

W. S. 1,086

**ORIGINAL**

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21  
BURO STAIRÉ MILESTÁ 1913-21  
No. W.S. 1086

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21

STATEMENT BY WITNESS.

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 1,086

**Witness**

Patrick Mullooly,  
Kiltrustan,  
Strokestown,  
Co. Roscommon.

**Identity.**

Brigade Q.M. North Roscommon Brigade,  
1918-1921.

**Subject.**

Elaboration of his previous statement  
which is registered as W.S.955.

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

Nil

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SUPPLEMENTARY STATEMENT BY

MR. PATRICK MULLOOLY

Kiltristan. Strokestown. Co. Roscommon

A correction and elaboration of original statement

Introduction.

"The roll of sixty have just passed over my brow  
Great changes in the scroll of time  
I can discern now.  
The hateful monster's fangs are clipped  
That kept us bound like slaves  
And sent our bravest o'er the earth  
To fill untimely graves"

Dear Readers, in the following pages I have endeavoured to give honour where honour is due. I have not written one word at the dictation of another and I sincerely hope that I have given no cause for offence. I assure you that I would never have penned a line had I not felt it to be my bounden duty to do so, in justice to the memory of my dead and living comrades and murdered kin. I have read with trepidation and disgust garbled accounts of the actions of heroes by people who would fain lead their readers up a blind alley. They take all the glory or try to wave a halo around the heads of those who were more fittingly left in the shade where truthful historians will undoubtedly consign them.

This story is principally my own recorded experience and entirely my own convictions, and honest opinion, written in the interest of truth and in refutation of imputed slander or in belittlement of dead comrades. I expect the respectful indulgence of all decent-minded men and women. There is an old saying: that the "truth is bitter" and so there may be those who may sneer or deride. They are welcome to do so. I am immune to such actions or repercussions, having but followed the bent of a clear conscience. Still, truth must be vindicated and propagated, else the purpose of life is void and robbed of its essence. To quote Mangan: "Napoleon sinks today before

the unguilded shrine - the single soul of Washington. Truth's name alone man shall adore, long as the waves of time roll henceforward on".

To those who may read these pages and take offence, I suggest as the best antidote their confiscation to the flames and the switching of the wireless set to the B.B.C. for much more palatable entertainment and a salve to their conscience. It would be futile to expect that such people could possibly believe that it could be very truthfully said of many of us in those days. "Love of women I had known not, little cared I for their wiles. Not one passing thought was wasted on their coquetry and smiles. But my heart went fiercely throbbing and my pulse danced with glee, when I thought upon the country that was Motherland to me, Who was slowly, slowly, slowly sinking to a nameless grass grown grave; Not a voice being raised to keen her - not even one hand to save"

"Yes, surely, they are very valiant and hardy. Great endurers of cold, labour, hunger and all hardiness, very circumspect in their enterprises, very light of foot and very great scorers of death" - Spencer's view of the Irish people.

In an endeavour to keep the names of the men of Roscommon green in the memory of Irishmen I submit a few of those who showed such great example to succeeding generations. I deem the following not out of place:-

Slieve Bawn is named after Queen Bagna - the Fairy Queen. In 1798, her sons under the name of the Ballyduffy Rangers set out on the 24th August of that year to fight the English at Castlebar. Led by Captain Michael O'Farrell, they were joined at the Four-mile-house by Mickey Devine and his hundred men. Allen Gibbons, Mary Hughes and Father Kelly went before them as scouts. Getting safely into the French camp they played their part in "Races of Castlebar" and were highly commended for their bravery by General Humbert and General

Sarrazin. Many of the gallant fellows were killed there - Paddy Head, Tim O'Brien, Jim Maher, Pat McDermott, Paddy Connor, Thady Murphy, Patrick Duffy, Joe Gillerors, Mickey Fagan, Sean Caffrey, Jim Hayden. Others included Shields, McGrath, McHughs and Cavenys, Cantys and Noones. Later in a bloody encounter at Collooney, Mickey Devine of Tulsk, Pat Carlos of Ashwood and Tommy Gamean of Tuam (South Roscommon) died on the hill where Teeling's monument commemorates the capture of the gun. Jack Sweeney, Pat Shields, Jemmy Moran, Luke Owens, John McHugh, Tom McGrath and Jem Carroll gave their lives for 'Ireland' on the 5th September 1798.

Patrick Mulcahy of Kilrooskey now led the remnant of the Ballyduffy Rangers. The forces of General Lake, Cornwallis Lord Roden and Crawford closing in, they fought against desperate odds. Mulcahy, McGee, Mulconry, Tim O'Brien of Moher, Tom Boscott, the Hunts, Petits and Healys of Clonfree, Edward Duffy and O'Dowd of Kiltrustan, and Tim Fallon of Clooncagh left their corpses on the shores of Killala Bay. Tom Beirne, the forbear of the present O'Beirnes of Strokestown, was killed at Ballinamuck.

As reprisals, the burning and slaughter were unmitigated until, getting sick of the carnage, the survivors herded or hid where any shelter or safety might be found. With their habitations on fire they were again left in comparative peace

There were many other tales traditionally handed down concerning the '98, '48 and '67 <sup>PERIODS</sup> ~~parades~~. It is told how, when the Fenians were arrested and being taken from Strokestown Dean McDermott defied the police to remove them, and how the horses refused to cross the Strokestown Bridge with them. How, in the '98. period an old man, Michael Maye, defended his house at Aughrim when attacked by the soldiers billeted near Elphin - knocking each down as he entered the house

while his daughter cut off their 'plaits' with a reaping hook so that when they returned to barracks they were courtmartialled and disgraced. The old man produced the 'plaits' as evidence against them.

One old man who is now dead over 40 years, and who was not less than 90 when he died, often related how a lone man passed along the Ballyvaughan Road with his pike on his shoulder on his way to take part in the Battle of Ballinamuck, at least 30 miles of a march.

The following are extracts from a letter written 30 years ago by an old lady of 84 years - a sister of a famous old fire-eating Landleaguer - Frank Kenny of Strokestown - to her nephew, Patrick Kenny: "Your father was born at Cloonalis not far from the O'Connor Don. My father's uncle was married to the daughter of the Prince of Coolavin. The English took all their property but left the title of Prince and Lord of Moylurg. His mother's name was McCluskey whose brother's name was Abraham".

One of Cromwell's drummers coveted his lands, so when he heard from a friendly Protestant that they were going to be attacked, he hid his five sisters in 'stooks of oats'. The sixth and oldest sister refused to budge and she loaded the guns while her brother did the shooting. She noticed soot falling from the chimney and, drawing her brother's attention, he fired up the chimney and down fell a dead man. Thus he successfully guarded his rights, while the neighbours helped his sisters to get to safety while they got the enemy engaged taking away their dead on carts.

I have attended to the above facts to try in a small way to give an idea of the fighting spirit of the Roscommon men in the past. Many more tales could be told of such individual and collective heroism. I was always convinced, and as time goes on I am more convinced than ever, that had not the raid

planned by Ernie O'Malley on Carrick-on-Shannon in 1918, not miscarried as it did, and that we had become the proud possessors of 22 Service rifles with, as McGloughlin said, as much ammunition as two men could lift, this county would be second to none. I am assuming that O'Malley would remain a short while to get things moving properly. Again I reiterate that the rank and file were amongst Ireland's best. Experienced leadership was the only requirement.

According to O'Donovan's letters written during his topographical survey of Ireland, Kiltrustan derived its name from the name of a pagan St. Patrick baptised there on his travels through Connaught. This pagan, named Troistan, displayed such faith by patiently bearing the excruciating pain caused by the piercing of his foot by the spike of the saint's crozier which, as he was about to perform the ceremony of baptism, he thrust into the ground, but instead, in mistake, he pierced Troistan's foot, who, thinking it was part of the sacrament, made no complaint. Thus, in compliment to such faith, St. Patrick decided to perpetuate the incident by building a church on the site of the occurrence. Hence the name Kiltrustan. This/<sup>too</sup>was the origin of one of Ireland's most famous art schools.

I was born within 500 yards of the old ruins and I must relate here what seemingly escaped O'Donovan. When St. Patrick was having the church built he had a workman named 'Bessian' who with a white horse conveyed the material. Every day at dinner Bessian threshed the sheaf of oats for his horse and as he threshed, a black pig eat up the oats. At length he complained to St. Patrick, who told him to tell him when it happened again. He did so and the Saint told him to strike it with his flail, which he did, and immediately the black dog vanished and gave no more trouble, but old people maintained that tradition had it, he would return again

before disaster would overwhelm the world; hence when he appeared in 1918 during the conscription crisis, people flocked from all directions to pay him their compliments, only to be laughed at for their pains. Nevertheless, clerical and laymen who ought to know took more serious views.

From my personal experience on one occasion when engaged by the parents of two children to accompany them to school the following morning, the children were at first quite normal and then suddenly one of them said: "Do you see him; he is there standing on the white stone". Of course, we saw nothing but the children's eyes dilated in such a manner that surely something was the cause. The other children who came along also pretended to see him could easily be detected as actors and little imps out for a good joke. Suffice it to say that both Father Roddy and Dean Gearty gave it serious thought and regarded it as a messenger of evil.

At this time the threat of conscription was at its height and things seemed to be drifting day and night towards disaster. Peter Carlon, the local blacksmith, asked some of us to accompany him to where the pig was appearing. On arriving at the spot Peter produced from his inside pocket a large cross and started to pray. He held a belief that blacksmiths had some supernatural powers and hence his request and religious fervour; but alas for Peter, we had more faith in the pig than we had in Peter and raising a wild cheer departed from the scene. Shocked and downcast, Peter followed in the rear.

Another incident, rather humorous and ridiculous, if not irreligious in its way, of which I was witness, also happened a little later when, instead of the pig with its seven bonhams there appeared to the children a fair-haired lady with sandals on her feet accompanied by seven children - six boys and a little girl. There lived a very religious decent upright man, a bachelor, close by, but of rather a nervous temperament, who called to a neighbour's house for some Holy Water. When

asked what he wanted it for he replied that he had nothing to ward off danger if the Red Woman called during the night. The old lady of the house told him she had none to give him until next time she went to Strokestown, that the supply in the local church was exhausted when she had called there, ~~that~~. He turned away depressed and more nervous than ever when her son, equal to any emergency and pitying the poor man, called him back and said there was plenty and gave him a vessel of ordinary water mixed with goat's milk. Thus armed, the old religious - smilingly and with profuse thanks and blessings, retired to his home and bed safe in the belief that he was properly fortified against all comers - woman, red or black, man or devil.

In those days there were a great bighearted people there, all wit and humour, folklore and music. It was lovely on a summer's evening to listen to the music of fiddle, flute, melodeon and concertina filling the air as it floated across the lakes from opposite directions as if in competition, each party vying with the other and exceeding the other in melody. Alas, nowadays there is not a breath of music in the air in that locality. The Homes of all those great old people are empty or levelled to the ground. It can truly be described as the deserted village. How often did we in those days play football by moonlight. On Sunday evenings from 30 to 40 young lads, the majority of them six foot tall would muster at Kennedy's before exploring the countryside in quest of country dances - often travelling many miles, paying a short visit to each house of entertainment and returning with the dawn to start again a laborious week which, if from a monetary point of view was unprofitable, was rich in manfulness and morality.

It was with the object of procuring local employment for these youths that Kennedy and his associates fought so determined and successful a battle for direct labour, and how pleased he was when later he saw 30 or 40 of his neighbours employed throughout the winter months where, before, employment

did not exist and those seeking work were forced to find it across the channel in England or Scotland. The first foremen or direct labour overseers had no favourites. If they were inclined that way they were not allowed. How vast the change! A petty tyrant from some back lane, or some boss of obscure origin who was born to cringe, is allowed to rule. They squander amongst friends and relations where possible the monies forced from the overtaxed and oppressed community, while the youth are forced to fly from the country. Allow me to quote Goldsmith on unjust taxation: "And all that freedom's highest aim can reach is but to lay proportioned loads on each. Hence should one order disproportioned grow, its double weight must ruin all below". Yes, surely it is time to empty the armchairs of opulent local government officials whose only claim to survival is their incompetence, their soft hands and swollen paunches, not to mention their crooked minds. "Ill fares the land to hastening ills a prey, where wealth accumulates and men decay. Princes or Lords may flourish or may fade, but a bold peasantry - its country's pride - when once destroyed can never be supplied".

As mentioned above, the houses that once were filled with laughter and song are fast disappearing. Soon there will remain only paupers and bosses. Pardon my digression to labour and its abuses. The fault lies with the youths of the present generation. They are too tame. Again to quote Goldsmith: "Heavens! how unlike the Belgic sires of old; Rough, poor, content, ungovernably bold. War in each breast and freedom on each brow".

Now, back to my story. Each social meeting of these decent, hardworking people I noticed was always interspersed with patriotic songs and recitations, Old and young contributed their share. The youths were most respectful to their elders and superiors. Their teachers they held in awe and only in a lesser degree than they did their parents. None

of the modern

cheeky familiarity was observable; no rudeness of speech or manner was extant; none would be tolerated. Such was life in my native parish when the first news of Easter Week trickled through.

At first people did not realise that shootings reported meant open rebellion, disputing the authority of the greatest empire the world had ever known, or the resurgence of the old slumbering spirit of nationality. Later, when news in the Press more than confirmed the rumours, many were thrilled and elated, while others thought it was another English move to nullify Home Rule. I remember an old man - Neil McCaffrey - crying shame on those who expressed those sentiments, holding up the Countess Markievicz as the prototype of Joan of Arc, asking with distasteful derision why should a lady of such high rank and social standing pity such grovelling slaves or feel so deeply our degradation as to risk life and fortune by rising in open revolt and under arms to vindicate our rights. This was the first occasion I heard the Countess and her associates vindicated and little did I think then I would later, while on my keeping, have the pleasure and the honour of her company even for a short period in 1920 on the balcony of the Richmond Hospital, Dublin, when we met as she paid her visit to the bedside of those who were badly burned in an attempt to blow up the Strokestown Courthouse.

Coming directly to my story, I will begin by stating that I was born in the parish of Kiltrustan, Co. Roscommon, on 21st January 1894. My father, John Mulooly, was born in Curraghroe. My mother was born in Kiltrustan, where her people were known and respected for generations immemorial. John Mulooly, a paternal ancestor of mine, married Anne Stewart who, with her brothers Robert and Charles, were banished from the north of Ireland where they were active members of the 'Defenders' an organisation later amalgamated or absorbed into the "United

Irishmen". Charles Stewart with his sister Anne settled at Curraghroe, Co. Roscommon, while their brother, Robert Stewart, settled at Stewartstown in Co. Meath. I have often heard it said that it was from the fact that Stewartstown got its name. Members of the Stewart family live there still.

For his activities as a United Irishman Charles was transported from Roscommon to a penal settlement in Australia. When after some years he obtained release through a general amnesty or pardon, and settling down on a ranch on which later a township sprang up, or a railway passed through, resulting to him in increasing wealth so that when he died intestate at Parmatta, Melbourne, his assets amounted to £50,000 from which his relatives in Ireland failed to benefit, principally because of the difficulty of communications, illiteracy of the common people and their consequent dependance on bigoted landlords and shoneens who, in many cases though overriding as they were were as ignorant, if not more so, than the people they so basely defrauded and oppressed. After a publication of the Stewart legacy in the public press over a period, it was confiscated by the Treasury.

The defenders of which the Stewarts were members originated in Armagh and extended to the other Ulster counties and to Meath, Westmeath and Kildare in Leinster, and in Connaught they were numerous and aggressive. (See History of Ireland by Rev. E.A. Dalton, LL.D., M.R.I.A.). After the transportation of Charles Stewart, the Mulloolys were dispossessed of their lands and they were forced to live on the mountainside of Slieve Bawn.

I was told over 40 years ago by an old man named Pat Bushel, who was himself a member of the R.I.C. during the Fenian Rising of '67, and who was paraded on the barrack square in the Police Depot in the Park, Dublin, on the occasion when members of that force were decorated for their fight against

the Fenians that in his time there was at least one civilian spy or informer in each townland and sometimes two, and that such people were paid varying amounts according to the Government's appraisal of the information given. He knew personally where one such petty informer was paid the paltry sum of 5/- for information about the distillation of poteen. He also told me that another big source of information were young ladies whom the R.I.C. individually, under the pretence of courting, would contact, and indirectly and sometimes deliberately, and often unconsciously, get the information required. These gullible women often compromised their own fathers and brothers.

Bushel got so disgusted at their methods that he resigned and went to the United States where he amassed a considerable amount of cash and returned to Roscommon and bought a farm of land from which he was later evicted at the point of the bayonet. It may be assumed that then, as in our own day, there was a sprinkling of decent men in the R.I.C.

The fight for direct labour previously referred to meant the wresting of the contracts for the upkeep of the public roads from a clique of contractors who left all the cash earned in the business premises owned by Co. Councillors for groceries and drink after giving back hand to their bosses, such as district surveyors and Co. Councillors who turned a blind eye on delinquencies such as non-completion of contract or the supply of 10% of the road material contracted for.

The local leader of the Kilbriain Direct Labour Club was a fearless fighter - Martin Kennedy - and their meeting place was at my father's house, who acted as treasurer. The bosses of the dying Land League became jealous of the Labour Club's strength and spread the rumour that it was an organisation got up in opposition to the Land League, so the fight became fast and furious; so much so, that when the Club requested the band instruments to attend a general meeting at Roscommon on the

occasion of a sitting of the Co. Council; they were refused. The local Hibernian Hall had not then been built and the drums were in private keeping and Kennedy, a man of powerful build and great strength, and a noted athlete in his youth, called one morning to my father and said: "John, as they will not give us the drum, you and I will just take it" and so they did.

In the whole Co. Council Chamber the only champion of the Direct Labour agitation had was John Fitzgibbon of Castle-rea, and of the officials, Mr. Mulvany, Co. Engineer or Surveyor, yet despite this opposition threats, abuse and gutter from gateways and all the vile tactics of their opponents who had the connivance of the R.I.C. supporting them they definitely held their course. With Kiltrustan, Elphin and Cloonfree under the leadership of Kennedy and McEgan from Elphin they triumphed in the end. I mention the above facts because it made such a deep impression on us youths and showed what a small unselfish determined body of men can accomplish. But, alas, today their efforts and sacrifices have gone for almost naught. Direct labour is a by-word. The cliques eliminated then are regrouped. The same graft is reported under a different guise and the people are powerless as their most trusted representatives like Nelson keeps the telescope to the blind eye. The youth seek labour abroad. With a different implication the following lines might suit now: "Could Calir come from moss-grown tomb to Cuilldack's side and from the height look down beneath where true men died. How must he feel neath Satan's heel 'Ochone, ochone' to find how slaves can thread the graves of lions gone".

The revival of the spirit of the people became so manifest after Easter Week that even the mighty R.I.C. were set at defiance and the "Peeler and the Goat", "Baden's Powell's Police" and "Ri toorali-toorali-ay", with other songs of suchlike, became favourites. The following are a few lines

from one of the above: "It was nice to walk along the roads with neatly-parted hair; To court the blushing lasses and make the gossoons stare. It was nice to hunt for poteen through the mountains and the bogs; It was nice to break up meetings It was nice to frighten dogs. Now every goat sure cries "Mageg", You no longer frighten me, And the asses bray defiance at the R.I.C."

While not all of the R.I.C. were evilly disposed, I numbered amongst them some of my best friends - yet as a body they were abhorred and detested by many and so as can be seen things were leading on to the boycott of them. To a certain extent it was desirable to have a clear-cut and try and make them realise their relation to the people, yet it was carried out in many cases to extreme limits never intended by Mick Collins or men of such mould and the Volunteer organisation made overnight many deadly enemies of potential friends.

THE ANCIENT ORDER OF HIBERNIANS. It looked so ridiculous to imagine Tone or Emmet being refused membership of an organisation calling itself national, nevertheless the Hibernians were a fine well-disciplined and organised body of men and any apparent laxity in their composition must be wholly attributed to the leadership of Joe Devlin, John D. Nugent and their slavish loyalty to John Redmond's leadership. Martin Kennedy, the hero of direct labour, was later the local secretary of the A.O.H. and he used to maintain that the organisation was first started by 'Rory Og' to set old Ireland free, and that the motto or slogan of the organisation was: "We will have the land that bore us yet though hard to get by the heavens bending oe'r us". Locally, as elsewhere, the Irish National Volunteers were controlled by the Hibernians. Previous to this I shall never forget the night that the local fife and drum band followed by a motley crowd of old and young proceeded to Strokestown to celebrate the passing of the

Home Rule Bill and its placing on the Statute Book. Bonfires were blazing on the surrounding hills and Carson's effigy was being burned in Strokestown opposite George O'Reilly's house, George being the County President of the A.O.H. What with speech-making and general celebrations which followed and the wit and humour inseparable from any such gathering, you bet we youngsters had a royal time.

How clearly I remember how after our return from Strokestown we insisted on two of the elders giving us a few words on the national situation. They, feeling rather happy (having previously knelt at the shrine of Bacchus in thanksgiving for Home Rule) got on to a loosely built stone wall and one after the other tumbled off it into a pool of water on the roadside. The second orator had only got as far as his oration as "Men of Kiltrustan and the surrounding cumference I came " when he joined his pal in the puddle of water also. These were great times only to be equalled, if not bettered, by the parades and martial exercises or antics of the Redmond Volunteers as the National Volunteers were known later. Imagine a lecture being delivered after being formed into a hollow square by one drill instructor and which ended with the exhortation to the Volunteers to always carry themselves in a respectful manner especially in the presence of 'female women'. But the days of the toy soldiers were nearly at an end.

On page 3 of my original account I referred to how Father O'Flanagan had come to Kiltrustan. My mother had told me the previous Friday on her return from the market in Strokestown of the lovely young priest who was introduced by Joe McGrann, C.C. and had such great praise for the men of Easter Week.

Larry Ginnell of the cattle driving fame had repeatedly declared off the public platforms that he was repeatedly referred to in the English House of Parliament by the

Redmondites and English members as a nuisance because of his Easter Week sympathies and the best answer the people of Roscommon who years ago had elected Rebel James J. O'Kelly, M.P. could give was to elect another rebel, Count Plunkett, so that the enemy would have to deal with two instead of one nuisance. We youngsters, who did not care what the Count did so long as he was elected, enjoyed immensely his announcement that he was not taking his seat. Some of his old backers could not simply understand; they were so long and so deeply imbibed with the idea of parliamentary representation. Though we had no votes at the time, we paraded the roads nightly singing election songs such as "Hurrah for Plunkett, Ring out the slogan call, The Count's our man, He leads the van for Ireland over all". We also recited or shouted a recitation called "Vengeance" at every opportunity. The first line runs thus: "God's curse upon you England now" and ended "Revenge, revenge, revenge for those who died in Dublin town".

While celebrating the election by a torchlight procession (sods of turf dipped in paraffin held aloft on hay forks) we chased along the roads and were especially loudest outside every doubtful voter's door. One such old man who, when we canvassed his vote, used to declare that he was nothing, meaning that he had no political leanings, so when we arrived at his place we duly called for three cheers for the man who was nothing. When he rushed from a stable where, seemingly, he awaited our arrival armed with a hayfork and swearing by his Maker that he would soon let us know what he was, discretion was the better part of valour and we retreated in disorder, only to run up against trouble in earnest. Three old men known as the "Bower" Nearys, two of whom were in receipt of old age pensions from its inception and who firmly believed that Count Plunkett was out to take it off them attacked us as we passed and in doing so the eldest, known as the "Wooden God" fell on the icy road

and in the morning sent for the R.I.C. At this time the D.I. of the R.I.C. was Paddy Beirne who was in charge of the area, where he was known as the "Devil's darling", lent a willing ear to Neary's complaint and, despite the favourable report of Policeman O'Doherty, who he had delegated to investigate the complaint, decided to make a State case and about twelve of us were summoned to the District Court. We were acquitted by the magistrate then sitting, to the great disappointment of the D.I. and the Bowers, who swore in Court that we shouted as he came along: "Burn the house over them, we are the Dublin men" and who on returning home accused the elder brother of being the cause of all the trouble, that the gorsoons were doing no harm and the old man replied that he lost his case by being represented by a lunatic (meaning the younger brother) that polished his head that morning; he had combed his hair before going to the Court.

Later that year when the "Pentecost" collection was being made as was the custom by collectors calling from house to house the old man inquired what was the collection now for and on being told it was for "Pentecost" he grabbed the fire tongs and shouted: "Begone, he's another 'Buck'like Plunkett".

Another regret of the oldest of the Bowers was that Lloyd George did not put him in charge of the British "Codmarality" so that he might go in his submarine to Berlin and deal with the Kaiser - the blackguard - who was destroying all the vitals, meaning the sinking of the foodships. He always called the Admiralty the "Codmarality" because of its inability to deal with the German Fleet in quick time.

Foremost amongst the great priests who helped Father O'Flanagan to make the Plunkett election a success was Father Malachy Brennan, Father Bernard Kane, Father P. Clyne, Father P. Sharkey, Father Glynn, Father Hurley, Father Roddy and Father McDowen and the redoubtable Father Dan.

Of course it is almost certain if those men had fought in the opposite camp the victory could easily become a rout. It is only fitting to mention men like the late Seamus O'Ryan of Strokestown and George Geraghty of Roscommon and Michael Ward of Boyle as samples of the type of men who spared nothing and did everything to achieve victory, not so much a political victory, but above all a vindication of the men of Easter Week.

Our part in the Longford election. I was a member of the Strokestown Gaelic Football team who retained the championship of the county and was unbeatable for a period of three years until broken up by the British, first by the arrest of that famous captain - Tommy Shevlin of Strokestown - a member of the I.R.B. and an I.R.A. officer. So it came to pass that the Strokestown team was invited to Longford to help to draw the crowds during the McGuinness election. We were easily victorious in the field and our stiffest fight was before us in the town where the streets were thronged with people, and the ex-soldier element and the separation women shouting that the war may never end. To hell with McGuinness and up McKenna (the party or Redmondite candidate) and such slogans. They became very aggressive, so that on more than one occasion we had to fight our way through. It was a great day and we thoroughly enjoyed it. Michael Egan of Dromard, Kiltrustan, was captain of our team and Father Michael Flanagan threw in the ball. I am not aware whether we were of any assistance to McGuinness, but I know that I felt pretty sore next day.

Regarding the formation of the Volunteers in Kiltrustan the other members of the company were Michael O'Connor, section leader John Rodgers, Matt McCormack, Frank McHugh, Michael Fallon, Patrick Rodgers, Michael Warren, Martin McHugh, John Kelly, Tom Diffley, Peter Lynch, Frank Wynne, Columbo Treacy, Joe Curry, John Caslin, Tom Kelly, Paddy Flanagan, Mick Tiernan

Tom Caulfield, Paddy Beirne, Pat Brennan, Peter Carlon, Luke Cox, Dan Sweeney, Paddy Sweeney, Tom McHugo, Peter Melia, Pat Moore, Pat McCormack and Johnny Callaghan.

On page 6 of my original statement I referred to the time that Ernie O'Malley came to my house and stayed there. I accompanied him to each of the adjoining company areas north of Strokestown, Kilglass, Killiana, Drumlion, etc., but the only Volunteer I knew south of Strokestown was Jim Lannon, later known as the "Plugger" Lannon. In Strokestown proper there was a pretty lively unit - Tom Shevlin, Marty O'Connor, Sean Bermingham, Frank Treacy, Tom Mason and others.

I always considered Bill Doherty's final arrest was a major loss to the brigade. He was a fearless, capable and intelligent officer and we had no one at any time capable of taking his place in his battalion area. He was one of those who accompanied Sean Connolly from North Roscommon to assist Sean McKeon and his men in defence of Ballinalee. While Cawley and his R.I.C. pals, Brady and Campbell, were in my house, my brother Mick was reclining on the settle-bed jeering the R.I.C. When Cawley tried to enter, old Jim the Fenian, although blind and almost 80 years of age, jumped before him and defied him to enter. I was standing with my back to the fire and was sorely tempted to jump on Brady who was standing at the front door with his rifle loosely at the order. The door was partly open and I had the idea of rushing through it. Mick thought I was going to do this and was ready to enter the fray. He was over 6-ft. in height and powerfully built and I knew it was an easy matter for us. However I had to consider my mother, who was in rather delicate health and about 70 at the time, and might not be equal to the occasion. In this I was mistaken as I had good cause to know later. She had more rebel fire in her than the rest of us combined. Campbell was the other R.I.C. man whom I learned later was the man who took young Corry from his home at Four-Mile-House in South Roscommon one night in 1920 and shot him dead.

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I got employment in Miller's of Thomas St. at 30/- per week. Digs in Dublin at this time were nototiously bad and I paid 25/- per week for digs, which left me 5/- for other expenses. Miller's were Wine Merchants and Distillers. After leaving there as an unemployed hand I got 30/- per week unemployment money at the "Rink" or Rotunda. This is why I thought Miller's informed them that I left of my own free will.

While in Ennis I got to like the Clare people very well. They were a decent lot as was also the railway staff with the exception of a British head porter. This man was physically and mentally repulsive. I regret not that I have forgotten his name.

While in Ennis I attended a hurling match one Sunday in the local grounds. One of the contending teams was from the parish of Kilmooly. I remember this because of the roughness with which the match was played and because after one tough red-headed player was left sprawling on the field, he shouted in his stentorian voice not for a doctor but for the bonesetter (a bonesetter was a civilian quack). It was nice that, apart from the rough play, every person was even-tempered and seemingly enjoyed every minute of the hour.

When bidding goodbye to good friends in Martin Conlon's of Phibsboro, I remarked to a Miss Keaveney - a great wit - "When you meet me again I will be manager of the line". "Yes" she replied, "you will, the clothes line".

While in Limerick I stayed at McInerney's of 12 Wickham St. They were very nice people, expecially the old man who had in his youth travelled extensively and now was so proud of having two sons in the Volunteers. I got an idea that the people of Limerick, apart from being a nice sociable people, had a rather false notion that they were somewhat superior to other people from any county or province. They seemingly have, or had the 'Golden vein' on the brain. I am sure I made little

impression when I classed the 'vale' inferior to the Palace lands of Elphin and lands generally around Elphin in Roscommon or Caldra or Cherryfield. So it was that anyone who was not Limerick-born was delighted at the defeat of the Limerick County and Hurling team by Cork. The match was a classic treat/for the first time I realised what a great game hurling really was.

I returned to Dublin on getting the annual holidays and reported to Martin Conlon's in Phibsboro. One could always keep in touch with life in those days through Martin. His house was really a kind of headquarters or meeting-place for all the leading and militant circle of the independence movement in Dublin. Martin himself - always most unassuming - was a big shot in the I.R.B. and was highly respected and implicitly trusted by every acquaintance in or outside the movement. His wife, Peg, had a real heart of gold and was a favourite with aall.

It was at Martin's that I had the pleasure and honour to meet Sean Treacy, Dan Breen and Sean Hogan in the Spring of 1919. A price was on each of their heads then. The politicians were fighting shy of being identified with men of such extreme and militant ideas, but by Michael Collins, Martin Conlon and such men they were received with open arms while they bided the general renewal of the struggle later on.

Now from Martin's I returned to Roscommon, on instructions from Collins. I had met him (Collins) with Martin Conlon, in whose company I was at Vaughan's Hotel, Parnell Square. While home in Roscommon I contacted Bill Doherty and Seamus O'Ryan, as well as attending a few brigade council meetings and a brigade staff meeting in Hillstreet.

I tried to negotiate with G.H.Q. for the loan of at least six rifles to attack Strokestown Police Barracks, and though Martin did his best, the rifles were not forthcoming. The barracks was not attacked and no attempt was ever made to do so

afterwards. It was considered an easy victim, being a building attached to private residences of equal height on each end, and it was not fortified then as it was at a later date.

While I was attending a Battalion Council at Scramogue a young, highly intelligent and spirited volunteer was court-martialled for some imaginary breach of discipline and, despite his able defence he was found guilty and a very trivial punishment inflicted. When the sentence was announced, the volunteer jumped to the centre of the floor and, standing to attention, declared "I am only Private Gill, but by G... I could teach generals". Such was his protest against injustice. I mention this fact to show that the so-called officers were often the result of favouritism of friends.

I now heard of shooting having occurred in Limerick and I applied for a transfer to there. I was not long in Limerick however, until I was in trouble with the railway bosses there. They were a rotten lot and they behaved like dogs to me. I was put on night duty, but soon I was transferred to the goods yard. Here one could get some eatables. There was only fruit - plums and damsons to procure and these were only interfered with if the container, or cardboard box was broken.

While in Limerick and working on the hated railway there I on more than one occasion saw enemy forces composed of Tans, soldiers and R.I.C. being drafted south by special train and on these occasions I again and again repeated, as if in prayer the words of the I.R.B. oath which substantially were as follows "In the presence of Almighty God I do solemnly swear that I will do my utmost to establish the national independence of Ireland; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the Irish Republican Brotherhood, and I further swear that I will bear animosity to all enemies foreign and domestic, so help me God". This oath was amended after the 1918 general election to read: "and the Government of the Irish Republic which is Dáil Éireann

An amusing incident occurred one day in William Street just adjoining Wickham St. An old woman from the Clare side of the Shannon, arriving at the city to dispose of some eggs and fowl, remarked to her companion, another old lady: "It would be a terrible thing if the English brought their old tanks over here". At this time she was hitching her donkey to the protruding barrel of a machine gun belonging to one of them. I saw the same incident reproduced after in post card form but I witnessed the original incident. On another occasion I found a lost postcard on the passenger platform at the station. This postcard, more than anything else, unconsciously conveyed a very graphic expression of likes and dislikes and a very clear idea as to the light in which the outside world viewed us as a nation. The postcard was written by some lady in Paris to a gentleman friend in Limerick. On the postcard was written: "The more I see of some people the better I like my dog" and the address read: Limerick, England, Ireland. So much for our international status in 1919.

While I was in Limerick I made no contact with the I.R.A. or I.R.B.

Page 13. para. 2. original statement:- I now changed my digs from Parkgate St. to Montpelier Hill close by, where I became acquainted with an Irishman named Keogh who was serving as a British soldier and was constantly employed as a telephone linesman at British G.H.Q. nearby. His work took him all over the place and he informed me that on one occasion, while on his job in the Intelligence Office, he got a glance at some of the secret files while he was left momentarily alone and that he gleaned the fact that there were 750 women spies alone in the city. He also informed me that two special couriers left Dublin for the south almost weekly and one was armed with a 'Peter the Painter' pistol and the other a Webley revolver. He also told me that an English soldier who was one of the

party at Fernside told him that it would be a pity if either of the lads (Treacy or Breen) were shot. He said he saw one of them clinging with one hand to a rafter of the roof of the conservatory while he was firing his gun with the other hand. In connection with the above incident, or as a result of it, the British victims - 5 in number - were being conveyed in separate coffins on gun carriages to the North Wall en route for England along the quays on the north side of the Liffey. On the south side the trams were allowed to run and, whether it was a token of respect or otherwise I do not know, but detonators were placed on the tram lines and exploded like pistol shots as the trams passed over them. Just as the funeral cortege passed me as I walked along the quays, some of these exploded and a few urchins almost beside me shouted: "Up the rebels", "the lads are at it again".

In preparation for my return home around the Christmas of 1920, after a fruitless night calling on friends of O'Connell's who had promised him something and everything in the line of arms and were out when we called, I suggested a drink and unwittingly we called to the house directly opposite the Castle gate.

Page 14. original statement. The second barman asked what offence we had committed and we told him just curfew and then he inquired for his friends Jim White and Bill Brennan, neither of whom were in the Volunteers, but they worked with us at Kingsbridge Station and shared digs with me. Now, when we were taken to the Castle, we were marched up to the table where the sergeant of the Auxies was playing cards and rather haughtily inquired what had the country come to when decent law-abiding citizens could not walk the streets unmolested. The sergeant just smiled and said: "You are here now anyway and if we let you go you will be back again as curfew is on by now (10 o'clock).

Apart from some loose cash, the only other article found on us was a motor driver's permit O'Connell had on him. (Apparently at one time he drove as a chauffeur for a man named Wilson in Belfast whose son was killed in the 1914-18 World War and who soldiered as a pal with the officer in charge of the Auxies in Dublin Castle).

After being provided with a blanket and three biscuits or cushions each, we settled down for the night. Even then the irresponsible O'Connell whispered: "I am afraid we're finished, but I would not mind at all but I have an appointment with a girl friend for next Sunday night and she is a rare old tart".

Now for the first time I recognised the prisoner who lay beside O'Connell as Ernie O'Malley, though his back was towards me. Neither O'Connell nor I slept that night watching and listening. Neither can I say whether O'Malley slept as he lay perfectly still never changing position as much as an inch until about 7 o'clock in the morning when the Auxies rudely and savagely kicked him on the soles of his feet. The rest of us were called quite gently. On such occasions each man stands beside his bed and the sweeping brush is passed from one to the other and when I got a chance I swept the floor in O'Malley's direction and whispered: "Do you know me?" Later in the wash-house he told me that G.H.Q. were not yet aware of his arrest and when I asked if he thought there was any chance of escape he said: "No" and that he had studied the situation and it was only a question of the enemy making sure of his identity until they would finish him off. They had already taken him out to shoot him in an effort to extract information and had actually fired blank cartridges, but when the smoke cleared away he was leaning against the muzzles of their guns. He must have got terrible abuse because even his clothes were almost in rags.

His first greeting to me was in the wash-house was:

"Many a B..... went west since we last met". My previous meeting with him was in Ennis, referred to elsewhere. Later, after breakfast, we were given back our belongings and O'Connell and I were taken before the O/C. Auxiliaries who apologised for our detention and said all we had to do was to sign a document (produced to us) and he asked me to read it. I said: "please read it yourself" which he did. It was as follows:-

"I do not and shall not belong to any organisation not recognised by His Majesty the King and that I will report to the Officer Commanding the district when called upon to do so". Night address and day address. I said: "There is not much necessity for our signatures to that document as anyone can see what the country was being brought to by these disturbers of the Peace" and preparing to sign asked where and when would we report to the officer referred to. He told us not to worry any more and, calling the sergeant of the guard, requested him to show us the gate. This the sergeant did and, after a cordial handshake, we bade him goodbye, hoping to meet him sometime down town. We had scarcely got 10 yards away when O'Connell said: "What will my fellows think if any of them saw me shaking hands with a Black and Tan at the Castle Gate at 8 a.m. They will surely shoot me before night".

When I told Martin Conlon of O'Malley's request for clothes he advised me to buy them in Mary's Lane in a secondhand clothes shop because they might trace me through the laundry marks, should I give him some of my own. Nevertheless I disregarded his advice and, going to my digs, returned with a shirt and pants, accompanied by O'Connell whom I warned not to attempt to leave the Western Hotel until I returned and thus I approached the Castle again and, calling on a Red Cap military policeman, asked if I could see the sergeant of the Tans. This I immediately recognised was a grave error, as the Auxies, being all ex-officers, regarded it an insult to be referred to as Tans

but without making any reply the policeman called another Red Cap and said: "This chap wishes to see the sergeant of the Guard". He said: "Righto, let him in". This looked bad in a place like that and especially because of the errand I was on. Having no alternative I entered the Castle and on my way towards the guard-room met O'Malley with other prisoners and behind them came the sergeant of the guard who asked: "What have you done since, that you are back again?" I laughed and said: "A lousy fellow who was a prisoner there asked me to bring him some clothes when I got out" and asked him to be good enough to leave them in the guard-room for him. He asked me the prisoner's name. I said I did not know, but that it must be that tattered beggar, pointing at O'Malley. He said "Good" and called one of his men and told him to leave the parcel in the guard-room that this chap had brought in for the prisoner. This man said "Good" and turned for the guard-room with the parcel under his arm while I, alone now with the sergeant, referred to the weather as very "sloppy" - a Dublin expression in those days. With an anxious eye on the closed gate I turned in that direction as leisurely as possible and, when I got the other side, I, for the second time that morning, shook the Auxie's hand and with profuse thanks hoped for an early meeting where we might have a good time.

I had not got more than 10 or 15 yards from the Castle Gate when who should I see strolling towards me, contrary to our arrangements, but Mick O'Connell. I grinned at him to turn back and when I caught up with him asked him why in the name of goodness had he not waited as arranged. He said: "You were so long away I thought they had pulled you and I was calling to see if I could be of any help". I was surprised at his loyalty. I wonder who could have a better pal in any difficulty or any situation.

A day or two later I was on duty at Kingsbridge from

4 p.m. to midnight when Martin Conlon called on me and asked me to call to his sister's place in Church St., that Collins wished to see me about O'Malley and so, after going off duty at midnight, I called there. Upstairs in the sitting room at a game of cards were Mick Collins, Gearoid O'Sullivan, Sean O Murthuile, Diarmuid O'Hegarty, Sean Connolly and others. The majority were playing cards. I told Collins and O'Sullivan all I knew and suggested that O'Mara, the friendly policeman who was a bar-tender and waiter on the Auxies, might be of some help, and I was instructed that O'Connell and I should keep in touch with him. This necessitated our mixing with the Tans and Auxies in the "Stag's Head", a publichouse convenient to the Castle. During our visits there I saw not even one civilian apart from ourselves calling there. Though we met O'Mara frequently, he would give no decided answer and when at last we took him downstairs to the lavatory he seemed nervous and told us that he could do nothing to help. If he had promised to co-operate we were to make an appointment for him with Frank Thornton of Collins's staff. In the meantime, Collins got, through his friends in the Castle, information that while O'Mara was a decent chap, he was one of those who would take no risks and so the game was up and our playing with fire for so long bore no fruit. O'Malley was shortly afterwards transferred to Kilmainham Jail from which he escaped.

Regarding my going back to Roscommon, I pleaded with Collins and O'Hegarty to be sent to some other area - that the fact of I going home and assuming senior rank in brigade after a lapse of two years, with the exception of my yearly visits and despite my promise to Seamus Ryan and Bill Doherty and my own company, that I would return, my doing so would create jealousy in the officer ranks at home. Collins asked me what was my real objection and I answered that I would not mind if things were hotter returning as a private soldier. He

answered, with such a look I shall never forget: "If it is not hot enough it is up to you to go home and make it hot enough". I sprung to attention and walked downstairs without another word.

I had met Collins in Vaughan's on a few previous occasions, once or twice upstairs and once underneath through I being in Martin Conlon's company. On each occasion he was relaxed with seemingly not a care in the world, and on one occasion fondling a Kerry Blue terrier which, I heard later, was his favourite breed of dog. Now, when I contrast the two men, one, the Collins relaxed, and the other the Collins the Commander - what a difference! I cannot describe it, and I doubt if his most intimate pals could either. This magnetism was such that you simply became his slave - his slightest wish was law - your life was his. He banished fear of death and to die beside him or for him was sweet. He was one in a million - a prodigy. God forgive the criminals who were responsible for his death.

Regarding the lectures given to us at the Topographical Society premises, which was, as far as I can recollect, in Gardiner St., an old man was doorkeeper and he directed newcomers upstairs. Some young lads like myself attended those classes. I remember only a few names: Charlie McAllister - now Colonel McAllister in the army; McGuinn and Duffy, and lecturer on tactics was "Ginger" O'Connell. John Plunkett lectured on engineering, demolitions, construction of mines and the making of hand grenades from gas reducing sockets etc. Frequent visitors there were D. O'Hegarty and General Price, the director and vice-director of organisation. Mick Collins called once. George Plunkett was also there and was detailed to Waterford, as I was sent to Roscommon, where he was shortly afterwards captured after carrying off some 'stunt'. Duffy was a Wexford man, but I do not think that Duffy was his real name.

G.H.Q. wanted him to return to his native county but his answer was: "If I go to Wexford they will point out Vinegar Hill and tell me when the rest of Ireland does as much as we did there, Ireland will be free. I want to go back to have revenge for my family!" His wife was outraged by the Tans and one of his children murdered. I think he was one of the G.H.Q. organisers and only returned to report.

J.J. (Ginger) O'Connell referred to dispatches recently captured from the enemy. One of the dispatches dealt with the especial suitability of Ireland for guerilla warfare on account of the peculiar type of Irish bridges. They at G.H.Q. could not understand what it meant and later, when I discussed the subject with Sean Connolly, he was also puzzled and we thought they must mean the small bridges or gullies so numerous against which a mine could be propped by a baulk of timber, or, alternatively, that it could mean the high arches resulting in a hillock behind which riflemen could take cover and remain invisible to the enemy until they were almost on top of them.

Another dispatch intended for Lord French was from Mrs. Cecil stating that her husband would be away in England over the weekend with dispatches on Sinn Feiners and how she so longed to leave her head once more on his noble breast.

About this time I had bought some flower bulbs at Mackey's to send home and, as I was turning the corner at Bachelor's Walk just outside the corner house - Kapp & Petersen's - I was walking pretty fast and immediately found myself in the middle of a holdup. I was informed that an ambush had taken place in that locality some few minutes before this. An Auxie, sticking his gun into my chest - proceeded to run the other hand over my clothes and, coming on the flower bulbs, asked what I had in my pocket and I said: "Bulbs" and he jumped back and shouted "bombs". I again said "bulbs",

whereupon some of the other people, who were also held up, laughed, or rather smiled, while some, especially a young lady about 20 yards away, looked as if all belonging to her were wiped out and like the last rose of summer left blooming alone. I was allowed to proceed almost immediately.

On another occasion, having met Marty O'Connor as soon as he was able to leave hospital I arranged to meet him at Neary's Hotel. Marty had been a patient in the Richmond Hospital as a result of severe burns sustained while trying to burn the Courthouse at Strokestown. Neary's Hotel was in Parnell St. and the management - Pat Conlon and his wife, who were also the owners, were wellknown to us. As I arrived from the direction of Capel St. to the corner of the street opposite the Rotunda I found myself on the fringe of a cordon who were searching Conlon's. A lorry or two and an armoured car were parked opposite the hotel. I feared that Marty might fall into the net so I remained on the outside of the cordon and was much relieved to see the lorries drive away without any victim. That raid was either a strange coincidence or the result of information because it was carried out at the exact hour and minute - 4 p.m. - the time of our appointment. These two occasions, apart from the time O'Connor and I were arrested when my bad temper was at fault, I was never held up away from home and, apart from the invitation by O'Malley in Clare and an intimation from Paddy Houlihan, my company commander in Dublin, that I might expect a call from the enemy soon - a call that never came - I had no reason to believe that they were on my house, so to speak.

The fact was that there were too many men in the city who were only too eager to engage in any action, however dangerous, against the enemy. Each Dublin company vied with each other as to which Mick Collins would crown with the laurel crown, inspired by his leadership. They feared not death or danger,

they would storm the gates of hell, though led by a complete stranger.

The only occasion I had the honour of meeting and speaking with that great Irishwoman, the Countess Markievicz, was when on one occasion I called to the Richmond Hospital to see Marty O'Connor, where he was a patient suffering from severe burns received when with others - Hunt, Scally and Flanagan from Clonfree - attempted to destroy the Courthouse in Strokestown. When I entered, the Countess was sitting by Marty's bed chatting with him. After a while she took him to the balcony of the hospital where she told us the history of Easter Week. Pointing out the windows in the College of Surgeons from which she fired on the English, and remarking: "It was good to see them fall". Here, I thought, we have a modern Joan of Arc. She was a great soul.

When I returned to Roscommon I stayed that night in Martin Conlon's of Feragh. Martin was a cousin of the Dublin Martin.

Referring to the attack on Elphin R.I.C. Barracks and page 17 of my original statement. I returned to the Dispensary and Tom Duignan and I returned to see if the whistle blasts really meant retirement. The Tans were still firing but the only visible sign of life we saw was a black cat that jumped from the back windows of ~~th~~ of Pat Durr's house which was opposite the barracks, a jump of at least 30 feet. One other sign - the people in their houses on the Strokestown side were reciting the Rosary and surely if they before and afterwards prayed half so fervently their salvation is assured. I accompanied the Ballinameen lads and stayed in Tom Duignan's that night.

On our way to Hillstreet we called to Kelly's of Ballinamee village and there Connolly told me that he longed for the old days before the trouble in Ireland when he met his pals each evening to have a stout and a chat, but then he said almost

wistfully: "We have done nothing for Ireland yet". At this time we got information that the police had instructions to take over positions quietly at any given crossroads under cover of darkness and wait in ambush during the night. Connolly instructed me that in the event of we getting the order to halt that we throw ourselves flat on the ground or road and open fire immediately. However, we arrived at Delia 'Beirne's of Hillstreet without mishap. When Connolly left us to go to Delvin, John Daly of Kilmore Company and some others whom Commandant Dorr, the battalion O/C., had provided acted as his escort to Jamestown on his way to the Leitrim Brigade.

Regarding the attempt to ambush a patrol of R.I.C. and Tans in Elphin referred to on page 18, the only living thing we saw on the streets of Elphin was a he-goat on the middle of the street opposite the barrack door and the animal, recognising our presence, jumped or stood on its hind legs and in good language voiced his disapproval. Ammunition was too valuable to waste a shot so we left the town to darkness and the puck goat.

Pat Madden was Battalion O/C. 3rd Battalion, South Roscommon Brigade. I told Pat of my attendances at the G.H.Q. classes of instruction and as to how neighbouring brigades could co-operate; how, after an action, there should be some pre-arranged place of retirement, and he remarked that it was no area that could not safeguard or hide its men. Though it was our first meeting, I knew I met a man amongst men. The bearing of the men of his company made a deep impression on me. Although I did not know at the time that he had amongst them such men - John and Josie Gibbons, Hughes, Farrell, Mulready, Jem Tiernan, Tom Madden, Dick and Frank Simmons and Luke Duffy and others equally as good. They were unbeatable, many of them having two or more years of the World War I to their credit. Well might an Irish patriot of today exclaim: "Oh, for one hundred thousand of such leaders and such men."

I mention this fact simply to illustrate and give as clear an idea as I can the great contrast between officers and men in many areas throughout Roscommon in the dark and evil days. The phrase or description applied to the National Army later was applicable pre-truce: "A small body of men surrounded by officers".

Even though the organisation was by now almost perfect many of the senior officers, though absolutely trustworthy, showed a lack of initiative and enthusiasm that was discouraging and disappointing as the following incident will show: I had notified the Cornaska Company that I would inspect it on a given night and so, after cycling about 10 miles, I contacted an officer newly appointed to the company. I asked him for a guide for the remainder of my journey. He was ploughing a field at the time and the only assistance forthcoming was directions as to the shortest route and to a house where I could call for further instructions. I had to be content with this while he resumed his ploughing. When I got to the house as directed I was wearing a trench coat. The young lady in the house, Miss Gill, was visibly nervous, mistaking me, as she obviously did, for a Tan, and especially so when I said I wanted to see her brother, Michael. I gave her my name and told her my business, whereupon she was much relieved. She went to the fields where her brother was working also with horses and this man, without the least demur, unyoked his horses and as expeditiously as possible accompanied me on the rest of the way to the place of rendezvous.

Page 19. Scramogue. After my meeting with Pat Madden at Farrell's I learned later that he inspected - alone - the point of ambush at Scramogue on two occasions. Michael Hunt of Ashbrook saw him on each occasion and can today verify for the truth of this statement.

Nangle and I were detailed by Madden to have the people

removed from their houses and put into one house for safety. Nangle did guard at the door. This gave each one of the detained people a full and prolonged view of Nangle and hence the informer later at Roscommon.

As I ran along the laneway I saw a soldier get inside the hedge opposite the tender on the right-hand side of the road from Strokestown to Longford. I asked Dick Hughes to give me his rifle, but he would not and said: "Just show him to me" which I did. I got a shotgun from someone beside Dick and only fired that one shot that morning. There was no occasion, as Hughes was a man not likely to miss his mark.

Contrary to arrangements or instructions there was no place of retirement arranged by the 3rd Battalion and, soaked as we were, I a stranger to the layout of the place was left with the Tan prisoner. Martin Fallon went away on his own. The irony of it all was that while Brian Nangle was a prisoner some others who were then as at all times immune to arrest were enjoying the hospitality of his home and the luxury of his bed. Jem Lynagh was company captain, Curraghroe; Brian Nangle was on the battalion staff; Martin Fallon was in charge of a section with shotguns.

Page 22. As we jumped out on the road a sergeant, who was in charge of the first lorry of Tans, said to me: "You are no cowards anyway". I replied: "There are enough of them here". Immediately they started tearing my clothes asunder and other abuse and then I called the friendly sergeant and said: "Please, sir, put some manners on these curs". He replied that I was his prisoner and that nothing would happen to me there. Suddenly I thought of Nangle and, looking up the road, saw him being searched and abused. Needless to say, I was very glad to see him alive and I now asked one of the Tans for a cigarette and ever since I firmly believe in telepathy because immediately Nangle said in a loud voice "Will any of you give me a cigarette

Just then I looked around and saw the R.I.C. and soldiers and Tans were standing in line on each side of the road. I made a dash through them. I know not why, unless it was the instinct to get a way and seeing no escape from certain death. I only got a few yards when a burly R.I.C. man blocked my path. I cannot explain how I hit him, but he went sprawling into the hedge. The rest gathered around, all trying to hit me at the same time. There were too many of them and one was impeding the other and no harm came my way much, until a little soldier hit me on the back of the head with his rifle. As I fell to the road an R.I.C. man with a thin evil looking face jumped on my hip and shouted: "Lie down you B....." I replied: "Never to you" and I sprang to my feet in terror of being kicked to death. His foot was on my hip and as I sprang up the action of doing so somersaulted him into the hedge. I now put my hands by my sides and again addressing the friendly sergeant said: "Sir, I surrender to you as a prisoner and I hope to be treated as such". He and some of his men took me to a Crossley tender and handcuffed me to Nangle. I want to emphasise here that there were no documents of any description whatever got on either of us. It should be obvious to the most shallow mind that anyone at that time, especially those on the run (unless one fit for the asylum) was likely to carry on his person any incriminating documents whatsoever. Yet those who were not within miles of us would have it otherwise to please, I suppose, their envious and evil minds.

After being placed on the tenders all the rest, with the exception of Joyce the driver, scattered, searching the houses again. I asked Joyce for a cigarette and he smiled and said: "Surely you have a cheek". I said: "You can get them in that house over there. Your lads have all my cash". He kept smiling but said no more. I have often heard since that this Joyce was the famous "Haw Haw" of Hitler's regime. He was a great soldier and a good sort. It was he who previously drove his

load of dead and wounded through Madden's ambush at Four-mile-house.

After the searching party had finished, all proceeded to Roscommon and at Rattigan's publichouse we met the Auxiliaries. They wanted to shoot us there, but our friend the sergeant and the Roscommon Tans formed a cordon round our car and so we proceeded to Strokestown where we were first driven to the R.I.C. Barracks. After a while - seemingly on instructions received there - without removing us from the tender they proceeded to the Demesne House, Strokestown, where the Lancers had their headquarters. Here the soldiers - Captain Peak's men - were frantic and mad to be avenged on us. They surrounded the tender shouting "You shot our captain". I protested our innocence and they would say with derision: "Look at the ..... innocent face of him". Again our friends, the sergeant and Roscommon Tans, insisted on taking us to Roscommon and then they could do with us as they pleased. Joyce turned his tender and as he did so the soldiers tore up the gravel in handfuls and flung it at us, but the wire cage, as they were known by, which covered the tender, gave us protection. This was the second time that day that this wire cage had been my friend and protector. When we had stopped at Rattigan's, one of the Auxies tried to punch me on the side of my head with the butt of his rifle. Thanks to the delay caused by the wire to the butt of the rifle, I got a split second to dodge it and it glanced harmlessly by my forehead. Had I got the blow as directed and with the force behind it, I have little doubt but that my troubles were at an end.

Page 23. Immediately we were taken off the tender outside the old jail door, a soldier who was wearing a Red Cross badge, snapped the bayonet off the sentry's rifle and following us up the stone steps (we were still handcuffed together) jabbed us with the bayonet. I got just one in the

leg, but Nangle must have got a number. We were unhandcuffed on the landing outside the cell doors and I was put in the first cell, and Nangle in the one next. Sergeant Mulleady of Ballagh and the Red Cross blackguard followed me into my cell and Mulleady said: "Your name is not Pat Madden, for I know all the Maddens". I answered: "Does a name matter now anyway?" to which he replied: "You are about right". He plied me with many more questions, while all the time the Red Cross coward was making jabs at me with the bayonet. Each time Mulleady caught his wrist. After a few minutes of this I completely lost control of myself and, jumping on him - the Red Cross man - crushed him into a corner of the cell saying: "Do you think I am going to cower to you either?" Mulleady shoved me back and my Red Cross hero, hanging down his head, left the cell. During the week I was there he always did likewise and turned away when he saw me. I think he was ashamed of his bravado. Another Red Cross soldier came and dressed my wounds. He was a nice fellow. Later, I was supplied with a damp single blanket but no bedding. A heavy iron grating embedded at one end in the cell wall served as a bedstead. When the cell door was closed I took off my boots and socks. When asked my name I had give that of Pat Madden. I cannot explain why, of all names, I should have given that one. Madden at this time was one of the most wanted men in Ireland. It must have been because of the very deep impression Madden had made on me from our first meeting. He had a fascinating and strong personality.

As soon as I heard the clank of the heavy iron door and the grating of the key in the lock I jumped to the side of the bed and slipped on my boots to protect my toes. I was first addressed by D.I. Cole who started his interrogation by telling me that he was one of ours until his pals tried to sell him and now he was having his revenge. He said he had seen me at a meeting in the quarry at the back of Four-mile-house and that

Bill Doherty had sold us all. Of course, I was well aware that this was the old trick to try to get you to squeal and I knew Doherty was already a prisoner of theirs and was as true as steel. Doherty and Seamus Ryan were the first I ever heard referred to as "two old Sinn Feiners" as early as 1915 when the name Sinn Feiners was unknown in Roscommon. I also knew that D.I. Cole was aware that everyone in Roscommon knew Doherty, so I answered that I was not surprised and that he - the D.I. - was lucky to have found them out in time.

The D.I. next asked me about Mick Dockery and if I knew Dockery. I told him there was no such name in Roscommon, but he insisted there was and said that Dockery was in Hillstreet recently. I said that could be but he must be a stranger and anyway I was never in Hillstreet more than twice in my life. He, the D.I., then admitted that he had made a mistake and that Doherty was the name, and I said: "Oh, Mick Doherty; he used to play football for Aughrim. I did not see him since 1917 in Elphin". He next questioned me on the Maddens, especially Pat and I said that living so far away I did not know any of them. He next inquired if I knew Frank Simons and I said: "Never heard the name before" and, as an after thought, I said that the Madden he was referring to must be Andy Madden who was a famous footballer and known to everyone in Connaught. All this time they were in an ugly mood, Stainer having me covered with his Webley revolver, while Cole held the cat-o-nine-tails ready to start his work. I now said that if I got the chance of a fair trial - which I had no doubt of getting - they would be surprised. Stainer now said that my gun was fouled and I replied that that could not be unless by dust from my pocket, whereupon he got more aggressive and asked did I mean to say he was a liar, he who had 25 years experience of firearms. I said I would be very sorry to insult him, but I could assure him that I did not fire any gun.

To my great relief they left me and went into Nangle's cell. I have only one explanation as to why I had no fear at any time - even hanging had no terror. Even at the risk of giving scoffers a chance to sneer I give the following fact: Some years previously I read in the "Sacred Heart Messenger" that anyone who said three times in the morning and three times on retiring for the night the following prayer: "Sacred Heart of Jesus I trust in Thee" had no cause to fear. This I usually practised night and morning at the time and so it was before our capture, while the bullets passed through my hair and pattered on the stones beside me, as I went into the field where I was captured, not even a splinter of a stone touched me while those British marksmen were not more than 20 yards from me. I said that prayer immediately the first car came in view and a few times while trying to force my way through the alley cuts before I rushed through to the second field.

The repercussions in Government and even in Royal circles resulting from the Scramogue ambush was immense. We viewed it in the light that there was one foe less in Ireland now, but across the water Lord Asquith, ex-Premier, had lost a near kinsman as Lieutenant Tennant was a nephew to Mrs. Asquith whose maiden name was Tennant. Captain Peak was closely related to Royalty and thus No. 10 Downing St. and Buckingham Palace automatically were placed in mourning by a few "country mugs". Captain Peak, a short time previously, - sure he was going to get - dead or alive - Madden and his boys, said to his soldiers when giving them instructions, pointing to Slieve Bawn: "They are there or in hell", and to his machine gunner: "You have a thousand rounds and know what you have them for". Whatever about the other place of retirement, he certainly never got another chance of investigating Slieve Bawn again.

While a prisoner in Roscommon, someone sent me in some underclothes which were confiscated by a corporal or sergeant

and who was also a Jew. Imagine how pleased I felt as a prisoner when I got the news that one night this man, when a member of a patrol which tried to penetrate into Pat Madden's area, ran up against Peter Collins who was doing sentry for Madden and who marked the bill "paid".

To explain Stainer's rage on Easter Sunday - I had seen Sergeant Cawley through the grated windows of my cell speaking to Lieut. Stainer the day previously at the Officers' Mess and I knew he had given Stainer full details regarding my past and I was then, as I am now, fully convinced that I got the soft side of him and partly convinced him that I was quite harmless. At all events now he was a maniac and shouted: "You're the greatest liar and hypocrite I ever met and only that I would not stain my hands with you ....." and so on.

Page 26. I appealed to the Officer i/c. and he ordered the men to stop and they now whispered to me that they would shoot me. I said shooting would be decent in comparison, but they were too cowardly and mean for that. I had lost control of my temper for the second time since my arrest. The unmerciful beating continued. Further appeals to the Officer i/c. were ignored but they ceased to torture with the lighted matches. At Kiltoom we were all bloody and the fact of we refusing to hold our heads down only made them more savage.

At Athlone we were placed in cells opposite each other with other prisoners. Sean Ratigan from Athlone shared my cell and also Matty Tully, a Councillor from outside Athlone. The military doing C.B. punishment (confined to barracks) were confined upstairs and so when Matty Tully recited "Bingen on the Rhine" they all flocked outside our cells and said we were great and so we started to arrange our escape. One soldier suggested that we should overpower the orderly that came to lock us up for the night and a few of them were game to come with us and knew their way about. Things looked bright enough, but our

plans did not materialise as Nangle and I were transferred one piercing cold morning to the Curragh. Nevertheless I got a mental picture of Athlone Barracks inside and out from Sean Rattigan and this was a great help when, a month later, on my return to stand trial on the purpose of a summary of evidence I bade them all goodbye - leaving as a souvenir the tail of my shirt flying gaily in the Gentle May breeze from the highest strand of barbed wire fence that surmounted the 12-ft. high wall which on the Athlone side fenced the barracks.

In the Cameronians' Barracks in the Curragh we were placed in cells side by side at the back of the guardroom. We were only allowed to exercise in a yard attached, which measured nine yards by six, and covered over with interwoven barbed wire. While on exercise in this confined space, a soldier with fixed bayonet did guard on us. We were never allowed to exercise together. Only on one occasion after being there a few days we were taken for a bath and to have our clothes fumigated. On that occasion the Provost or police sergeant referred to us while under escort with fixed bayonets as a lousy B..... As usual, we were handcuffed together and though we were, Nangle turned round in a temper to retort but one of the soldiers said: "Do not mind, Paddy, he is only a cur and might shoot you". Nangle and I were able to converse pretty freely while in our cells by tapping on the hot water pipes that passed at ground level through the cells. The tapping would call the attention of the person to be spoken to, so all we had to do was be on the floor of our cells and the pipes acted on the same principle as a telephone does. In this way, any news or any message we wished to transmit to one another was passed through. It was very useful as well as passing the time and particularly so when we tried to make arrangements for our escape.

Negotiations for our escape came through a Scotch soldier

who was confined to barracks for the duration of his service and who daily did fatigue duty, generally scouring barrack utensils in the small yard referred to. This harsh sentence as related to me by himself came about in this manner: He had gone through World War I for its full duration, 1914-18, and on armistice day got drunk celebrating the event. For this offence he was courtmartialled and he considered too severely dealt with for such an offence on such an occasion. Being a man of spirit he swore that he would never serve England another day. When his time was up he flogged his kit again and again until finally his Commanding Officer gave up in despair of having him reformed. This soldier and another, an Irishman in the same boat, were determined to steal the keys of our cells from the guardroom as soon as the opportunity arose, but this opportunity was always deferred through no fault of theirs as at that time the same unit never occupied the barracks for more than one week at a time. The guard was always composed of storm troopers - soldiers sent on raiding expeditions throughout the country and so were constantly on the move. Members of the regimental band were compelled to do guard duty on more than one occasion. They were hard-pressed or they would not use those men for duty. One of those soldiers showed me our tricolour tattooed on his arm and he told me that unless we got away before we were transported to Mountjoy there was no hope for us. He said he knew the soldier that identified me and that he would try and persuade him to retract his statement. I never saw that soldier again. There were a few more as anxious to be more helpful as he if they could but I never saw them more than twice. One such soldier was a member of the band. The whole matter of our escape was left in the hands of the Irish and Scotch defaulter soldiers. I never met anyone half as wild and reckless as the Irishman. He said one day to me: "You know what awaits you when you get to Mountjoy,

then why dally here". I said: "How will I get going". He said: "Wrench the rifle off one of them little B.....s and shoot your way out". I came to the conclusion that he was mad or nearly so.

There in the cells we lingered on in hopes day after day and at least on one night we were assured everything was smooth sailing, when a crowd of storm troopers arrived with a fresh batch of prisoners - some new captures and some old - including Marty O'Connor of Strokestown and Frank Treacy of Kiltrustan. They were parked in the other spare cells. An old man and his son from Enfield, I think, were placed in my cell. Still we kept hoping on until at 6 a.m. in the morning our soldier friend called hurriedly to my cell and told me the crowd that came with the prisoners had remained playing cards in the guardroom and that he and his pal had no chance of getting the keys.

That night I was transferred from my cell to another one further down the passage and a guard was placed outside my door all night. The Scotch soldier came in the morning and told me that a bloody Jew, a sergeant, had heard himself and the Irish soldier talking and had reported that we were planning to escape. We were not long in the Curragh when a Miss Flanagan of Kilglass (later Mrs. John Lowe of Ballyfeeny) sent through one of the soldiers whom she contacted and could depend on an envelope containing some cigarettes and a shirt and pants which were sent from home. There was also a £5 note from Michael Dockery from the brigade funds. That £5 was a great friend of mine, because an odd half-crown was passed to the military police or red caps and friendly soldiers, and such gifts were appreciated. Often a soldier would come to the spy hole in my cell door and shove a few small buns through it. On one occasion the Provost Sergeant called and I gave him 5/- to have a drink in the canteen. He looked at me and said:

"Many of your fellows have passed through my hands, some of them were real gentlemen; some of them were rough, but I do not know what to make of you". I said: "Have no fear, I don't bite". He went away laughing his thanks. Constantly, concentrating as we were on nothing but escape I took advantage to conceal a knife which was accidentally left in my cell after dinner. It was half blade of good quality and with it day after day I continued to dig into the hard wood of the jamb of my cell door inside and around the lock, so that as a last resort, I would be in a position to force the piece. It was my intention to try getting away over the lavatory in the yard where the net~~s~~ and barbed wire were not so close. The chance however did not come as a result of the Jew's report for the next morning we were taken out and after threats, because of our contemplated escape and our guileless protests, we bade goodbye to our good friends Scotty and Paddy and started by tender back to Athlone where I was placed in Brian Nangle's old cell while he was placed in the Detention Room, where not ~~so~~ bad prisoners were detained.

In my cell now in Athlone was a man from South Roscommon named Dockery who was charged with murder. He had accidentally killed a neighbour coming from a cattle fair in Roscommon town. He was a decent genuine sort and expected his release any day now. I told him I had scabies which I had developed on the Curragh and he told me to complain when the doctors called on his visits. I told him I would not complain, that I had already complained in the Curragh and they took no notice and now I would not give them another chance of refusing a second time. He said he would complain if I did not, because he did not want to contract them and infect his household on his release. The doctor called in due course and the usual "Any complaints" was asked. I said "No, sir" and Dockery started to speak so I called the doctor and told him about the itching

between the fingers and especially at night. He seemingly ignored me and I was mad with Dockery for being the cause.

About this time Gerald Davis, a south Roscommon man whom I knew in Dublin as a medical student and who was sent by G.H.Q. to organise Westmeath Brigade, was captured and now joined us as a prisoner in the cells. There were 13 of us all told, considered bad cases ~~put~~ together, and amongst them was a man named Partridge from Longford who was taken near his home. He had attempted to hide in a bush and, ostrich like, he thought when his head was covered that he was invisible, but found to his surprise he was not by the touch or prick of a bayonet in the best part of his ham. He was arrested and charged with the murder of 13 killed at Cloonfin in an ambush carried out by Sean McKeon.

This man Partridge was a nervous type. He was in the cell with us awaiting a summary of evidence to be taken against him, so that when Davis (now Dr. Davis in the army) and I started to plan an escape from Athlone, Partridge would have nothing to do with us. One day the summary of evidence was taken and he was accused and identified with the killing of 13 enemy forces at Cloonfin. He returned to us very depressed and as we took the usual exercise, walking in double file around a wooden hut one beautiful day in May, he sat with his head between his hands. As I passed by in company with Davis, I said: "Partridge are you game now?" and he replied: "By G... I am game for anything". God forgive us if we laughed, but under the circumstance it was partly excused.

Through the visitors who called weekly we got in touch with George Adamson, the Brigade O/C. in Athlone area, and arranged for his co-operation. We planned that when we were on our way to Mass in the gymnasium on a given Sunday we would overpower our guards and all who wished could escape over a low part of the barrack wall opposite the gymnasium. Adamson and

his men would open fire on the guard on the balcony of the gymnasium for the few minutes that were necessary. Imagine my dismay when a military policeman called me from exercise and said: "G..., I'll be in trouble; you should have been in hospital; come on quick". I was on friendly terms with this soldier and tried to evade going with him to the hospital, but there was no way out and, just as we arrived at the hospital, I remembered that I had left my trench-coat behind me and, giving him a half-crown, asked his permission to fetch it. We both arrived back at the cells and I ran down the steps to where Davis and the rest were at exercise. I pulled Davis into the lavatory and told him my position and that he must carry on with the arrangements for escape and that I would be with him at all costs on the following Sunday at the gymnasium.

I now joined the policeman and took my abode in hospital on the third floor where there were 15 soldier~~s~~ skin patients. Some of those I discovered through their conversation were at Farrell's on the day Nangle and I were caught. They referred to us as the two most obstinate ..... who tried to beat us all and were the worst ever they had met. It was a big ward and we used to play football in it together and were good friends. The football was a lump of paper tied with twine. My exercise ground was ~~was~~ at the back of the hospital with the usual companion with fixed bayonet. One of these companions was a conscript of Irish extraction and he told me that he was never allowed to go to Mass for the few years that he had been in the British army. He always had to parade with his regiment to the Protestant Church, but he was allowed to remain outside and not take part in the service.

The guard on the soldier patients and ~~the~~<sup>J.</sup> were very lax there and the door of our room was not locked, just closed on the latch. My bed was beside the door. I had nothing to do but just walk down the stairs and with luck get home, but

could not break my promise to Davis by escaping or attempting to compromise the arrangements for the following Sunday. This was the situation when Miss Duffy from Coosan called next visiting day and urged me not to put off the opportunity. I reluctantly refused and told her I would take the risk and bide my time. Later I had good cause to regret my decision for the following Saturday night and the night previous to our arrangements, a prisoner detained in the gymnasium named Scally from Longford escaped by concealing himself in the lavatory (underneath) before the general lock-up for the night. He was not missed until some time later. He was only one of about 200 detained there with no charge preferred against him. As prisoners they had a royal time. From the hospital window I could see them playing football. They were much more secure there than outside and a great many of them recognising this fact had no wish to leave. If they were discharged it was with a sign of regret they turned homewards. The same could be said of many of the detention prisoners. We in the cells could hear them playing music and games during the night and until lights out they had a concert every night.

When trying to organise the mass escape I noticed the apathy of many, attributable to their present contentment. Miss Duffy had something similar in mind when she urged me not to depend on Sunday's success. Many of those lackadaisical heroes became great fire-eaters during the truce and especially so after the treaty was signed and supported their brethren of the same heroic mould, who never previously did more than frighten sparrows from their fathers haggard. The result of such false support helped to add many martyrs to the "Roll of honour". Again the cream of Irish manhood was skimmed of the national pail and the country was forced to sweeten the national tea with buttermilk which over a period was becoming sourer and sourer. So it went on and the country had become so bilious

that it was forced absolutely to call on a few 'specialists from Armagh' to carry out an autopsy which thank God proved successful and the vaccine used on that occasion has been admitted by all great authorities to be the only remedy for a national headache.

On the vital Sunday I got permission to attend Mass at the gymnasium and the soldier referred to earlier who had not been allowed to Mass for some years was delighted as he would act as one of two who would accompany me. Of course he and I well understood that being an isolated patient, liable to spread infection we would be blasted to hell by Black Jack who as already stated was responsible for the security of the prisoners. Now one had escaped the previous night and the other at large so to speak (that should be in close confinement and who had almost gone from the Curragh) and who he 'Black Jack' had made it his special mission to warn with all the venom of his make up "to try and attempt it and take a short cut to hell". I arrived with the soldier at the gymnasium and he insisted that I should go up towards the altar because if Black Jack saw me he was sure to turn us back. As I had arranged with Davis that I would be there, I could not get from the door of the gymnasium until the racket started, as the detention prisoners came round the bend towards the gymnasium led by Davis. The soldier urged me almost with tears to come where Black Jack would not see us, but I could not and with that Black Jack accompanied by a young officer <sup>ARRIVED</sup> Immediately he saw me he ordered me back to "hell". I pleaded with him saying that we Catholics liked to attend Mass so much, and now that I was there would he please let me remain. The more I pleaded the matter the angrier he became and turned white with rage. The little conscript soldier was tugging at my sleeve and whispering "Paddy, he'll shoot you". Black Jack being adamant, I turned to the young officer who resembled a giraffe

- he had such a long neck and towered more than a foot above me. To my pleading he seemed to be completely deaf. All the time Black Jack was jumping with rage, but time was flying and at last the detention prisoners came in view - Gerald Davis in front shook his head to intimate that all was up, or nothing doing. The officer shook his head to intimate that I could not stay, so we retraced our steps to the hospital. I now determine to walk down the stairs as I could have done any night during the previous week, only to find now a padlock fixed on the door of our ward. The door, previous to Scally's escape, was always on the latch.

The weather now was very hot and rather sultry in the ward so we would raise and lower the windows at will. The next day when my soldier companions were out at exercise I removed one of their beds a short distance from the corner of the room and pushed up the inner sash of the window with the intention of getting through that night and clinging to a downpipe, try my luck. I doubted my ability to do the cat burglar successfully, having no previous experience. Still I had no alternative if I wished to escape the "noose of the hangman's rope" that with the passage of every hour was dangling nearer and nearer. That night when all the world was seemingly at rest I cautiously approached the window beside the soldier's bed, and as I was getting through on the first lap of a three-storey descent to the yard below, the soldier stirred restlessly in his bed and gave a long yawn. I swiftly and silently retreated to my bed on the floor beside the door as he lighted his Woodbine cigarette and dashed my hopes for the time being. As Shakespeare has expressed it: "There is a divinity that shapes our ends, rough hew them as you will".

One day later at exercise my friend the red cap policeman called me and I asked where he was taking me. He replied that I was coming back here again. He and I now crossed the square

together and for the first time since my arrival back in Athlone I met Mangle who with me was being taken before a military legal officer of high rank, judging by his epaulettes and many ribbons and decorations, to have summary evidence taken.

When the wounded prisoners arrived after the Kilmeena ambush my Red Cross friend - the soldier Paddy from Tipperary - assisted in carrying the wounded men upstairs. He told me that the red haired prisoner who seemed to be badly wounded informed the police that it was he who had shot the D.I. and asked them not to place the blame elsewhere. I think that Mayo man died of his wounds, but he did his best to save his comrades by taking all the blame himself. I am sorry I did not get his name at the time. He was one of Ireland's greatest.

I had also assisted in the carrying up of those wounded men to a ward on the second floor. The windows of this ward had iron bars or grating as a precaution against prisoners patients escaping or for some such purpose. It was what could be termed the strong room of the hospital and as it came to pass that after the summary of evidence being taken against me and after being accused and identified of the murder of four of His Majesty's soldiers I was returned to the hospital. This time I was put in a cubicle adjoining the Mayomen's ward with an armed guard day and night on duty there. The day of the taking summary of evidence was my second day in this room which was lighted by one large window about 5-ft. high. On my first night here I remained awake to observe the routine and my hopes were light as I realised that my door was kept wide open and the Catholic soldier sitting on a chair - his rifle between his knees - facing the window at 8 a.m. on the first morning. I think he doubted that I would try to get away, but he must have kept his suspicions to himself, because when the guard to which he belonged was changed for a new one the door remained closed all night. The soldier who carried my bedding from the

third storey to the cubicle further down asked me why I was staying there when I could go. I said that they had no charge against me and that after some hospital treatment I hoped to be released. I also said that if I wished to escape where could I go only that way pointing in the direction opposite to that I had in mind. He said to me: "That is the wrong way, get round to the back". I thanked him and said I had no notion of going at the moment, that it was not worth the risk. I gave him the last half crown of Dockery's £5 note. He said: "You are a toff and you can always depend on me to do what I can".

I had determined that I would never confide in anyone any more and so it was, though I had the utmost confidence in this man's sincerity and although, emptied I did not take him into my confidence neither did I give Nangle any hint though I saw he was heartbroken when he heard charges preferred against me while he was only charged with being in possession of some ammunition. I thought he would enjoy the news all the more, that might come to him the next day.

Before going for the summary of evidence I noticed a slatted ladder of about 12 rungs lying against a shed at the back of the hospital and so it was after my return to my cubicle, I asked the young officer in charge of the fresh guard if I could have a drink of water and before he had time to call on one of his men to procure I ran past him up the stairs to the tap. He was calling after me to come back. I filled my mug at the tap and could see through the window that the ladder was still in the same position. I then ran downstairs again. I asked the same officer if he would be good enough to post a letter for me. He said: "Certainly Paddy, but I will have to read it first". I said, of course, that that did not matter and that he was welcome to do so. I told him that it is only a question of making arrangements for my defence

as the summary of evidence had been taken that day, I might expect my trial soon. So I wrote a note to Miss Nangle (Brian's sister) telling her I expected my trial soon and to please call on visiting day next week so that I could make arrangements for my defence. I finished by saying we were quite well, that we were well treated and that I would be looking forward to her next visit. The officer read this and promised to have it posted which he did, and so having him put off his guard I returned to bed, having earlier in the day let down the top sash of the window. This attracted no notice because of the oppressive heat inside, especially so because of the sun's rays beating fully on my windows from noon to sunset.

From my observations of the previous night I determined to make my getaway at 1 a.m. so, taking a book to read that the officer kindly lent me I went to sleep. I must have awakened at the exact time I had determined but that being a full moon and the weather so fine I could not judge whether it was night or day and so I waited until the barrack clock chimed the quarter, then the half hour and at last 3 a.m. Now the sentry outside the door was being relieved and I could hear them talking outside my door which was closed, but probably would be kept open by the new arrival. I got as gently as possible from the bed which had a sort of a chained mattress which to my ears made unearthly sounds. I took my trench coat on my arm, got onto the window and put one leg over. In getting over the other, my knee lightly touched the sash and the tail of the coat, which was the only article of clothing left in my charge and in the pocket of which was my razor, lightly touched the window. Even though this only made a slight noise it sounded like thunder to me in the awful stillness which was only broken by the murmur of voices outside the door, barely two yards away. I had ~~arranged~~ <sup>PLANNED</sup> to

get down to the window sill and cling to it with my hands and drop as lightly as possible to the ground. The window was directly over the front entrance to the hospital and the door was seemingly open, because when I looked down I saw a stream of light coming from the hallway. I at first thought this light had come from the door behind me. At one quick glance I could see that the door was still shut and flinging all precautions to the wind I jumped to the pavement below, my hip sliding along off one of the steps outside, which led to the door.

Page 30. I went across another small wall and dropped into a lane at the head of Connaught St. I waited until the tramp of the patrol died away in the distance and, running from the lane chased by a small pack of dogs barking loud enough to wake the dead. I ran from the lane and found myself on the left bank of the canal which I ran along until I came to the Shannon. I was now with the Shannon to my front and the canal to my right and the town to my rear. I thought I would have to hide in the reeds and sedge along the river until the following night, but now remembered that some distance back I had heard the water in the canal make a rippling sound as I passed. I retraced my steps and to my great relief found at this place that the water did not reach above my knees. I often thought it strange afterwards that it never occurred to me to swim the canal. Probably the reason for this was on account of my back. I could run all right but almost bent in a double position. I could not stand erect for a million.

Having crossed the canal I kept on across the fields until I came to a road. Having decided to call at the first house I met I knocked at the window of one to the left hand side of the road. A young man came to the window. I asked him for a drink of water and directions as to what course I could take.

He gave me the drink of water and instructed me to keep straight until I came to a road or rather a pass to a bog and to follow it. This I did, deciding again to chance knocking at the first house on my way (Curley's was the name of the house that I had first called on).

I called on the next house I met as decided and early in the morning as it was they were astir. There was an old man in the house, his two hardy sons and his daughter, a fine type of Irish womanhood. The teapot was by the big fire and the table laid for breakfast and I was made heartily welcome. They were great hospitable people. I now regretfully forget their names. At this time I was donned in half my hospital shirt and the faithful old trench coat. These kindly people provided the balance and one of the young men saw me safely to the village of Goory where all were exceedingly kind.

That evening Barney Gaffey, the local Battalion I.R.A. Commandant, and a fine type of Irishman and who, I was informed later, died from the results of a beating he received from the R.I.C. and Tans, called with some of his men. With them I now started for O'Connell's of Taughnaconnell. We arrived at O'Connell's about 8 a.m. the following morning. Again no words are capable of describing the kindness, faithfulness and hospitality of those people. Nothing was too much or good enough. I was only a few hours there when my good friends from Athlone arrived in a rubber tyred trap laden with all delicacies fruit, wines and, to cap all, a nurse. This fact forced me to blush and smile. I forget the nurse's name now, but I thankfully declined her services. Later Dr. McDonald from Athlone did the good Samaritan when required. The other occupants of the trap were Eva Fitzgerald and Miss O'Connell, a member of the O'Connell family whose guest I was under rather peculiar and rather dangerous circumstances. Commandant Gaffey had given me £5, and Mick O'Connell purchased some clothes for me.

After recuperating somewhat in O'Connell's I was moved to O'Flynn's of Taughnaconnell where I remained sometime longer until I was at last fit to face the music again, not caring for the personal consequences. I had old and new scores to settle. The becoming angels won me on, with many a radiant vision up the thorny path of glory where man receives his crown.

Leaving my good friends the O'Flynnns who, if that were possible, excelled in every respect my previous samples of the people of South Roscommon, I was now handed on by each I.R.A. unit. Hearing that the enemy were about to occupy a vacant mansion halfway between Roscommon and Athlone I advised destruction of same which was accomplished immediately. The idea originated with the enemy after the shooting of Colonel Lambert at Athlone. Thus I continued on to Castlecoote and to Clooncroy where I met Joe Finlay (the rebel son of a rebel father) and we spent one night in a dugout in a bog with straw for bedding and with the champion fleas of Ireland for bed-fellows who were always on the lookout for wayfarers. In my case they must have enjoyed the change of pasture for they invaded from all angles and levelled all barriers in their headlong onslaught - charging, reforming and charging again. At length when daylight shed its welcome rays I, in an effort to shake off the assailants, proceeded to leave them in an adjacent boghole. Some falling loose died from misadventure, some more as a reprisal from me, some committed suicide while the remainder fighting a rearguard action, retreated to leave me in peace with myself at least it not with the world.

Joe Finlay and I had breakfast in Brennan's of Clooncraff and from there we proceeded towards Madden's stronghold. Madden had refused to be intimidated by the enemy and when they tried to infiltrate into the area they were always met by some man like Peter Collins who would oblige by taking charge of their arms in exchange for a quiet rest in some sylvan glen

or buried in Davy Jones locker through the medium of the Shannon. In company with Joe we crossed the Shannon to visit Joe Kelly (still alive) and John Scally, R.I.P., who were severely wounded and under doctor's care there. To cross the Shannon a boat was shoved into the water and this boat's seams had become as watertight as a sieve owing to the glorious and prolonged heat wave of 1921. It was due only to the great strength of Treacy the boatmen combined with his river craft that we reached the opposite bank. The boat sank beneath the water as we jumped ashore. On one occasion previous to this Treacy with others was engaged in a more unpleasant and gruesome excursion in the Shannon. The mission was not of their choosing but because it was the "Irish hirelings" (a spy) wish - who had got to take the extreme penalty - to be drowned in preference to meeting a soldier's death by shooting. As the spy slid over the edge of the boat in midstream Treacy, as if speaking to himself, said: "I will never die content until the Shannon is full of you".

I was once again in Madden's well-guarded trystings and from there I proceeded to Curraghroe and on to Scramogue and the dugout in Ballyhubert. When I arrived to the dugout in Ballyhubert and first learned that the enemy were using the roads at will either by car or cycle, I suggested half-joking and half in earnest that we should adopt the same policy and cycle too. I also suggested that we should stage another ambush on the Longford Road at the post office - the junction of Ballyfeeny and Lanesboro roads. I could see plainly that I was an unwelcome visitor. I was also convinced that Michael Dockery, Brigade O/C. who had been picked up by the enemy, was abandoned to his fate. No suggestion or argument could make any impression. Another aspect of things I did not like was the erection of dugouts or underground shelters that were non-existent to my knowledge two months previously. These dugouts

were almost wholly occupied by those who were dangerous to none but their friends and quite harmless except in their own imaginations and worst of all fed at the expense of such noble-hearted and patriotic souls of whom Mrs. O'Connor was typical (a widow with a young family to cater for).

I moved on to another dugout about a mile distant at Pollymount where the McDermott and Thompson families again supplied food at their own expense. Such was the situation south of Elphin and north of Pat Madden's area - the 3rd Battalion, South Roscommon Brigade. It was after this that the myth of the flying columns grew up. It happened that a communication was received from G.H.Q. instructing the brigade to have each battalion establish an active service unit. An O/C. of this unit was to be appointed who would be responsible to the brigade council, composed of brigade staff and battalion O/Cs.

The order was complied with in theory but never functioned in practice in North Roscommon to my knowledge or to that of any one I have contacted since. Imagination brings some people to the verge of reality and a bit of 'cheek' and 'bluff' helps to convince the credulous. In the words of Burns: "O would that God the giftie gie us, to see ourselves as others see us.. It would from <sup>MANY</sup> blunder free us and foolish notion".

Early in 1921 the brigade staff met at Delia O'Beirne's of Hillstreet to give effect as far as possible to the order issued by G.H.Q. regarding the organisation of flying columns or active service units in battalion areas. At this meeting battalion officers handed in the names of potential column commanders. Peter Leavey's name was submitted by the 2nd Battalion O/C. and I have no doubt that Peter, who is still hale and hearty, will without compunction verify that nothing in the nature of a flying column existed pre-truce in the 2nd battn area. The same applies to each of the other four battalions

comprising the North Roscommon Brigade.

There was of course always available in each company area an active service unit or the nucleus of a column if the arms and essentials were available which in our case was not so, as the appended Battalion Quartermaster's Reports of 1921 (month of December - after the truce in July) amply testify

Every man in every company was available when called on and none ever failed, even though they had little or no military training. The old shotguns they were prepared to use and did use were often minus ejectors. Consequently after the cartridge was fired, the empty shell had to be ejected by a hazel or sally rod.

The only active service unit that I was cognizant of that could be entitled to the application of 'flying column' was the unit in South Roscommon led by Pat Madden. I was not down in the Arigna area but the Brigade O/C's report to me was that Jem Cull and his crowd there were unbeatable - absolutely reckless and devoid of fear. I record the above for the sake of posterity. Even in our own day it is aggravating to those who know the facts - and very misleading to the public - to hear or read of the North Roscommon flying column. It might be asked if it is flying yet, as so far, it has not been identified as a territorial unit in the Tommy Barry tradition.

Copy of Quartermaster's Reports for the month of  
December 1921.

Area - 1st Bn. Nth. Roscommon Brigade -  
Month - December 1921.

To Brigade Q.M.		
<u>Rifles:</u>	Lee Enfields	1.
	Martinis	1
	.22	2
<u>Shotguns</u>	Double barrel	12
	Single "	12
Revolvers	.....	-
Grenades - Mills		5
Home-made		12

.303	.....	71 rounds
Shotgun ammunition		176 "
Auto pistol	"	2 "
Revolver	"	100
Pinfire	"	28

1st Battn. Q.M. North Roscommon Brigade.

Monthly Report - Area:- 2nd Bn. N.Roscommon Bde.  
Month: December 1921.

To Bde. Q.M.

All the services in my battalion working very well.

Rifles Lee Enfield	.....	2
Shotguns double barrel	...	17-37 rounds
" Single	" ...	12-32 "
Rifle ammo. .303	...	14 rounds
Revolver ammo.	...	30 "

2nd Battalion Quartermaster. Nth. Roscommon Brigade.

Monthly Report - Area - 3rd Battn. Nth. Roscommon  
Month - Dec. 1921.

To Bde. Q.M.

Sir,

I submit the following report on the services in this department - also statement of armaments for the month of December.

<u>Rifles</u>	Lee Enfield	.....	2
	Mauser		1
	Winchester		1
	Miniature		2
Shotguns	double barrel	<del>17</del>	
	17 sent for repairs		22
"	single barrel		
	12 sent for repairs		35
Automatics	parabellum	...	1
	.45		2
	.32		3
	.25		1
Revolvers	.45	...	1
	.38		1
	.32		3
Grenades (Mills)			10 Mills
Rifle ammunition	.303		25 rounds
12 bore cartridges	shotgun		76 "
Automatic ammo.	.45		50
"	" .32		7

Monthly Report - Area 4th Battn. Nth. Roscommon Bde.  
Month - Dec. 1921.

To Brigade Q.M.

Rifles	...		
Shotguns	- 12 bore	double barrel	... 18
	"	single "	6
	"	ammo.	123
Autos.	-	.....	3
Revolvers	-	.....	6

Q.M. 4th Battn. N. Roscommon Brigade.

The foregoing reports which must be accepted as genuine being exact copies received by me in 1921 and still in my possession speak more eloquently than language is capable of doing. The more I think the more I marvel where all the armament hailed from - post truce - to try to snatch the advantages gained by the statemanship of Griffith and Collins and for the assassination of men like Dockery.

Would to God there was the twentieth part of such arms available before the Truce. Surely our plenipotentiaries could meey Llyod George with a stiffer upper lip. But then there is no solace in repining, the hot-tempered fiery Irish once more flung reason to the winds, played into the enemy's hands and almost destroyed the hope newly born in the hearts of every decent Irishman and woman and every genuine lover of freedom the world over.

The hydra head of dissension is still reared on high and the fires of jealousy still smoulders in breasts of the "rubber stamps" the civil war placed in a position to rule and ruin Ireland. No more need be said, but were I Anthony and Brutus I would put a tongue in every wound of Collins that would make the stones of Dublin to rise and mutiny.

After meeting Dockery in Hillstreet at our old trysting place in Delia O'Beirne's we proceeded to Kiltrustan area where we stayed at Tom Duffley's of Drumisane, and from there to an inspection of Kiltrustan company mustered at Toberpatrick.

John McManus was sent with a dispatch to the captain of the unit who pretended that he was lying in wait for the two Tans

who, for close on two months cycled through the heart of the 3rd Battalion unmolested. The contents of the dispatch was strict orders to withhold the arms requested. Fresh trouble was not seemingly welcomed.

Previously, when I was at the dugout at Ballyhubert, I learned that cycling patrols of enemy were frequent occurrences and I suggested "Can you not cycle too and let the best horse win". I noticed the sly glances and to my disgust realised that it was a question of live as long as you can and die when you can't help it.

Page 34. I met the Tan thus in Strokestown after the truce. Sean McDonough C.E. Brigade ACS and Records officer and I were having a drink in Kieran McHugh's premises. There were others at the bar also having a quiet drink. I thought I knew or recognised one of them and remarked him looking rather sharply at me. After some time this man approached me and asked me if we had met before. I said: "Are you the chap who pretended you were so mad the day I was caught, and tried to hide your smile with fierce threats". He said "Yes" and asked where was my Sam Brown belt because, he added, I see them worn by those who went on their knees to us. (Some swell headed ones of ours, wore Sam Browns over their civilian clothes after the Truce). This was what the Tan was referring to. He then introduced me to his two pals who were also in civilian clothes and we had a friendly drink and a chat. He was one of the Tans who had protected Nangle and me on a few occasions on the day of our capture.

This Tan told me that since the Truce he had been spat upon and insulted by some of those he saw grovelling and added that if the truce broke he would make it his business to get even with them. He also told me he was one of the party who was out at my house the day they murdered my brother. He said he was driving the County Inspector (Hetread) and was present

while they were interrogating my brother, who was seemingly unconcerned, answering all questions put to him without difficulty and making a joke now and again. As the rest of the crowd were moving away and starting their cars for Strokestown, he also left thinking the others were coming too. As he started his car, shots rang out and he stopped his, and asked Hetread what that meant. He was about to leave his car when he got the order to drive on.

As a result of the information I got from him I communicated with Collins, giving the policemen's names who were responsible - Hopkins, Brady, Cawley and the actual killer, Basil Pierce, an Auxie. Michael Collins replied instructing me to get them immediately the truce broke. Afterwards Madden and I had tracked the Auxie who had left the area and gone to the midlands where he had obtained work or an appointment in a bank in Monasterevan. However before we could pay him a courtesy call he had moved again and so we left him for God to deal with him. I regretted for some time after especially during the civil war that I had not dealt with Hopkins, Brady and Cawley as they deserved, but at that time the moral standard of the I.R.A. was 100%. To kill was considered the highest of virtues and the God given right of every Irishman a few hours before the truce; it was murder now. We fought or believed we fought for the honour of God and the glory of Ireland. Little did any one envisage then that it was possible that recriminations springing from every breast, by jealousy, could originate in the Army G.H.Q. and the highest political circles, spreading downwards to the lowest ranks until brother eat brother, not because one had greater love than the other, but simply because he happened to be acclaimed an 'idol' of the people and the other wished to prune his feathers, and perhaps live in luxury ever afterwards. The country was out of the picture. It was the order of the

day and considered more patriotic by some to loot on an already tried and true man's goods - to shoot someone who from and during 1916 braved death and danger, than the capture of a dozen of barracks from the enemy. Oh, yes, it was courageous to burn barracks and other buildings after their evacuation by the enemy and after they had become the property of the Irish people. In that accursed civil war - originating as stated in jealousy and sponsored by personal hatreds, the meanest elements in Irish life got free rein. Those who, pre-truce, were not deemed fit company for an I.R.A. man's dog now appeared from nowhere - swashbuckling heroes, who not only their comrades or their country, but in the words of the old land-leaguer - Pat Lynch - would sell their Saviour who died on the cross for them, for one glass of whiskey.

On that occasion in McHugh's of Strokestown when I met the Black and Tan he gave me his card and an invitation to England to his brother's hotel for as long as I wished to stay. He explained his presence in Ireland thus: He had served four years in the 1914-18 war and when recruits were asked for the soldiering spirit took him here. This to him was a foreign country and the spirit of adventure was still strong within him. He also said that they thought there was a rifleman behind every bush in Ireland. He was particularly shocked to learn that their effective opponents at Scramogue were the men who, like himself, had also fought the Germans for four years and now were in rebellion because of England's tyranny here.

The communication received by me direct from Michael Collins referred to was the only ever to my knowledge sent to a member of a brigade staff. He scarcely communicated orders to junior officers as is sometimes alleged.

After I got back to Hillstreet <sup>WHEN</sup> I escaped from Athlone I made a check of brigade funds and found there was £700 missing

£350 of this was supposed to have been paid for Dockery's release to Corporal McGlackin, Boyle, yet the man never got one penny of the money.

John Connors of Ansville and Jem Callaghan of Hillstreet were great friends of Michael Dockery the brigade O/C. as was also Delia O'Beirne of Hillstreet. Many times I stayed with him at either Connor's or Callaghan's when in that area. On one such occasion we had stayed in Jem Callaghan's and in the morning Dockery told me that I should procure some cash from the brigade funds. The nearest person to Hillstreet with some of the funds being Mrs. Charlie Green of Curraghroe a distance of 13 miles. There being no alternative I started away on an old crock of a cycle and arrived at this good woman's house who insisted on I having some food. I thankfully refused the food and got from her £30 odd - the amount I asked for & returned to Hillstreet. Mrs. Green's was the principal house in Curraghroe I knew of who always kept an open door. She was a great woman, prepared to risk everything for the cause, an awkward position for a widowed woman with a weak family to claim her time and care.

On my return to Hillstreet I had some food in Delia O'Beirne's and though coming on to dusk (late evening) in the month of February 1921, Doherty, Duignan and I started for Ballinameen, another 13 miles distant. As we sped along with a rifle slung across each of our shoulders, the storm increased and we were buffeted about the road so that Dockery decided to travel to Croghan that night and proceed next morning to Ballinameen. As Bernie Shields of Croghan was the only house I was well acquainted with in the village, I told Dockery that we would compromise him by pulling up there. If there was any raiding during the night we were better off at some other place than our best friends for a bit of diversion. Dockery decided to call on Johnnie Beirne's, a member of the Croghan football team, who had shortly before started business in Croghan, on

the Boyle to Carrick road. In response to Dockery's knocking the occupant inquired who was there and giving his name requested the hospitality of his, Beirne's, house. To my great surprise he met with a refusal accompanied by the explanation that he was expecting the police to collect a motor cycle of his at any time.

Dockery seemed satisfied with the explanation and was about to turn away when I knocked pretty heftily on the closed door with the rifle butt. Immediately the door was opened and stepping past I demanded the best bed in the house and breakfast served sharply at 8 a.m. the following morning. Without more ado we three ignoring all warnings as to the Tans expected arrival at any moment, proceeded to take possession of a very comfortable bed and before long were all three in the land of nod. At 8 a.m. sharp we were awakened by the proprietor with a beautiful tray of rashers and eggs with an earnest request to make ourselves scarce as quickly as possible as the Tans might arrive at any minute. Our reply was to lie back after doing justice to our appetites and consequently showing our appreciation of his culinary efforts on our behalf. Having sank back again on our pillows Duignan requested Johnnie to make a point of not admitting the Tans when they called without first waking us. We again slept peacefully until 12 midday when we took our departure where we arrived without further adventure.

While we had slept after breakfast the Tans did actually pass by the door on their way to Carrick-on-Shannon. Had they called as they had promised there surely would have been fun. It could be considered a mean advantage for a benighted traveller to take and probably it was then, but those were different times and desperate ills called for desperate remedies. I am sure that Johnnie that night and morning as he did his weary vigil never dreamed that one day such inconsiderate actions by the

wilful Irish youth everywhere would one day during his lifetime result in the establishment of a native Government, of which he would be a respected member. The ways of God are wiser than the things that man may know.

Dockery died in Boyle with his collar bone blown through his back by a renegade's soft-nosed bullet fired at point-blank range from an old Mauser last used in the Boer War by the British civilisers and friends of humanity in general. Ballinameen and Ballyroddy were very loyal to Ireland and they produced great soldiers. The Roches, the Kellys, the Morans, Roddy Duignan, Murry Owens and many others - the Connors, Carlos, Brennans and Beirnes. They were the cream of kindly welcome and the core of cordiality. Looking back on those wanderings now one incident or two that occurred at Hillstreet which in those final days of the struggle was the brigade H.Q. will not be amiss. Sean Glancy, the brigade adjutant, and I were returning from Drumlion one night when, as we neared the village, we heard great noise and commotion. We approached very cautiously - one on each side of the road - and treading carefully on the grass margin until we were actually in the village. Here all was quiet, where a few minutes before we were sure a raid was on and that probably we were late to be of any assistance. We had not heard any shots and suspected that Dockery and others were surprised. How glad we were to meet in Delia O'Beirne's - Dockery, Nangle and some more who laughed at Sean and me.

Sometime later, as I stood by the fire speaking to a Miss Donnelly, a cousin of Miss O'Beirne's, Dockery who, with Nangle and some others, were standing in the open doorway called my attention to a most weird cry that we placed at Jim Dorr's house or very convenient to it. It was a most unearthly wail and not one of us, even though it was so uncommon, gave it a second thought as we mounted our cycles on our way in the

Strokestown direction. On the following day week I arrived back again in Hillstreet to hear that Jim Dorr's father was dead and buried. Jim was the local battalion O/C. My brother had ridden on horseback to the funeral little dreaming that his own doom was sealed.

Another strange incident that happened about this time at Hillstreet also, is also rather strange, and remains to me still an unsolved mystery or phenomenon if either is an appropriate term. Let others judge. Mick McGloughlin and Alec McCabe of Sligo were prisoners in Carrick Jail and Bridget McGloughlin - Mick's sister - one day brought a message requesting our co-operation in their intended escape. One Sunday Dockery and I arrived in Hillstreet from John Connor's where we had stayed the night before. Those on the run at any time got a dispensation for non-attendance at Mass due to the enemy police and soldiers so often desecrating the House of God in search of wanted men. When we arrived at Hillstreet the people were just returning from Mass at Aughrim Church and with the rest came Bridget McGloughlin with the latest news as to how things stood at Carrick-on-Shannon with the prisoners.

After we three discussing affairs for a while and agreeing on the message Bridget was to take back, I left Dockery and her speaking at the door facing each other. One was each side of the doorway leaning a shoulder against the jambs of the door. I was sitting on a settlebed almost directly opposite the door when a young man well-known to each of us cycled to the door and casually and deliberately got off the cycle. This man looked at Dockery who, returning the look, was in the act of putting out his hand to him when suddenly I was seized by a great fear lest the newcomer would see me and so I went to the room beside me. A few minutes later Dockery got writing material to send a message to

McLoughlin. I asked him if the lad was below yet. He asked me what lad and when I mentioned his name and said they shook hands, Dockery laughed and said: "I often thought you were mad and now I'm sure of it". Suddenly the fear left me and I searched everywhere inside and out and felt anxious to meet now the young man I had feared to meet before. On making inquiries by dispatch and through every source I was informed that when I thought that he was in Hillstreet, he was actually in England where he had recently gone.

I suppose Dockery was right, that I was really mad. It is one explanation; I wonder if there is possibly another. I think, and since have reason to believe, there is. Shakespeare says: "The lunatic, the lover and the poet are of imagination all compact" and truly were not the lads great lovers in those glorious years and days and just now remind me of the infancy of our I.R.A. company. We tried the manufacture of gunpowder and the pulling of candle-grease through shot to increase the range of shotgun. Last but not least the buying of all the playing marbles we <sup>COULD</sup> get to find they were much too big for the 12 bore shotguns; also the collecting of ball bearings with which to fill cartridges, not to speak of the pikes referred to elsewhere, and the great-hearted generous people who as a whole went about their daily chores not knowing what the night or morning might bring - never twitching a lip, blanching a cheek or winking an eyelid in fear.

Many years afterwards I called to visit one of those great old souls. He was on his deathbed and died the following day. When I ventured into his sick room, he in a great effort raised his head and struggling to his elbow attempted to sing a favourite song of his, but only succeeded with the lines - "Brave Emmet and Fitzgerald too, their courage ne'er did fail, for they led the brave green coated boys through green robed

Innisfail". Falling back on his pillow he said between breaths "I am sorry Pat I am not able for any more". P.J. Gunn of Curraghroe was in my company and marvelled at such spirit. That old man's name was George Warren of Kiltrustan. His brother, Michael, already deceased a couple of years was one time captain of the local company. Having scouts like these in mind whose nobility compensated for the dirt of the civil war makes me refrain from discussing it here. Its origin, its greed and graft, until the name of the Irish Republic and every ideal held so dear - calling forth unstinted heroism and sacrifice, became a by-word to be sneered at by friend and foe alike.

During that time I was paid a slight tribute by Irishmen who never held a gun when necessary. The engine of the car I sat in was cut to pieces with Mauser bullets. They promptly ran away when replied to leaving their transport behind them with one of their companions wounded, while, miraculously, not even a hair was turned on one of us. Mick McGloughlin, the Roches, Joe Kelly or anyone of the pre-Truce soldiers and companions of mine, before the accursed split, would suffer and bear to be torn to pieces by wild horses than deliberately open fire on either Michael Dockery or me. It took the truce heroes to run the gauntlet. As Anne Devlin (Robert Emmet's servant) said: "The mongrel Irishman is the worst enemy of all, the stag of stags".

Page 36. On the evening of the ambush at Scramogue Marty O'Connor handed over the Tan prisoner to Martin Fallon or Pat Madden and slept in Flanagan's of Moher that night with Hugh Keegan, now a Garda Superintendent. After this Marty proceeded to Connor's of Cloonara and next night went to O'Connor's of Manor in the Tulsk district. This was considered a quiet or safe place, but the spies were at work and he was betrayed by a man named Higgins. Higgins escaped

when some of our men called to execute him. He took refuge with the enemy for a time and then fled to England and there has not been any trace of him since. Marty was taken to the Demesne House which was the headquarters of the Lancers at Strokestown. Here he was inhumanly treated in an attempt to extract information from him. On one of these occasions he was beaten unconscious. Dr. Forde of Strokestown, who was a good friend of the I.R.A., attended to his wounds there. It is to Dr. Forde he owes his life because the doctor himself was an ex-colonel having served in the British Medical Service. The doctor was on friendly terms with Captain McDonnell who took over charge of the Lancers after Captain Peake was killed.

After about 20 days Marty was transferred to Athlone. Here, though not beaten up any more, he was taken as hostage to the Curragh on several occasions. He was finally transferred to the Curragh and after getting a jail term was released in the general release after the truce. Almost every night, while a prisoner of the Lancers at Strokestown, he was attacked by a drunken mob of soldiers and on several occasions taken out to be shot. He sure had someone's prayers or the four-leaf shamrock, but, like the rest of our lads when up against it, he scorned death and was prepared for the worst.

Post-Truce. After the truce we busied ourselves to be prepared in the eventuality of its breaking and, amongst other things, arranged for the capture of about 120 rifles from Athlone Military Barracks. For this purpose I called to Fitzgerald's of Connaught St. Athlone (referred to elsewhere) to make arrangements with our contacts inside the barracks, a soldier known to us as "Ticket aboo"; (this was his way of expressing his opinion or assurance that everything was O.K.) Mick Dockery now being out of the picture (he was suspended during the truce), there was no enthusiasm for the project with those who replaced him. It was contrived so that it was

never attempted and cancelled ~~when~~ "Ginger" O'Connell called to Hillstreet to have a talk with the brigade and battalion staffs on matters in general.

I also started a munitions factory and armoury on a small scale and for this purpose had Dr. P.A. Dowd appointed Brigade Chemist. He went to Dublin to study the making of explosives, cheddar or war flour, while the Roches of Ballinameen and Joe Kelly of Ballyroddy, with the assistance of the Kiltrustan Company in whose area the factory was, were responsible for the collection and repair of arms.

Thus things continued until the accursed split and Dockery's death. Dockery was again Brigade O/C. at this time having been reinstated when G.H.Q. too late, found out the injustice they had done. I was unanimously the election of brigade and division to take his place.

I served in the National Army until 7th April 1924, a month after I had helped to add one word more to the English language - "Absconsionist". This term was applied to those who deserted from the army and as mutineers, and sacrificed their careers in the army in a vain protest to try and get the Government of the day to follow in the footsteps of Michael Collins. The following is a copy of my resignation:-

Strokestown,  
Co. Rescommon  
24.4.1924.

To: President Liam Cosgrave,  
Acting Minister for Defence,  
Dáil Eireann.

Sir,

I hereby tender you resignation of my commission as Commandant in the National Army to take effect from the 24th April 1924. I take this step as a protest against what I believe to be the national betrayal of Ireland and the anglicisation and corruption of public life which is so apparent in each government department and service of the State.

Sgd. P. Mullen, Comdt., G.H.Q.

No. 10 Inspection Staff.

How foolish it reads now. In the 30 intervening years there is no change for the better. The only step forward being the declaration of the Republic for the territory left us, which but for the civil war could have been, I believe, much greater and would today embrace the 32 counties.

Thank God I lived to see the day when young men are again trying to scale the last rampart. The defenders of old are again reborn in Armagh. I am sure they have the blessing of Saints Patrick, Bridget and Columcille whose sacred dust the soil of Armagh enshrouds.

Signed:

*Patrick Mulloly*

(Patrick Mulloly)

Date:

*2-2-55*

2.2.55

Witness:

*Matthew Barry Comd't*

(Matthew Barry, Comd't.)

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BURO STAIRS M.L. 1913-21
No. W.S. 1086