

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BUREO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21
NO. W.S. 1036

ROINN**COSANTA.**

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS.**DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 1,036.....****Witness**

John Moloney,
26 Glenanaar Row,
Mallow,
Co. Cork.

Identity.

Member of Irish Volunteers, Mallow, 1914 - ;
Lieut. same Company later.

Subject.

National activities, Mallow, Co. Cork,
1914-1923.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.**Nil**

File No. S.2329.....

Form B.S.M. 2

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
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No. W.S. 1036

STATEMENT BY JOHN MOLONEY,

26 Glenanaar Road, Mallow, County Cork.

I was born in Mallow on the 2nd November, 1896.

My parents were supporters of William O'Brien' party, but I have no recollection of having had any connection with any political party during my early days.

I joined the Volunteers early in 1914. The officers at the time were :-

Captain Dan Hegarty,

1st Lieut. Chris Connell,

2nd Lieut. Bryan Kelly.

The strength of the Company at the time was about 80/90. At this time there was also a committee in charge but I do not remember any of their names.

The Volunteers when I joined were being drilled by John Levers - a British Army reservist. He continued to carry on the drilling until he was called up at the outbreak of the first World War in August, 1914. The only drill was foot-drill but towards the end of the summer in 1914 we had wooden rifles to practice arms drill.

The strength of the Company increased as the year 1914 advanced until nearing the autumn it was nearly 200. At this stage it was divided into two Companies - one in Ballydahan^{ESN} area mainly composed of O'Brienite supporters and the other in the town area composed of Redmondites. I was a member of the O'Brienite section and the Captain was Bob Nagle.

When John Redmond appealed for recruits for the British Army the Volunteers in Mallow, as elsewhere, broke up into two bodies - Irish Volunteers who were opposed to Redmond's recruiting campaign and the Irish National Volunteers who followed the Redmond policy. I remained with the Irish Volunteers while the other body gradually faded out. However, a good many of the members of the Irish National Volunteers followed their leaders' advice and joined the British Army to fight as alleged for the freedom of small nations.

The Irish Volunteer Company in Mallow at this time had a membership of between 30 and 40, and this strength continued to Easter Week 1916. On Easter Sunday, 1916, the Company to the number of about 40 marched to Beeing Cross roads where a parade of the Volunteers in the district was being held. We were accompanied by some Volunteers from Castletownroche numbering about ten. The parade of the combined Companies carried out some drill in the fields at Beeing Cross and before dismissal were addressed by the Brigade O.C., Tomás McCurtain.

As far as I can recollect no activities took place in the area during Easter Week but some days later (early in May) Dan Hegarty, O.C. and Chris O'Connell (1st Lieutenant) were arrested. They were later interned in Frongoch.

Following Easter Week the Volunteers continued to carry on. We met in small parties and carried out parades in the fields surrounding the town. This was still the position in the summer of 1917 when the prisoners were released. New recruits were taken on round this time but before being invited to join they were usually vetted by the officers. Towards the end of 1917 the Company strength was in the neighbourhood of 60. The officers were :- Captain Owen Harold, 1st Lieutenant Jack Cunningham and 2nd Lieutenant Dan Looney.

The political wing of the National Movement (Sinn Féin) was at this time occupying a lot of the attention of the Volunteers. This body was mainly composed of the Volunteers and members of their families. The work of organising Sinn Féin went on continuously during the years 1917 and 1918, and culminated in the overwhelming success of Sinn Féin in the General Election in December 1918. There was, however, no activity in the Mallow area in connection with the General Election as David Kent - one of the famous Kent brothers of Bawnard House, Fermoy - was returned unopposed. A few members of the Mallow Company went to Waterford City to carry out protection duty but I did not go.

During 1918 there was a big influx of new recruits to the Volunteers due to the threat of the imposition of Conscription by the British. The strength of the Company, at this time, must have reached 300 or so, but when the Conscription scare passed the majority of the newcomers faded out. There was no change in the officers of the Company at this time. About this time all shotguns in the area were collected as well as any ammunition held for same. I think we also collected a few .22 rifles. All raids for guns, as far as I can recollect, were carried out without opposition - the guns being surrendered voluntarily.

The success of Sinn Féin in the General Election helped to make our activities as Volunteers more popular and there was an improvement in the outlook of the general public with the result that the membership increased slightly. The usual drills and parades continued to be held and activities in general were carried out in the open. About this time the Company O.C., Owen Harold, was arrested for "illegal drilling" and sentenced to a term of imprisonment in Cork gaol. He was released sometime in June or July, 1919.

It was early in January, 1919 that Cork Brigade, which embraced the whole of the County Cork, was divided into three Brigades - Cork I. in the city and surrounding area; Cork II. covering North Cork and Cork III. in West Cork. Mallow Battalion, which at this time comprised the following Companies - Mallow, Mourne Abbey, Analy^{ee}ntha, Ahadillane, Dromahane, Two-pot-house, Lombardstown, Ballyclough, Burnfoot - became a unit of Cork II. Brigade. The officers of the Battalion were, I think :-

O/C. Liam Jones,	Mourne Abbey,
Vice O.C. Owen Harold,	Mallow,
Adjutant Paddy McCarthy,	Mourne Abbey,
Quartermaster. Jeremiah Buckley,	Mourne Abbey.

There were seven Battalions in the new Brigade, viz. Mallow, Millstreet, Newmarket, Kanturk, Charleville, Fermoy and Castletownroche. The officers of Cork II. Brigade were :-

O/C. Liam Lynch,	Fermoy,
Vice O.C. Dan Hegarty,	Mallow,
Adjutant. Tom Barry,	Glanworth,
Quartermaster George Power,	Fermoy.

There was nothing unusual in Mallow area about this time. The usual drills, parades and training were carried on and everything proceeded as usual until early in September, 1919, when a number of members of the Company were engaged in an attack on a party of British military going to the Wesleyan Church in Fermoy on 7th September, 1919. The Mallow men who took part in this engagement were :- Dan Hegarty (Brigade Vice O.C.), Owen Harold (Company O/C), Bryan ^{KELLY} (2nd Lieut.), Ned Waters (1st. Lieut.) and Leo O'Callaghan (driver of the car). Following this raid a number of arrests took place in the area including Dan Hegarty and

Leo O'Callaghan. The latter was released about June, 1920 while Dan Hegarty was detained until 1922, when he was released following the ratification of the Treaty.

When the general order for the destruction of evacuated R.I.C. barracks and Income Tax Office papers was received in April, 1920, I took part with Tadg Byrne (1st. Lieutenant) and several other members of the Company in the destruction of Blackrock R.I.C. barracks as well as in a raid on the Office of the Income Tax collector at Mallow where we destroyed all available records.

In June, 1920 the railway men at Mallow were refusing to drive trains on which British troops or stores were being carried. The Stationmaster at Mallow - Slattery was his name I think - usually made it his business on such occasions to select a married man to drive although there were single men on the staff. The general feeling amongst both the public and the I.R.A. was that this was being done in order to inflict the maximum amount of hardship on the railway men concerned so it was decided to give the Stationmaster a bit of a shock. With Jackie Bolster I was detailed by the Company O.C. (Jack Cunningham) to kidnap him and hand him over to the O.C. We waited in the vicinity of the railway station one night towards the end of June, 1920 and when the stationmaster reached us on his way home from his club we held him up. We took him to the western slope of the railway embankment where he was handed over to the Company O.C. by whom he was taken away under escort to the Lombardstown area where, I believe, General Lucas was also a prisoner at the time.

Early in Juhe, 1920, with several other members of the Mallow Company including Tadg. Byrne, Jack Cunningham, Jackie Bolster, Dick Willis, Leo O'Callaghan, Joe Morgan, Jeremiah Daly and Pat Sullivan, I took part in a raid on the railway station at Mallow

where we seized two wagon loads of petrol which was awaiting transfer to Tralee. It was consigned to the British Forces at Tralee and was made up in two gallon tins. The petrol was removed to a disused pump-house belonging to Mallow Creamery on the banks of the Blackwater. The information regarding these enemy stores was conveyed to Jack Cunningham (O.C.) by Jack Barrett who was employed on the railway. Other reliable contacts on the railway at Mallow at this time were John Murphy and Tom McAuliffe.

The normal training took place during the summer of 1920 but it was possible, at this stage, to have some target practice each week-end with .22 rifles. In addition, a number of raids for mails were carried out round this time but I do not know whether anything of military importance came to light. With several other members of the Mallow Company including Leo O'Callaghan, who drove the car which conveyed the mails to Brigade Headquarters for censorship, I took part in two or three raids on the mail train between Mallow and Dublin at this period. We were usually assisted by members of the Two-pot-house Company in whose area the train was usually held up.

The next action of any importance in the area was the raid on Mallow Military barracks. This was carried out by the Brigade Column, which had been formed a short time previously, on 28th September, 1920. The column was in charge of Liam Lynch and representatives of nearly all Companies in the Mallow Battalion took part in this job which necessitated the provision of outposts, scouts and covering parties throughout the various roads and streets in the town and district. I was allocated by my Company O.C. (Jack Cunningham) to take up a position at the railway crossing on the road between Longfields Bridge and Dromahane. I was to

ensure that, when the cars carrying the stores captured in the raid had crossed the railway, the railway crossing gates were locked and the key disposed of. I may say that the whole-hearted co-operation of the gate-keeper was forthcoming and I had no difficulty in carrying out my part of the job. Following this raid I never slept at home at night. As a matter of fact all officers of the Company were "on the run".

At this stage the Company was re-organised at a parade in Goulding's borheen. On re-organisation the following were the officers :-

O/C. Jeremiah Daly,

1st. Lieut. Jack Moloney ("Congo") witness,

2nd. Lieut. Patrick Corbett.

About the end of October, 1920 I left Mallow and went to John Hickey's, Glenville, with Jack Cunningham and Jackie Bolster. I think Jeremiah Daly left for the Column about the same time. The Company officers now became :-

O/C. Patrick Corbett,

1st. Lieut. Jack Sanders,

2nd. " Jack Cahill.

These were, I think, the actual Company officers at the Truce.

When we had been at Glenville for some days the house was surrounded one night by the enemy forces. We were awakened by the sound of English accents and had about made up our mind that "the game was up" when the officer in charge of the raiding party came to the gate of the yard and said "What the H - are ye doing there. Ye are at the wrong house". (There was another John Hickey living further up the borheen). The party who had surrounded our billet withdrew to the other house which was about 200 yards away. We left

immediately taking our clothes with us and dressing ourselves outside. The enemy later moved off in three lorries and we returned to our billet.

With a number of others who were "on the run" I continued to knock around the area until the Battalion Column was formed in January 1921. I then joined the Column. The other members were Jack Cunningham, O.C., Dick Willis, Jackie Bolster, Leo O'Callaghan, Tadg McCarthy, Joe Morgan, Jeremiah Daly, Denis Mulcahy, Tadg Mullane, Ned Murphy, Batt Walshe, Tom O'Callaghan, William Roche, Con Buckley, Con McCarthy.

We underwent a short course of training in the use of arms, cover, scouting and instructions regarding outpost duty. This training took place I think at McCarthy's, Creggane, Lombardstown.

One of the first jobs I took part in with the Column was the attack on a party of "Tans" taking mails to the Night Mail at Mallow station on 31st January, 1921. This party of three to five "Tans" usually arrived at Mallow station between 9.15 p.m. and 9.25 p.m. each night. Five members of the Column (Jack Cunningham, Jeremiah Daly, Denis Mulcahy, Ned Murphy and witness Jack "Congo" Moloney) took up their positions behind a wall lining the entrance to the station. While Leo O'Callaghan and Ned Waters were on the road leading to the goodsyard at the opposite side of the railway in order to cut off any approach from the rear, I was stationed at the end nearest the public roadway and when I saw the enemy party coming I reported same to the O.C. When the party had entered the roadway leading to the station we all opened fire on instructions. After the first volley we withdrew from our position, in the direction of that across the railway held by Leo O'Callaghan and Ned Waters. We all withdrew, then, in the direction of Ballyclough where we billeted at Tim O'Connor's and John Barry's, Croughta. I would

like to mention that, before we had cleared the railway goods yard on this occasion, you could pick up a pin by the light of the Verey lights fired by the enemy forces stationed in the "Tan" barracks quite close to the station.

After a day or two we returned to Laharn Cross area where the Column was billeted. About that time some members of the Column lay in ambush outside K.B. Williams' house, Navigation Road for the O.C., Mallow Military Barracks, who used to visit K.B. Williams at intervals. The nickname of this officer was "Cock Robin". He did not arrive while we were in ambush all night so we returned to our billets next morning. The Column members on this assignment were Joe Morgan, Jeremiah Daly and witness (Jack Moloney).

During the following week the Column moved into Gleannavigue in Mourne Abbey area, where it was reported that an enemy convoy travelled to Cork each day by the glen road and Beanaskeha. This Column took up a position on the main Killavullen-Cork road at Beanaskeha about three miles from Killavullen in the early morning on two or three occasions. We were on high ground overlooking the road and distributed over a distance of about 200 yards. Although we remained in position until dusk on each occasion the enemy did not arrive. This was the position on the evening of 14th February, 1921, when word was received from the Battalion O.C. (Tadg Byrne) that the Column was to report to Tadg Looney's, Burnfoot, Mourne Abbey, before dawn next day. With the other members of the Column I moved off towards Burnfoot where we arrived at Tadg Looney's in the early morning of 15th February.

Sometime about 5.30 a.m. the Column moved out from Tadg Looney's to the bridge crossing the Clydagh river to Anallyntha where we arrived at 6 a.m. At this point final instructions were issued to

all units and I proceeded with the other members of the Column to take up a position behind a stone-faced fence on high ground at the western side of the road (Mallow-Cork). Our position overlooked the actual site selected for the attack, Leary's Rock, from which we were distant about 150 yards. The enemy convoy to be attacked was one escorting General Cummings (O/C. Forces at Buttevant) to a meeting of the officers of the Southern Command at Cork.

As the Column were moving into position lights were noticed in the farmhouse of Joe Corry at Mooneparson. The Column O/C., (Jack Cunningham) went to investigate and found that Corry was preparing to go to a fair in Donoughmore. Corry was instructed not to travel and although, I believe, he protested strongly he finally agreed to obey the O/C's orders not to leave the farmyard pending further instructions. I think it necessary to mention this as Corry was, at a later stage, alleged to have informed the enemy of the Column's position. I am certain that there was no truth in this allegation.

There was no change in the position as far as I was concerned until about 10.30 a.m. when I was ordered by the O.C. to proceed to Corry's and order tea for the Column. I did as instructed and, while the tea was being prepared, I returned to the Column position with a stock of cups. I then returned to Corry's for the tea. When on my way back with the tea in a white enamel bucket I saw Danny McDonnell (I.O., Mallow Company) on the main Cork-Mallow road across the glen at a distance of about 100 to 120 yards. I shouted to him to come across the river. He did and as he reached me he said "Ye are surrounded." He had no sooner spoken than machine guns opened fire from a field at the back of the old dispensary.

The enemy position was across the road from our position and in the rear of the section of the ambush party drawn from the local Company which was in position over Leary's Rock. Immediately the firing opened I dropped the bucket of tea and went to collect my rifle which I had left in the position I occupied before going to Corry's for the tea. Having secured my rifle I withdrew with the other members of the Column as instructed by the O.C. We crossed the Mourne Abbey Castle road on our stomachs and under cover of the fences retired in the direction of Nursetown where we had a meal. We then proceeded to Shanavoher and on to Laharn where I billeted with Leo O'Callaghan and Ned Waters at Riordan's. After three or four days I moved with Leo O'Callaghan to Murphy's, Derrygowna, and then to Crowley's and Byrne's in the same district.

As it appeared obvious that the enemy must have had some prior knowledge of the proposed engagement at Mourne Abbey, the Brigade O.C. (Liam Lynch) held an investigation into the happenings. There was a certain amount of suspicion at the time that the information had leaked out from amongst the local Volunteers, but the ~~letter~~ events at Nadd on 10th March, as described later in this statement, seems to confirm that the leakage regarding this engagement (Mourne Abbey) was also revealed to the enemy by Shiels - a British ex-soldier and a member of the Kanturk Battalion Column.

With apparently first-hand information at their disposal the enemy forces from Cork and Ballincollig took steps to encircle a large area surrounding the site selected for the ambush. The majority of these forces detrucked some considerable distance from the ambush position and then moved in across the country to close on the I.R.A. party at the precise moment when the attention of the latter party was concentrated on the point from which the enemy

convoy, which it was intended to ambush, should appear. I have described as far as I can the engagement as I recollect it from my position with the Column. The only people who can give an account of the actual happenings on the eastern side of the road are the members of the Burnfort Company under Tadg Looney, who were surrounded there.

Towards the end of February or maybe early in March the Mallow Column under Jack Cunningham moved into Kanturk Battalion area where the joint Columns (Mallow and Kanturk) underwent a course of training under their O/Cs. Jack Cunningham and Denis Murphy respectively. The training consisted of the usual foot drill, instruction in the use and care of arms, outpost duty and scouting. As Brigade Headquarters was in Paddy McCarthy's house at Nadd at the time there were also rounds of guard duty for the Column members. Each guard unit was usually composed of one man from each Column with two local Volunteers. They went on duty in pairs of one Column man and one Volunteer.

On the night of 5th March (I think) some members of the joint Columns under Jack Cunningham and Denis Murphy moved from the billets at Nadd to Father Murphy's bridge area on Nadd-Banteer road to ambush a patrol of Tans and R.I.C. They did not return until the evening of the 7th, as the patrol did not arrive as expected on the morning of the 6th. The ambush at Father Murphy's bridge had been a success and four carbines and four revolvers with some rounds of ammunition were, I think, captured. The enemy had one killed while the I.R.A. had no casualties. On the return of the Column from this job the Mallow Column O/C. (Jack Cunningham) gave me a short webley which he had captured as a souvenir. Amongst the members of the Mallow Column who took part in Father Murphy's bridge engagement were :- Jeremiah Daly, Jack Cunningham and Joe Morgan.

On their return from Father Murphy's bridge, Jeremiah Daly and Jack Cunningham were billeted in Herlihy's farmhouse at Nadd. This house was commonly known as "The barracks" in view of the large number of Column members who stayed there regularly when the Column was in the district. Others billeted there at this time were Joe Morgan, Ned Waters, Jack ("Congo") Moloney (witness).

On the evening of 9th March, 1921, I was on guard duty on the hill behind Riordan's house at Nadd and overlooking the road from Nadd village. I was on duty until about 6 p.m. when I was relieved by a member of the Kanturk Column. I came down to Herlihy's house ("the barracks") where I was billeted with Tim ~~Kirby~~^{Kiely}, Joe Morgan, Ned Waters, Jack Cunningham and Jeremiah Daly. The latter two had left to take part in the burning of Dromagh Castle before I was relieved of guard duty. They had been replaced by two new recruits to the Column from Ballyclough, viz. Jack Ring and Mick Walsh. We all gathered round a fine turf fire and chatted until Mick Walsh went on guard with Tadg McCarthy and Jack Ring moved to Riordan's house on the hill. The remainder of the Company (Joe Morgan, Tim ~~Kirby~~^{Kiely}, Ned Waters, Jack Herlihy and myself) retired to bed about 12 midnight. With Joe Morgan and Tim ~~Kirby~~^{Kiely} I slept on a mattress on the ground floor in a room off the kitchen while Ned Waters and Dave Herlihy slept upstairs.

As the members of the Column on guard were coming and going at all hours the door of the house was never locked. It must have been about 7 a.m. on the morning of March 10th., 1921, when I was rudely awakened by a military officer who told me to get up in rather strong language. I thought at first that it was Ned Donoghue, who had gone off to Dromagh Castle, who had returned but I was not left in doubt for very long. I got a few kicks in the ribs which soon got me out and, of course, Joe Morgan and Tim ~~Kirby~~^{Kiely} made no delay either.

When we were on the floor we collected our clothes and I managed to get into my trousers and to slip on my boots but I would not be allowed to lace them. Morgan and ~~Kirby~~^{Kiely} were treated similarly. I then picked up my coat which was hanging at the fireplace in the kitchen and put it on. On my way out the door the officer in charge held me up by putting his knee across the doorway and he asked me where we got all the guns and bombs. (There were rifles taken in the raids at Fermoy and Mallow in "The barracks" that morning). I did not reply, so he said "You'll know very soon". He then allowed me out to the yard in front of the house where I found Joe Morgan. We were later joined by Dave Herlihy and ~~Kirby~~^{Kiely}. Tim ~~Kirby~~ in their bare feet, while Ned Waters also arrived in bare feet shortly afterwards.

At this time we were surrounded by a party of about twelve soldiers. We were then searched by members of this party. The officer then told us that he was going to shoot us, saying, "When I tell you to run - run". Close on one hour must have elapsed between the time we were taken and the preparation for the shooting. He then drew up a firing party at the gable end of the house. He marched us round the house to the gable end and stood between us and the firing party. We were then told to face the firing party and as I turned I made a dash for freedom. Joe Morgan, although we had not had an opportunity of speaking since captured, must have been of the same mind as he dashed away at the same time and in the same direction. I must have gone about twenty/thirty yards when I got hit. As I was hit the shot apparently twisted me to one side and one of my boots fell off. I kicked off the other and continued to run to a "cummer" (a dry cutting) about 7 or 8 feet deep between 60/80 yards from the house. Before I reached the "cummer" I saw Joe Morgan fall and I thought he was hit. When I reached the cover of the "cummer" I delayed a moment or two but as I saw no sign of Morgan I continued

along the cutting in a westerly direction. I had travelled some distance and was bleeding freely. I decided to move out of the cutting and as I prepared to do so I heard a single shot. I went back into the cutting and continued in the same direction as before for some little distance when I left the cutting. At this time I was close to Riordan's house and as I was feeling very weak I attempted to reach same. Just as I got to the gate of the yard I met some members of the Kanturk Column; Mick Courtney, Jack Winters, Peter Hayes; and Jack Ring of the Mallow Column. They took me along with them in a westerly direction. I was getting weaker as we proceeded and eventually my companions decided to rest until they had established their position. I should have said that visibility was very poor as it was misty and foggy. One member of the party went off to scout and when he returned we continued our journey to a nearby house which proved to be Kenny's, Naddbeg (I think).

I collapsed just at the door of this house where we were received with open arms. A bottle of whiskey and a bottle of wine were produced. I made an effort to get the whiskey bottle (although I didn't drink) but Mick Courtney snapped the bottle from me. The girl in the house then tore up a sheet and I was bandaged with same. I was then put to bed where I was when found a short time later by Leo O'Callaghan.

As it was felt that we were still too close to the enemy position Leo O'Callaghan asked the Kenny family to remove me to Cahill's, Kilmacraine. They agreed to do so, tackled up a horse and cart, placed me on a mattress in same and with Leo beside me we crossed the mountain to Cahill's. I may say that, on many occasions during this journey, I thought I had passed out and so did my companion Leo O'Callaghan.

Shortly after reaching Cahill's, Liam Lynch arrived and dressed my wound. He was accompanied by Joe Morgan whom I thought had been killed. Needless to say I was glad to see my comrade.

Arrangements were made by Liam Lynch to have me visited by Dr. Ryan, Glantane, who dressed my wound that evening. I was later visited by a doctor from Kanturk whose name I don't remember. On the Monday following the Nadd raid, which occurred on the previous Thursday, I was dressed up in women's clothes and removed to Mrs. Daunt's Maternity Home, Cork, in a four-wheeled carriage which came with a party to attend the funeral of Jack Herlihy (the owner of "the Barracks"). I was accompanied to Cork by Miss O'Connell (now Mrs. Lynch, Beechmount, Mallow) and Miss Buckley.

I was detained in this Home for about four weeks. I cannot recollect the names of the doctors who were attending me and the only nurse I can remember was Nurse Murphy.

It would appear from this account that the I.R.A. security arrangements at Nadd were defective. I do not think this is so. The normal plans made by the Column O.C. provided for guards at Nadd Cross and on the hill behind Riordan's house. This arrangement would normally enable the approach of the enemy through any of the usual routes to be observed at quite a long distance. However, on this occasion the enemy - evidently being aware of the whereabouts of the Column billets from inside information - detrucked some three miles from the district and travelled across the mountain before dawn. They moved straight to the glen in which the houses, in which the Column were billeted, were situated. In addition the weather conditions on the morning of the raid favoured the British party who approached under cover of a thick misty fog which reduced visibility to a maximum of 150 yards under the best conditions.

The information on which the enemy acted on this occasion is generally believed to have been supplied by a British ex-soldier named Shiels who was a member of the Kanturk Battalion Column. He had been detailed on 6th March, 1921 to proceed with other members of his Column to take part in Father Murphy's Bridge ambush but on the pretence that his mother was seriously ill he was relieved of this duty and was permitted to go to Kanturk to see his mother. While in Kanturk the local I.R.A. Intelligence Officer observed that he was drinking with Black & Tans in some public houses in the town and he (I.O.) sent a message to this effect to the Battalion O.C. (Denis Lyons). This information was, I believe, never relayed to Brigade Headquarters. In any event I understand that Shiels, dressed in Black & Tan uniform, was identified as one of the raiding party at Nadd on the morning of 10th March, 1921.

When I left the Nursing Home I was accompanied by a Miss Barry who took me in a covered car to the Muskerry station on the Western Road, Cork. I travelled by train to Donoughmore where I was met by Tom Bride, Nadd, who took me to his home and later to Laharn where I was billeted at Jim Byrne's. After a few weeks I moved to Paddy Murphy's, Laharn Cross. I was convalescing for a few more weeks and early in June I was feeling fit enough to take up my normal duties with the Column. However, the Column O/C. would not hear of my return at this stage but he permitted me to take part in the destruction of the houses of a few British loyalists in the area, viz. those of Major Prettyman Newman and Major Coote. These houses were destroyed as counter-reprisals for the burning and destruction of the homes of Republican supporters and those of members of the I.R.A. by the British about this time.

Towards the end of June or early in July I took up a position with Joe Morgan, Jack Cunningham, Jeremiah Daly and Denis Mulcahy in Ballydaheen on a few occasions in an endeavour to ambush a military

patrol which operated during curfew hours. The patrol never came into the ambush position so we withdrew to our billets in Lombardstown area. There was no further activity to the Truce.

My rank at the Truce was 1st. Lieutenant, Mallow Company. The strength of the Company at the time was about 80.

After the Truce I went to a training camp at O'Connors, Croughton, for about 14 days. I then returned to Mallow Company where I took charge of a party of new recruits at a camp in Upper Quertown. This continued with a few groups alternating for a period of about 6 to 8 weeks.

When Mallow Military barracks was handed over in January, 1922, I took up duty there as a member of the Maintenance party. On one occasion I was sent to Dublin (Beggars Bush Barracks) as a member of the escort with two lorry loads of rifles from 1st Southern Division which were to be exchanged for new rifles in Dublin. I was accompanied by Jerry Hanlon, O/C., Mallow Battalion, Tadg Mullane and Dick Willis. When we got to Beggars Bush we would not get the new rifles so we remained in Dublin for about a week or ten days. Liam Lynch then arrived at Beggars Bush Barracks and we were handed over the new rifles for which we had been waiting. This would be about mid June, 1922.

On our return to Mallow I was transferred to Buttevant where I served until the Civil War began. I then took part in various engagements with Free State forces in the southern area until I was arrested about four miles from Mallow on 27th December, 1922. I was detained in Limerick gaol until 30th March, 1923 when I, with a number of other prisoners, escaped through a tunnel. I returned to my home area where I continued to serve until the "Cease Fire" in May 1923.

When Dick Willis (who was Battalion O.C. at the time) was arrested in April, 1923, I was O.C. of the Column operating in the area.

(Signed)

John Moloney
John Moloney

Date:

12th November 1954
12th November 1954

Witness:

P. O'Donnell

(P. O'Donnell)

INVESTIGATOR:

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
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