present for the job. As we could not set fire to it for fear of burning down adjoining houses, we had to demolish it with crowbars.

In this month an R.I.C. man named Matterson was being driven in a motor car to Limerick City by a man named Thomas Conlon. It was in the early hours of the morning. Conlon stopped the car at a couple of places, pretending that there was something the matter with the engine. He had just lifted the bonnet the second time when four men of the local company appeared. Matterson, it appears, drew his revolver, but before he could open fire he was shot dead. The four men were Jim Liston, Owen McAuliffe, Tim Collins and Con Cregan. Subsequently there was some trouble over the shooting of this R.I.C. man. I heard later that he was actually an Intelligence Officer for the I.R.A. The Brigade O/C took a very serious view of the shooting and issued instructions that no operations be carried out in future without the sanction of the Brigade Staff.

After the shooting my house was again raided. I knew nothing of the shooting at the time. That night the local library and creamery were burned down, several houses were broken into, including the local newspaper office - "The Weekly Observer" - and wrecked by the Tans. A man named Seán Broder, an I.R.A. man, was editor of the "Observer". Next day I had to leave my job and go on the run.

Shortly after going on the run I was instructed by the Brigade O/C, Seán Finn, to visit each company area and administer the oath of allegiance to every I.R.A. man in the area. About this time I took part with other I.R.A. men in raids on enemy houses for shotguns, ammunition or arms of any kind. I also took part in the trenching and blocking of roads in the area.

By the end of August 1920 a very large number of men in the brigade area were on the run when the Brigade O/C formed an active service unit. In all 15 men were taken into the unit, which later became known as the Flying Column. I became one of the column and was issued with a carbine rifle and a point 32 automatic. The rifle was one of a number of rifles captured at Ballylanders on the 27th April, 1920, by the I.R.A. in the attack on the R.I.C. barracks there. The Brigade O/C, Seán Finn, took charge of the column.

One of the first actions of the column after its formation was an attack on a Tan patrol in Abbeyfeale on the 18th September, 1920. The patrol usually numbered ten or twelve men, who left the R.I.C. barracks at about 8 p.m. each night and patrolled up and down the street from the barracks to the Church of Ireland, about a mile to the south of the town. Our scouts had informed us of this.

The full column arrived in the town on the night of the 18th September and took up positions on either side of the Main St. I was near the church and was armed with the carbine.

As the patrol were approaching the ambush position proper a couple of our men located behind a hedge adjoining one of the houses in the street, made a noise which attracted the attention of one of the Tans, who went over to investigate. As he looked across the hedge he saw the two armed men. Our two men could do nothing but open fire at once. The Tan fell dead. The remainder of the Tans opened fire all round, to which our men in the immediate vicinity replied. The

action had lasted about ten minutes when our men withdrew.

During the months of October, November and December there was very little doing, although the strength of the column by the end of the year had increased to about 26 men. On Christmas Eve of this year the Tans once again raided my house, but this time they burned it down.

Early in the year 1921 a man named Kissane, who was known locally then as Captain Hand, arrived from G.H.Q. in Dublin. He came for the purpose of promoting more activities in the area so as to draw some of the pressure by the enemy off the Cork Brigade. Due to lack of arms and the terrain of West Limerick he did not succeed in making any great impression in the fighting in the area at the time.

On the 17th February, 1921, the Column O/C, Seán Finn, decided to hold up a train from Foynes to Limerick at a place called Borrigone, halfway between Askeaton and Foynes. He had previously received information that a number of R.I.C. were travelling to Limerick on the train to give evidence in a court case to be held at Limerick. It had been arranged that one member of the Foynes Company would travel in the last carriage of this train and given an arranged signal as to the number of Tans and R.I.C. on the train. The signal was to be one wave of a white handkerchief for each Tan or R.I.C. on the train.

One man of the column named Con Boyle was detailed to take up a position on the railway track

with a red flag attached to a stick for the purpose of halting the train. The remainder of the column took up positions behind a low bank on one side of the railway and on a nearby bridge. On the opposite side to which the column had taken up positions was a high bank, which was unsuitable for our purpose as it was too high.

As the train approached we saw the Foynes Volunteer wave the white handkerchief about twenty times, indicating that there were at least twenty of the enemy on the train. In the meantime Con Boyle waved the red flag which brought the train to a halt opposite our positions.

As soon as the train came to a standstill the enemy inside, numbering at least twenty, opened fire on our positions. We returned the fire. Just then a Tan jumped out of the train on the higher side, crawled under the train towards the engine and succeeded in reaching the driver's cabin. He ordered the driver, at the point of a revolver, to proceed with the train. The action had lasted ten minutes. We subsequently heard that one Tan was wounded in the engagement. I was armed with the carbine; the other members of the column had either rifles or revolvers.

In the month of March the East Limerick Column, under Donnchadh O'Hannigan, arrived in West Limerick area, after which the two columns were amalgamated. On the 30th March, 1921, the column happened to be billeted over a wide area in the Ballyhahill district. On this particular day two lorry loads of Tans and military were seen approaching from the Newcastlewest direction by two men of the column who were on scout duty. As the scouts ran to warn the main body, principally the

column leaders Finn and Hannigan, located some way back off the road, they were fired on by the enemy.

It appears that when Finn, Hannigan, Jim Colbert, a man named Quane and another man named Jimmy Finn who was from Ballylanders, heard the shooting, they left the house in which they were billeted with the purpose of escaping. The enemy opened fire on the five men. Seán Finn was shot dead. Quane was wounded. By this time the two lorries had come to a halt. Jimmy Finn, when Seán Finn fell, ran back and collected Seán's rifle and succeeded in making good his escape under heavy fire. As Jimmy picked up the rifle Seán said to him: "Carry on lads, I am finished". Subsequently the enemy went into the field and collected Seán's body, put it in one of the lorries and returned the way they had come. Quane, who had a bullet wound through the mouth, and the others managed to escape. On the occasion I was billeted at the upper end of Ballyhahill village which was not on the direct route of the lorries.

After the shooting the column assembled at an old fort, where we waited till dark for instructions from Hannigan. He decided that night to leave Ballyhahill immediately and took the column to Athea area. We had not long left Ballyhahill area when there was a widespread search of the district by military and Tans from Listowel and other barracks in the area.

The following morning while we were located in the Athea parish we received information that a military lorry was broken down in the neighbourhood of Corrigkerry, about four miles away. I, with eleven other men of the column, was detailed to go there and burn it. We had

to travel through a bog to get to the lorry. As we were within a couple of hundred yards of the broken down lorry we heard the noise of other lorries approaching. We took cover in the heather and then saw the broken down lorry being towed away by the military.

We left Athea district that night for Newbridge, near Rathkeale, where Hannigan called the column together and spoke to the men. He said that West Limerick was not an area in which fighting against the enemy was possible owing to the flat nature of the country and the fact that the area was so well garrisoned. He then informed the men that he was going back to East Limerick and appealed for Volunteers of the West Limerick Column to come with him. Seventeen men, including myself, volunteered to go with him. Michael Colbert was put in charge of the West Limerick men.

The seventeen men of the West Limerick Column who volunteered for service in East Limerick were as follows:

Michael Colbert, Athea, 2nd Battalion	
Jim Colbert, Athea	do.
Jim Guiney, Abbeyfeale,	do.
Larry Hartnett, Abbeyfeale	do.
Jimmy Collins, Abbeyfeale	do.
Denis Collins, Abbeyfeale	do.
Patrick J. O'Neill, Abbeyfeale,	do.
Amos Reidy, Newcastlewest, 1st Battalion	
Owen McAuliffe, Newcastlewest	do.
Jim Liston, Knockaderry,	
Newcastlewest	do.
Jack Cosgrave of Askeaton	do.
Paddy Naughton of Limerick City,	4th Battalion
Brian O'Grady, Tarbert, of	
Kerry 1 Brigade	do.
Bill Fitzgerald, Askeaton	do.
Mick Murphy, Askeaton	do.
Jack Nash (known as Lynch)Rathkeale	do.
Dan Neville, Croah	do.

After the death of Seán Finn, Garrett McAuliffe became Brigade O/C, Jim Colbert Vice O/C and Ned Cregan

Brigade Q/M.

Having got the seventeen Volunteers from West Limerick the combined column under Hannigan set out for Castletown on the border of East Limerick Brigade area. When we got there Hannigan collected all revolvers in the possession of the West Limerick men and returned them to the Brigade O/C West Limerick, saying that officers only should carry side arms.

From Castletown, at about the end of April, the column went to the Galtee Mountains, where we were joined by the Mid Limerick Column. The three columns between them now numbered 80 men approximately.

Shortly after our arrival in the Galtee area the leaders of the column decided to ambush a cycle patrol, usually about 40 strong, of the Green Howards. This patrol were in the habit of patrolling the road between Galbally and Mitchelstown. The place chosen for the attack was called Killbinny. Hannigan was in charge. He carried two whistles; a single blast on one meant to open fire, alternative blasts on each meant that we should retreat.

We took up positions in extended formation on each side of the road at the place chosen. We lay in wait there for several days. Our luck was out. The patrol never appeared during our long wait. Eventually the attack was called off.

On Sunday morning the 1st May, 1921, we were billeted in the Shraharla area of East Limerick. About four or five members of the column had gone to Mass that Sunday morning and were returning to their

billets in a group when several lorry loads of military and Tans appeared. Seeing our men the enemy opened fire on them. The firing, however, ceased after a few minutes. When the column heard the firing they made for the area of fire - this being one of Hannigan's orders - which was that when we heard firing we were to make for it.

The column advanced towards the area of fire and opened fire on the attacking party, to which the military and Tans replied. It was then a case of every man for himself. The scrap was in progress for about half an hour when reinforcements of military arrived from Mitchelstown, which was only six or seven miles away. The reinforcements were followed by an aeroplane. We withdrew as best we could, while the aeroplane kept spotting us all the time. Taking cover now and again the main body of the column succeeded in making good its escape.

When the column reassembled some short time later we discovered, as well as I can remember, that five of our men were missing. They were not of the West Limerick Column. I think they were East Limerick men. To the best of my knowledge, three men had been killed and two had been taken prisoners. I cannot remember names. The two prisoners were executed the following morning in Cork Jail.

After the scrap we proceeded to the Knocklong district where we were billeted all round the area that night. On the following morning I, with three other members of the column, was in bed in a farmhouse in the townland of Lackelly when the woman of the house called to us that there was shooting down the road leading to

the house. We dressed immediately and went out. We heard firing about a quarter of a mile away and went towards it. On our way we met a scout, who informed us that five or six of our men had been killed down the road. In my group by this time there were 17 men. We made for a field near the main Cork-Dublin railway and took cover in some long rushes and tall grass with our backs to the railway line. A few minutes later we saw military crossing a gate immediately to our front. Michael Colbert, who had taken charge of our group, said: "Hold your fire, they have a hostage with them". We next saw a number of our own men coming into the same field in which we were located. The next thing we saw was Hannigan approaching through an opening in a fence to our left which ran approximately at right angles to the railway line. The opening itself was a few yards from the railway fence. Hannigan, who had no boots on, called to the nearest man to him and said that our section was to go into the field from which he had come.

When our section got through into this field fire was opened on us by a section of the military located in a double ditch opposite. We made for the cover of the railway fence in this field on our bellies. I had almost succeeded in reaching cover when the buckle of my right legging was shot off; at the same time I received a slight flesh wound.

Having reached the cover of the railway fence or ditch our section opened fire on the double ditch opposite, where the military were located and from where they had been firing on our section. A short time afterwards a hostage carrying a white flag appeared to the left of the double ditch. We ignored the flag and continued to fire. The hostage disappeared immediately

Firing was in progress for over an hour when we discovered that the military had ceased fire and had withdrawn. It appears that another section of our men had got behind the military occupying the double ditch and opened fire on them from the rear, which caused them to retreat to a farmhouse about 400 yards away.

Our section advanced to the double ditch evacuated by the enemy. When we got there we discovered the bodies of four of our men who had been killed and 40 cycles which had been abandoned by the enemy.

The Tans in the double ditch were guarding the cycles and the dead men. The dead men were four of our men who had got up early that morning and were talking to a girl on the road when they were surprised and shot dead before they could open fire. The shooting of these four men was apparently the shooting which gave the alarm.

We had ceased fire for some time when we saw an officer with field glasses appear outside the farmhouse holding the woman of the house in front of him as a screen. He scanned the countryside with the glasses. We were warned not to open fire in case the woman would be shot. He returned to the house with the woman and the military inside opened fire on one or other of the sections of our men located in the vicinity. Having repeated this operation about five times the officer eventually appeared for the sixth time, glasses in hand, but without the woman this time. It was his last appearance, for Jack Cosgrave of the West Limerick Column shot him dead. During the exchange

of fire around the farmhouse several cows were shot dead. The scrap had started at 12 noon and it was now 8 or 9 o'clock in the evening and was getting dusk. The enemy about this time decided to withdraw and succeeded in doing so, taking their dead and wounded with them and leaving behind the 40 cycles and our four dead comrades.

The story I have related refers only to the section to which I became attached when the fire was first heard in the morning. I cannot relate the happenings to the other sections or how they fared in the fighting which took place that day. I do know, however, that during the course of the encounter reinforcements of military and Tans were rushed from Tipperary town and other places.

We ourselves were certainly glad of the dusk that evening. A short time after the enemy retreat a scout arrived with a message from Hannigan to proceed to a place known locally as the Cross of the Tree and to take the four bodies and 40 cycles with us. The O/C of our section sent a message to Hannigan asking for Volunteers to carry the bikes as there were not enough men in our section for the job. Hannigan sent along a number of men of the column.

Each body was placed across two rifles and carried by four men, followed by others with the bikes, to the Cross of the Tree. This place is a crossroads with a tree in the middle. It leads to Knocklong and Galbally and to Ballylanders and Kilfinane.

When we arrived at the crossroads we laid the

bodies on the side of the road and stacked the bikes close by. Hannigan, still in his bare feet, with the rest of the East and Mid Limerick Columns was there when we arrived.

Near the crossroads on the righthand side of the road as one faces Knocklong, was a two storey farmhouse. The farmer at this house, with the help of May Maloney who had taken part in the engagement during the day, supplied us with tea and bread and butter.

When we had taken our tea Hannigan lined up the entire column in two ranks. He then called on No. 1 man of each rank to 'fall out' and take over a pony and trap each, into which the bodies of the four men had been placed on the seats. The two men took over, standing in the centre of the traps. Hannigan then asked for 40 cyclists to escort the two traps. The 40 men stepped out, each man taking over one of the bikes.

The funeral of the four men started to Loughgur via the main road to Knocklong and Elton village. I was not one of the escort although I volunteered for the job.

I, with the remainder of the column, followed on foot and met the funeral party in Elton village where we halted for a short time. A brother of Tom Howard - one of the men killed - met the funeral in the village. He started to cry when he saw his brother's dead body.

From Elton village the bodies were taken to the house of a man named Ryan in the townland of Loughgur.

The combined columns took part in the funeral, after which we were billeted in the area for the night. It was about 1 a.m. when we got to Loughgur.

Next day the four bodies were washed and wrapped in white sheets which were sewn. At dusk that evening the combined columns were mobilised and marched to Ryan's house which was up a boreen. The four bodies were then carried out on shutters, the funeral proceeding up the boreen about 100 yards beyond Ryan's house and into a garden, where an open grave had already been dug. The bodies, to which numbers had been tagged, were then placed in the open grave. A priest was present who recited the De Profundus and a decade of the Rosary. The grave was then covered by local Volunteers. The burial took place in the dead of night. We could not fire the usual volley over the grave.

When the grave was closed Hannigan delivered an oration, in which he exhorted the men to avenge our dead. I only knew one of the dead men personally, and he was Tom Howard of East Limerick. The enemy during the scrap appeared to have used explosive bullets which may account for the fact that the head of one of the victims cracked open as it was being placed on the pair of rifles.

After the funeral that night we proceeded to Drumkeen, near New Pallas, where we were billeted for the night. Early next morning there was a surprise round-up in the area by Tans and military. I, with three other men, happened to be billeted in the house of a deaf man. We were dead tired and slept all the next day right through the round-up. The remainder of

the column had been warned of the approach of the enemy and had made good their escape to a wood some distance away.

In the evening I got up and noticed the place was very quiet. I called to a man working in the fields but he ran away when he saw me. I followed him and after some time I learned from him of the round-up. He told me and the other three men who had joined me, that the military had surrounded the house where we were sleeping that morning. We took him back to the house and showed him where we had slept. We asked him where the column had gone to, but he was reluctant to tell. After some time, however, he very reluctantly took us to the wood where the column was located, which was about half a mile away.

That night after a speech by Hannigan to the effect that the combined columns were too large, the Mid Limerick Column left.

The East and West Limerick Columns then proceeded to the townland of Howardstown in the parish of Bruree, I think. We billeted there for the night, a Protestant named Hunt putting up sixteen of our men. The following evening we went to Granagh in the West Limerick Brigade area, where we billeted for that night.

That night in Granagh the local company had a prisoner. I think his name was Ryan. He had been tried as a spy and had been sentenced to death. Four men of the company with the prisoner were coming down a boreen when they were met by a body of military who were rounding-up the area the same night. The

military called on the five men to halt. One of the escort party opened fire with a revolver and the party then scattered. The military returned the fire. One of the escort, a Volunteer named O'Shea, was shot dead. The other three succeeded in holding on to their prisoner and escaped. We had only been in our billets a short time when we heard of this and were ordered out of the district at once.

The two columns then separated. The West Limerick Column proceeded to Castletown district, while the East Limerick Column made for Tankardstown towards the Galtee Mountains.

When our column got to Castletown we were instructed to proceed to the Athea area, where we were met by the Brigade Staff. They disbanded the column and sent each man back to his own battalion area.

I, with three others, Owen McAuliffe, Jim Liston and Jack Cosgrave, went back to the 1st Battalion area to which we belonged. A dug-out had been prepared for us at Carrigkerry bog. We stayed for a week at the dug-out, where we were looked after by a family named Goulding and the local Volunteers.

A short time after this an instructor from North Cork arrived in the area and gave lectures on the manufacture of home-made bombs and land mines. I, with a couple of men from each company in the battalion area, attended these lectures, and around the same time took part in intensive road trenching, tree felling on public roads and the blowing up of bridges.

From Carrigkerry district McAuliffe, Liston, Cosgrave and myself went to Strand district where we

were joined by three others - Ned and Con Cregan and another man in a dug-out there.

In the Strand district we received information from the Newcastlewest Company that a badly wanted Tan was in a certain locality every evening with a young lady. Owen McAuliffe and a local man named Collins went into Newcastlewest one evening to shoot him but were unsuccessful in locating him. A short time later two of our men again went into Newcastlewest to execute a spy who had been sentenced to death. They only succeeded in wounding him. I do not remember his name.

As well as the Castle, four other buildings, including the Courthouse, were occupied by either Tans or military in the town about this time. In all the enemy numbered over 1,000 men.

In the first week of July we received word that the Courthouse, which was occupied by the Tans, had been temporarily evacuated. The Brigade Staff decided to burn it down.

I, with the local company, took part in this job. In the early morning we took off our boots, crept up and cut the barbed wire surrounding the Courthouse and removed a number of sandbags protecting the windows. Having broken the windows we threw in petrol, tar and paraffin oil. One man used a stirrup pump to pump in a mixture of petrol and paraffin. We then threw in a number of lighted rags, but somehow the place did not take fire. All this time the column were on guard armed with rifles. As we were about to retreat

a local Volunteer named Joseph Ambrose soaked his handkerchief in petrol, wrapped it round a stone, set it alight and threw it into one of the windows. The building went up with a bang and was totally destroyed.

I, with my six companions, went back to the Strand dug-out. A night or two later we were ordered by the O/C, Jim Liston, to proceed to Tournafulla, where we met the other members of the West Limerick Column and became a unit once again. The North Cork Column were there the same night. The two columns were then amalgamated, Seán Brislane of North Cork being put in charge of the joint columns.

It was then decided to ambush a military convoy of four lorries which usually travelled from Newcastlewest via Abbeyfeale to Listowel. The position chosen for the attack was between Barna and Templeglantine, about six miles from Newcastlewest.

We took up positions in extended formation on one side which was higher than the road, the opposite being more or less on a level with the road. We were all armed with rifles, shotguns or revolvers. The North Cork Column had a machine gun. Brislane was in charge. Michael Colbert was 2nd in command. The road had been mined with box mines to which electric wires attached to detonators were connected. I do not know who took charge of the battery, but he was a North Cork man.

We lay in wait for four days. Early one morning - it was the 10th July, 1921 - the four lorries passed towards Listowel. We let them go with the

intention of attacking them on their way back that evening, but they never returned that day.

On the 11th July, 1921, at 12.15 p.m. as the mines were being removed the convoy arrived and pulled up. The officer in charge and his men had a look around. The officer walked over to Brislane, shook hands and after a word or two drove off again.

I went to a training camp during the Truce and later joined the National Army for a period of eighteen months and retired with the rank of Lieutenant.

Signed: Amos Riedy
(Amos Riedy)

Date: 12 October 1954.
12 October 1954.

Witness: John J. Daly
(John J. Daly)

