

W.S. 1188

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21  
BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21  
NO. W.S. 1188

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

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 1,188

Witness

Michael J. Mansfield,  
The Burgery,  
Dungarvan,  
Co. Waterford.

Identity:

Q.M. West Waterford Brigade;  
Engineer, do.  
Vice O/C. Active Service Unit.  
Subject.

National activities, Dungarvan, Co. Waterford,  
1914-1924.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil

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STATEMENT BY MICHAEL MANSFIELD

The Burgery, Dungarvan, Co. Waterford.

I was born in the year 1897, at Crobally, Old Parish, Dungarvan, Co. Waterford. My parents belonged to the farming community.

From my earliest days I was associated with the Gaelic Athletic Association in my native place and, when the Irish National Volunteer movement was started about the year 1914, I joined the local company. There were about 25 men or thereabouts in the company, but, to the best of my recollection, we had no guns of any kind. Our drill instructors were mostly ex-British army soldiers and the 'rifles' used in training were wooden 'dummy' rifles. The so-called National Volunteers were under the control of John Redmond, then leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party in the British House of Commons.

When the split in the Volunteer movement came, as a result of Redmond's offering of the Volunteers to help the British Government in the 1914-18 war, myself and about six or eight others broke away from the Redmondite Volunteer movement and affiliated with the Irish Volunteers.

We took no part in the Rising of 1916, as we had no official knowledge of the matter. It was practically over before we knew with any certainty what had happened. There was no interference by the British authorities with our little group immediately before or subsequent to the Rising. None of us was arrested.

When the reorganisation of the Irish Volunteers commenced in our area about mid-1917, a company was formed in Old Parish, Dungarvan, which I joined. I was then actively organising companies in Ardmore, Clashmore, Ballyquin, Ring and the neighbouring districts. It was about the same period that I was

sworn in a member of the Irish Republican Brotherhood by 'Pax' Whelan of Dungarvan who was, I believe, the 'Head Centre' of the I.R.B. in West Waterford. I subsequently contacted 7 or 8 men from the local Volunteer companies who also became I.R.B. members.

During what was known as the 'Conscription' period in the year 1918, when Britain threatened to enforce conscription for Ireland, a very big increase in Volunteer membership took place and in my area, which was known as the 3rd Battalion, West Waterford Brigade area, we had upwards of 500 men. The area in question covered the districts Helvick, Ring, Old Parish Grange, Ardmore, Clashmore and Villarstown. I acted as Q.M., Adjutant and general organiser for the battalion, all the time keeping in close touch with Pax Whelan, the Brigade O/C.

In the early stages, we had practically no weapons at all. There may have been a few shotguns and two or three revolvers. Of the latter, I had one.

In the months of February-March 1918, there took place in Waterford a parliamentary by-election which was probably the most bitterly contested in the history of elections in Ireland. The contestants were Dr. Vincent White representing Sinn Fein, and Captain William Redmond representing the Irish Parliamentary Party, whose leader was John Redmond (brother of the candidate).

In support of Captain Redmond were all the anti-Irish forces in Waterford, the most active being the notorious pig-buyer element from Ballybricken, Waterford. In addition, the large number of ex-British soldiers, their wives and families indulged in the most disgraceful hooliganism in an effort to prevent the Sinn Fein candidate from obtaining a hearing. Assaults on supporters of Sinn Fein were numerous and of daily occurrence, so that it became necessary for those directing the Sinn Fein election programme in Waterford to ask for outside assistance in maintaining some sort of order in the city.

It was particularly noticeable that the local R.I.C., heavily reinforced for the occasion, made no attempt to prevent assaults on those working for Sinn Fein, whilst these same policemen were only too eager to baton those who tried to defend themselves against the Redmondite mobs.

To combat this blackguardism, units of Irish Volunteers from many of the southern counties went in to Waterford city. About 30 went from our district under the command of Pax Whelan. The men were armed with hurleys. Pax and myself carried revolvers.

During the course of the election many fights took place in all of which our men were greatly outnumbered. On one occasion, the Sinn Fein Hall in Colbeck St., Waterford, where a large body of Volunteers was quartered, was fired into; some Volunteers were wounded, and, as others tried to leave, they were set upon and beaten up by the Ballybricken mobs. Neither Pax nor myself used our revolvers, although subject to great provocation. I think there was an instruction issued by our people that no guns were to be used during the election campaign.

The time was somewhere about the early part of the year 1918 when an effort was made by some of us in the West Waterford Brigade to contact German submarines off the coast in the vicinity of Helvick. I cannot now remember much about this. I do not recollect from whom our instructions came or the purpose of the proposed contact (presumably the idea was to obtain some arms, but I am not sure about this). At any rate, I remember about half a dozen of us putting out to sea in small boats at night and remaining out trying to make contact with the German submarines. Signals were arranged, but nothing happened. We failed to make contact.

During the year 1918 and for the greater part of 1919, my personal activities were mostly connected with the local

Brigade H.Q., the O/C. being Pax Whelan.

During this period an all-out effort was being made to 'tighten-up' the organisation in West Waterford. In company with other brigade officers, I visited the districts where Volunteer companies were functioning and arranged for the appointment of company officers and battalion officers. The principle of appointment, or rather, the selection of officers, was as follows:- The company selected its own captain, lieutenants, adjutant, I.O. and engineer. These company officers then elected officers to form the <sup>battalion staff from which the</sup> brigade staff <sup>was appointed.</sup>

Following the organisation of companies, our next and biggest problem was the securing of arms and ammunition. Some of our men had a shotgun and a few of us had revolvers (myself included), but, generally speaking, we were poorly equipped. I have a recollection that a quantity of pikes was made at this time but, to my knowledge, they were never afterwards used in action against the British.

Our main source of supply was as the results of raids mostly on houses of what might be termed 'the gentry' in the district. I took part in many such raids and we collected quite a fair share of guns, mostly of the sporting type. These raids always took place at night and were carried out by four or five men, one or two of whom would be armed. In no case was it necessary to use force to secure any weapons which might be in the house raided, although, as can well be understood, there were quite a few who were reluctant to part with <sup>for</sup> the guns for the purpose/which they knew we required them.

A raid on Minehead lighthouse by four of us at night, armed, brought us a few welcome small arms, a few rifles and some equipment and stores. In a raid on a private house in Cappoquin, we encountered a party of R.I.C. in one of the streets of the town. We fired a few shots at them with revolvers and made our way off on bicycles eastwards to our

own district around Dungarvan. So far as I am aware, there were no casualties on either side, This might be termed our first brush with the enemy.

During this period (mid-1919) the system of all-night camps was set on foot in the brigade area. These camps were used to discipline the men generally. Drilling, rifle training and guerilla tactics were discussed and practised. The men were being toughened for the job which lay ahead. These camps were by no means carried on without interference by the British. On one particular occasion in a wood at Ardmore, Co. Waterford, where a training camp was being held, a party of R.I.C. came on us as we were drilling. We held up the R.I.C. with revolvers and told them to clear off. They did so. We moved camp to another district as a result.

As Brigade Q.M. it was my job to lay hands on all the weapons I could with a view to making the brigade an effective fighting force. Not being satisfied with the results of raids for arms previously mentioned, I remember going to Dublin to interview headquarters for the purpose of securing, if possible, more stuff for our lads in West Waterford.

I travelled to Dublin by train from Dungarvan, Co. Waterford, and stayed at Fleming's Hotel, Gardiner's Row, Dublin. This hotel was owned by the late Sean O'Mahony, who was T.D. for Fermanagh. He was a native of Thomastown, Co. Kilkenny, and his premises in Gardiner's Row was a regular rendezvous for republican supporters from all parts of the country. I remember meeting a headquarters man in Dublin by the name of McMahon. I think this is the same McMahon who is now a senior official in the Department of Defence, Parkgate Dublin. I was successful in obtaining from him a small quantity of revolvers - Webley and automatics.

On one occasion when I was preparing to leave Dublin with the 'stuff', there was a hold-up of traffic by British

military who were searching cars and the occupants. Fearing that my bag, which contained the guns, would be examined, I gave it to a girl who was employed in Fleming's Hotel and whom I knew to be trustworthy. I got a taxi for her and asked her to take the bag to the Kingsbridge railway station while I followed on foot. When I got to the station and looked along the train I saw the girl in a railway carriage. On seeing me, she got up and left the carriage, whilst I took her place without any sign of recognition passing between us.

I made quite a few trips up and down to Dublin, all the time for arms and ammunition and always by train. I was fortunate to escape detection by the British who were intensifying their searches on trains and indeed on all forms of locomotion.

On one occasion when the train on which I travelled reached Waterford station, I found that the place was 'alive' with British military. Michael Veale, now Co. Manager in Leix, was a clerk in the railway parcels office at Waterford then. He saw me, came and took my bag (which carried revolvers and ammunition) from me and put it in a safe place, while I passed through the military cordon without any bother. Later that same day, when the military were withdrawn from the station, I returned there, collected my bag from Michael Veale and travelled on to Dungarvan, Co. Waterford, without further interference.

In addition to the sources already referred to, we obtained quite a fair share of revolvers and ammunition from sailors on vessels coming in to Waterford harbour.

It was the practice for each Volunteer to keep his own gun and ammunition; but, when a general raid was carried out by us for shotguns, company dumps were made in out-of-the-way places where these weapons were kept and cared for. It was usual for us to make our own gunpowder and fill our own shotgun cartridges with buckshot.

In or about September 1919, I was appointed Brigade engineer to the West Waterford Brigade.

Attack on British troops at Fermoy.

It was in the month of September 1919, when George Lennon, Vice O/C. of the West Waterford Brigade, and I went to Fermoy to take part in an engagement against the British, the O/C. I.R.A. being the late Liam Lynch. It was observed that a party of armed military, about 20 strong, used parade from Fermoy barracks to the Wesleyan Church, Fermoy, to attend Service in the church at 8 a.m. on a Sunday and plans were laid to ambush this party and capture the rifles. The idea was to have our men in twos at intervals along the road where the military used to halt before entering the church. Another party of our men were out of sight in a public convenience near the church. When the signal was given, the Tommies were to be rushed and disarmed. Everything came off according to plan. The soldiers arrived as expected. We were in position and rushed them with revolvers pointed, ordering them to surrender. Most of them did so, but there were, I remember, a few shots fired which resulted in, so far as I can say now, one Tommy being killed. Liam Lynch was wounded in the shooting. However, the badly needed rifles and equipment were captured from the soldiers and taken quickly away by the Cork Volunteers to a place of safety.

Meanwhile, George Lennon and I were in a rather precarious position. The motor in which we travelled from Dungarvan, and which was to bring us back, was taken to remove Liam Lynch and we were left stranded in a locality more or less strange to us. We made our way on foot quickly out of Fermoy, bearing in a south westerly direction, whilst the countryside was alive with military in lorries and on horseback, searching for the raiders. Planes were also up 'looking out' for us. We were very fortunate to be able to cross the Blackwater river by a boat

which was waiting to take over some men from Araglen, Co. Cork, who were on the job in Fermoy.

Later in the day we found ourselves surrounded by searching troops, so we hastily took off our coats, got into a cornfield and proceeded to make up stooks of corn. We were seen by the military, who took us to be men engaged in harvesting work; they passed on without suspecting a thing. Eventually we reached Lismore about 12 miles south at about 8 p.m. where we were welcomed in the house of Sean Goulding (afterwards a Senator). We remained in his house overnight and returned to Dungarvan safely the following morning.

By this time, the R.I.C. used to raid my home in Old Parish frequently. I remember that, after an attack on Ardmore, Co. Waterford, R.I.C. Barracks on 17th January 1920, I was ill at home when a party of R.I.C. arrived. They found me in bed and gave me a pretty rough time of it. I remember them asking the name of the doctor who was attending me. I told them and they checked on this. My young brother and another chap who was in the house at the time succeeded in putting the police motor car out of action while they were interrogating me; as a result, the car had to be drawn away by horses when the party were leaving the house.

In the early part of the year 1920, the R.I.C. were being gradually withdrawn from the smaller country villages ~~and~~ into barracks in the larger towns. This was due to the constant harassing attacks carried out by us.

It was, I remember, early in the same year when a party of us burned down two such vacated barracks at Clashmore and Kiely's Cross, Co. Waterford. At Kiely's Cross, the R.I.C. had left only an hour or so before we arrived. Apparently their departure was a hurried one, because, when we entered the barracks, we found on a table a brand new Webley revolver.

On a Sunday morning in the Spring of 1920, 5 or 6 of us

went into Ardmore to have another go at the R.I.C. in the barracks and to capture the place, if possible. We had arranged with the postman to call to the barrack door and when the chain was taken off inside the door to drop a prepared parcel on the floor to keep the door open. A Volunteer named Prendergast and I were then to rush across the street and hurl Mills bombs into the open door of the building.

When the postman knocked, a policeman's wife looked out the barrack window and, recognising my brother Jim, who was in our party, began to scream. The R.I.C. immediately opened rifle fire on us and sent up Verey lights for assistance. The British Marines in the coastguard station on a hill overlooking Ardmore also opened up on us. I happened to be out in the middle of the street when all this happened. We replied to the fire from the barracks, but, as it was obvious that our plan to rush the place had broken down, we had no option but to withdraw.

During this period we intensified our raids on postmen, post offices and mail trains with a view to capturing correspondence addressed to military or R.I.C. personnel in the area, or to loyalist sympathisers. Letters of this nature were passed on to the brigade for <sup>examination</sup> ~~information~~.

In April 1920, we raided the Income Tax offices at Dungarvan and Lismore. The offices of the Sheriff in Ring were also raided. All books and documents helpful to the British administration were taken away and burned.

Organisation of units was being actively stepped up now. Company and battalion strength was being built up and the men encouraged to get into action at every possible opportunity.

Due to the constant raids by R.I.C. and military on my home at this period, I was compelled to go on the run. I did not, of course, leave the brigade area.

I think it was about the month of April or May 1920, when word reached us of the expected arrival of a ship from Italy carrying arms. I cannot remember from whom this news came, but I remember quite well the mobilisation of the brigade in preparation for the landing. We were 'standing to' for a week or so at the time. Extensive road-blocking was carried out and scouts posted for miles inland from Helrick where it was thought the vessel would come. Actually, the vessel never did arrive; as a matter of fact no arms were landed on the Waterford coast until during the Truce period, i.e. July 1921 - December 1921, when a cargo of arms was landed at Cheekpoint on the east coast of Waterford near Passage East. So far as I can recollect, these arms came from Germany on a vessel chartered by Bob Briscoe (now T.D.) and a man named McGuinness.

Disarming of R.I.C. at Dungarvan Railway Station.

Early in the month of August 1920, it was decided to attack and disarm an R.I.C. party which escorted mails daily from the town of Dungarvan to the railway station, about half a mile outside the town. The late Pat Keating of Comeragh, who was then commandant of the 2nd (Kilrossanty) Battalion, was the officer in charge. About 10 men were engaged in the attack. Amongst those taking part were George Kiely, Eddie Power, Pat Burke, Patrick Power, all of the 2nd Battalion, and about half a dozen others whose names I cannot now remember. All our men were armed with revolvers. Pat Keating was dressed in the uniform of a wireless operator. This was done by way of a disguise, as Pat was a wellknown and 'much wanted' Volunteer at that time.

So far as I can recollect, the R.I.C. party numbered five. They were armed with rifles and were in charge of Sergeant Hickey, who carried a revolver.

Our men were in position concealed in the public lavatory on the station platform, when one R.I.C. man came into the

station. Pat Keating crossed over to the platform where the R.I.C. man was and, as he approached, was saluted by the policeman. Pat returned the salute, drew his revolver and escorted his captive across the railway bridge on to the platform where the main Volunteer party was. This R.I.C. man was locked in a station outhouse.

Shortly afterwards, Sergeant Hickey came along with his group. He and his comrades were immediately held up at revolver point and quickly disarmed. The sergeant showed a reluctance to surrender and only did so on being threatened to be shot. The arms were then hurriedly taken over to the Gaelic sports field where some Dungarvan Volunteers, one of whom was, I believe, Phil O'Donnell, ~~who~~ arranged for their dispatch to a safe destination.

It might be of interest here to record that the same Sergeant Hickey was the policeman captured by us, subsequently, in the ambush at The Burgery, Dungarvan, in March 1921. He was then courtmartialled and shot.

#### Ambush at Brown's Pike, Dungarvan.

In September 1920, an ambush position was taken up by about eight Volunteers at a place called Brown's Pike which is roughly three miles west of Dungarvan, and on the main road from that town to Cappoquin, Co. Waterford. The position was on high ground affording good cover and overlooked the roadway. A short distance on the Dungarvan side of the position was a railway level crossing. Word was received that a lorry with R.I.C. men and Black and Tans had gone towards Cappoquin on a raid earlier in the day and an attack on the lorry was planned for the return journey. Our men, under George Lennon, Vice O/C. of the Brigade, took up positions late in the evening. There were a few rifles in the party and some shotguns, possibly also some revolvers. The time would be approximately 6 p.m. When the approach of the enemy was reported, the

level crossing gates were closed to halt the progress of the lorry, and when the latter ran into the ambush position fire was opened by our men. The driver of the lorry (who was not hit) accelerated, crashed his car through the gates of the level crossing and drove on at high speed out of rifle range. I have a recollection that one of our lads threw a home-made bomb at the lorry, but I cannot say with what effect. I do not know whether the British suffered any casualties. None of our boys was hit in the exchange of shots.

Following the ambush at Brown's Pike, it was noticeable that British raiding parties subsequently comprised more than one lorry load of troops. It was rarely that only one lorry ventured out into the country.

It was in the beginning of November 1920, that the West Waterford Brigade active service unit was formed under George Lennon, Dungarvan. I acted as Vice O/C. of the column. This unit numbered about 20 men, mostly men like myself who were on the run.

At the start, we were fairly well armed. There were four or five rifles. The remainder had shotguns and some of us were armed with revolvers as well. Ammunition was scarce, particularly for the rifles and revolvers. We billeted at nights in the houses of persons friendly disposed and these might be said to include almost every house in the brigade area with the exception, of course, of those whose occupants were known to be hostile to the republican movement. Our headquarters - if it could be so called, because we were continually on the move - was at Comeragh in the foothills of the mountains, lying north and west of Co. Waterford. When hard-pressed, the Comeragh mountain district afforded us safe shelter from numerous encircling movements by superior enemy forces and enabled us to rest for periods, after long cross country marches.

Piltown Cross Ambush - November 1920.

The first what might be called 'major engagement' undertaken by the column was that at Piltown Cross, Kinsalebeg, Co. Waterford, a district about 10 miles west of Dungarvan, on the road to Youghal, Co. Cork, and approximately 8 miles from the latter town. The date was November 1st, 1920. In this ambush we were helped by men from the Ardmore and Piltown companies and by selected men from our 3rd Battalion. I would estimate the number of I.R.A. who actually were in action at Piltown Cross as about 30. These men were armed with rifles and mostly with shotguns. In addition, large numbers of our lads were engaged scouting, blocking roads in the district that night, and the Ardmore company of over 20 men kept the local R.I.C. barrack and Marine Station under fire for a period preceding the actual ambush.

At about 8 p.m. we took up positions at Piltown Cross with George Lennon in charge and myself second in command. I remember placing the shotgun men in positions behind the hedge at the Cross and on high ground overlooking the Cross. I handed two cartridges to each shotgun man to supplement whatever small supply he already had. I was armed with a Lee Enfield rifle and a revolver.

A trench was dug across the road at a point near Piltown Cross and a tree felled to make the road block a really effective one. Shortly after taking up position, three of our lads went in to Ardmore on bikes, four miles distant, and threw a few bombs at the R.I.C. barracks there. Having done this, they returned to Piltown while the Ardmore Coy. continued sniping at the barracks and the Marine Station there.

As usual, the garrison in Ardmore barracks sent up Verey lights to summon assistance. These lights were seen by us and also by the British military in Youghal. It was hoped to draw the latter out into the ambush position by

It would be about 9 p.m. or thereabouts when our scouts reported considerable military activity in Youghal and it was, possibly, about an hour later when it was reported that the lights of a military lorry were seen approaching our position at Piltown. When the car reached the road block it stopped and we immediately called on the soldiers to surrender. They replied to our demand by opening fire in all directions, some of them made to get out of the lorry. At once our shotgun men let them have it and the lorry driver was the first to fall. Those of us who had rifles then let them have a blast. In a few minutes there came a lull in the British fire. I had been behind the hedge just at the Cross with Pat Keating of Comeragh and when I noticed this lull I remember saying to Pat that "these fellows" had "stopped firing" and that we had better get out on the road. Pat, Myself and a few others of our lads then climbed out on to the road and ran towards the British, shouting at them "stick them up". They tumbled out of the lorry in confusion and we lined them up and had a look at things.

We discovered that there were two soldiers killed and six (I think) wounded. We disarmed the military, of whom there 18 or 20, so far as I can remember, but we failed to locate their officer. To our surprise, the officer appeared as a prisoner taken by some of our shotgun men who lined one side of the hedge near the road barricade. It appeared that, on the first burst of fire by our men, the British officer jumped out of the lorry and in through the hedge where our shotgun men were. He lay there during the firing until his men surrendered. It was only when our lads rose up to leave their positions and came out on to the road that they discovered that one of the men lying with them was the British officer in charge of the party under attack.

When we ascertained the extent of the British casualties,

we rendered whatever first aid service we could to their wounded and then got a horse and dray from a nearby farm to enable the wounded men to be taken to Youghal for treatment.

We took no prisoners that night. What we needed most were guns, not prisoners. None of our lads suffered any casualties. The ambush, from our point of view, was a great success, because from now onwards, the column would be equipped with Lee Enfield rifles and a reasonably good supply of ammunition and equipment. So far as my memory serves me, we captured at least 20 rifles and many hundreds of rounds of ammunition.

After the ambush, we headed towards the Comeragh mountains in small groups. I remember carrying two rifles and military equipment across country towards Comeragh, 16 miles to the north. All members of the column got to Comeragh safely, notwithstanding intense activity by British search parties in the area. We dumped the captured stuff and rested up for a day or so at Comeragh.

#### Shooting of R.I.C. man in Cappoquin.

It would be about the month of December 1920, when, with George Lennon, the column O/C., and Pat Keating of Comeragh, I went into Cappoquin one evening to shoot an obnoxious Black and Tan. We went by motor, all of us armed with revolvers. When we arrived outside the town, we left our car and came in on foot. There were a group of Tans on the street at the time whom we had to pass. We did so and saw that the Tan we wanted was not amongst the group. It was decided to wait<sup>a</sup>/while, so we went in to Walshe's Hotel for tea. After tea, we rose to leave the hotel and in the doorway, blocking our entry to the street, was a uniformed R.I.C. man. We immediately came to the conclusion that our presence in the town had been noticed and that we were trapped. We drew our revolvers and fired, killing the R.I.C. man. Running out to the roadway, we ran into a party of Tans on whom we opened fire. They replied with revolvers and grenades. We made with all haste to where our

car was located and with great good luck managed to evade our pursuers and get back to Comeragh in safety.

I cannot remember the name of the R.I.C. man we killed that evening in Cappoquin. I think his name was O'Rourke, or Quirke, but I am not at all certain.

Tramore Ambush - January 1921.

On the night of January 7th, 1921, in company with Pax Whelan, George Lennon, Pat Keating, and about 12 others of the column, I went by car to Tramore, Co. Waterford, to help the East Waterford Brigade in an ambush planned to take place at the Metal Bridge, about half a mile east of Tramore and on the main Tramore-Waterford road.

We were all armed with rifles and travelled in three cars, arriving in the vicinity of Tramore about 10 p.m. or perhaps somewhat earlier. Our party took up a position on the Glen road which overlooked the main road which ran under the Metal Bridge and on the western (Tramore) side of the bridge. The East Waterford Brigade men under Paddy Paul, their O/C., occupied positions on high ground overlooking the eastern or Waterford city side of the Metal Bridge. I cannot say how many men Paul had with him that night, but at a rough estimate I should say about 30 men. A diversionary attack on the R.I.C. barracks in Tramore was to be made in order to draw the British out from Waterford city to help the garrison.

At about 11 p.m. a few of our lads - Pat Keating of Comeragh, and Patrick Whelan (not Pax Whelan) went with some men of the East Waterford Brigade in to Tramore and flung a few grenades at the barracks. The R.I.C. replied with heavy rifle fire and sent up Verey lights. Our men then returned to their positions on the Glen road near the Bridge where a barricade was erected on the main road in full view of our position.

The plan of attack was, that any military lorries

approaching the Metal Bridge from the east, i.e., the Waterford City side, should be allowed to run on until they reached the road barricade when they would have to pull up and come under rifle fire from our party on the Glen Road. The rear of the military column would then, and not till then, be engaged by the East Waterford men who, as I have stated, were on the eastern side of the Metal Bridge. This plan was arranged between Paddy Paul, O/C. East Waterford, and Pax Whelan, O/C. West Waterford.

About 11.30 p.m. or thereabouts, we were in our allotted position when we heard the rumble of lorries approaching from Waterford city. We couldn't see them as the Metal Bridge obscured our view. We waited for the British to come on into the trap, but before we saw any of their lorries, firing broke out on the far (east) side of the bridge. We were at a loss to know what had happened, when, suddenly, one British lorry came into view at the barricade on the road on our side of the bridge. Pax Whelan fired a Verey light and we could see the soldiers in the front seat of the lorry. We let them have a volley from our rifles and then ceased firing. Meanwhile, there were sounds of heavy fighting going on in the position on the far side of the bridge which was held by the East Waterford men. No further British cars came up to the barricade and it was now obvious that something was seriously wrong.

Pax Whelan, George Lennon, Pat Keating and myself discussed the situation. We were at a loss what to do. If we opened fire on positions across the bridge, we stood a good chance of killing our own men. The night was very dark and the terrain was quite unknown to us. It was, of course, dark when we arrived some hours earlier. We had no idea as to what was actually happening. We did not know the location of the enemy forces who, for all we knew, might be trying to encircle our

small group on the Glen Road. After discussion amongst ourselves, we decided that it was advisable to retreat from our position. This we did, moving westwards across country on foot, having been cut off by the British military from our cars.

I learned afterwards that a shot fired by one of the East Waterford men before the British ran into the ambush position led to the military dismounting and engaging the men from East Waterford on the eastern side of the Metal Bridge only. Our comrades there lost two men killed and had two wounded that night. I do not know what casualties, if any, were suffered by the enemy.

#### Ring - Robert's Cross Engagement.

In February 1921, an ambush was planned to take place at Robert's Cross, near Ring, about six miles south east of Dungarvan. The Ring and Old Parish companies were mobilised for this job, together with the column under George Lennon.

To entice the British out from Dungarvan, a message was sent to Dungarvan military barracks to the effect that Cathal Brugha was staying out in Ring Irish College. The column, of which I was one, was marching in file at either side of the road near Robert's Cross, going to take up position at the Cross, together with some men of the Old Parish company. The night was dark. Suddenly three lorries of military rounded a bend in the road, travelling fast with lights on, from the direction of Dungarvan. They took us completely by surprise and we had barely time to scramble in over the ditch to avoid being caught. There was no time at all to get in a shot at them as they went by in the direction of Robert's Cross.

When the British got to the Cross the Ring company were only getting into position to attack. They, too, were taken unawares. However, they did have a bang at the military and, having done so, retreated, as they had neither the arms nor

ammunition to put up much of a fight. I believe that one of the Ring men was wounded in that exchange of shots.

The military proceeded on towards Ring Irish College to look for Cathal Brugha, who, of course, wasn't there. While they were searching the College, we took up position to attack them on their return journey to Dungarvan. We were well acquainted with the terrain in that district and we were looking forward to giving the 'Tommies' a hot reception; unfortunately, the military returned by another route. We actually saw the lights of their lorries going back to Dungarvan but, to our chagrin, they were out of range of our fire and there was nothing we could do about it.

From this period onwards, the British rarely went out without carrying at least one hostage in the lorry. This made the question of ambushing more difficult for us as we were naturally reluctant to open fire when civilian hostages were about.

For example, a few of us from the column happened to be at Mass one Sunday when we were warned that lorry loads of military were outside the church. We were armed with revolvers. On leaving the church, we opened fire on the military in one lorry and then noticed a civilian hostage in one of the other lorries. We had to cease fire and run for it, otherwise the hostage would almost certainly have been killed in the exchange of shots; of, if not, he would have been shot by the British and his killing blamed on us.

My home at Old Parish was again raided about this period. Failing to find me there, the military arrested my young brother and two other young lads who happened to be there when the raid was on. One of the boys was shot and wounded trying to escape.

### Durrow Engagement.

Early in the month of March 1921, plans were laid to hold up a train proceeding from Cork to Waterford carrying jurors to the Courts in Waterford. The idea was to take those jurymen off the train and so prevent the British Court from functioning. It was also hoped to draw British forces out into an ambush prepared by us when word of the train hold-up reached the military authorities. All the members of the column were engaged, as well as about a dozen men from the local battalion. The venue for the train hold-up was at a place called Millarstown, about two miles east of Dungarvan and on the coast road between Dungarvan and Waterford. The ambush position was about a mile or so further along the line at Ballyvoile where the railway bridge crosses over a steep gorge. The railway then enters a tunnel, the next station being Ballyduff, about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles to the east.

I think it was in the neighbourhood of about 7 or 7.30 a.m. when the juror's train came on from Dungarvan. It was flagged to a stop at Millarstown, the jurors taken off and left sitting on the railway embankment in charge of a few I.R.A. men. After half an hour or so the train, without the jurors, moved off to Waterford. By this time, about 15 or 18 of us, with George Lennon, the column O/C. in charge, took up ambush positions on the railway line at Ballyvoile and overlooking the coast road from Dungarvan to Waterford. We were all armed with rifles, the 'proceeds' of the successful Piltown ambush of November 1920.

About an hour elapsed when our scouts signalled a train approaching our position from Dungarvan. We had hurriedly to leave our positions on the line and move back off the railway tracks. When the train was passing we saw it was full of soldiers. They saw some of us and opened fire. We replied to their fire. As the train ran on into the tunnel and out of range, George Lennon decided to follow it.

When we reached Durrow, as far as I can remember now, we found that the military train hadn't stopped there. We also learned from scouts that a party of military had come out the coast road from Dungarvan and had passed through the ambush position at Ballyvoile, which had been recently vacated by us. The British troops had returned to Dungarvan by the same route having apparently got word that a large number of I.R.A. were in the Ballyvoile area.

We held a conference at Durrow and decided to break up into two groups and go in search of food. The time would be, roughly, about midday, or perhaps somewhat later.

I was having some grub with Pat Keating and two others named Kirby and Lonergan when we heard firing going on in the direction of Durrow, about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles from where we were having the meal. We ran out on to the roadway and met a fellow with a jennet and dray which we commandeered and drove on towards Durrow. We approached Durrow station across the fields and, as we drew near, came under heavy machine gunfire from the British military. We got under a hedge to size up the situation. Firing was going on all around us. Eventually we located the machine gun at the back of the Co-operative Stores which adjoins Durrow Station. We concentrated our rifle fire on the machine gunner and soon put him out of action. A British officer then ran over to man the machine gun, but we got him too.

The main British fire appeared to be coming from the Co-Operative Stores. There were also small British groups here and there outside the Stores. The engagement lasted quite a long time. Bursts of firing continued until well into the evening and the position then was that we had succeeded in forcing the British to retreat into the Co-operative Stores into which we poured a concentrated fire from about 100 yards distance.

We had a consultation then with George Lennon as to whether it was feasible to press the attack closer and take the stores by assault. Owing to the nature of the terrain which, in the immediate vicinity of the Co-operative Stores, afforded us practically no cover, and to the fact that our ammunition was, by this time, almost exhausted (we had been firing off and on for about three hours) it was reluctantly decided to break off the engagement and retire to Comeragh, about ten miles to the north west. This we did without encountering further British forces.

Sometime in either February or March 1921, George Plunkett came down to us from G.H.Q. Dublin. He came to us in a general advisory capacity with a view to tightening up the organisation of the brigade in the county.

About this time - March 1921 - extensive road-blocking was carried out by men of the various companies, and bridges were demolished to hamper enemy troop movements. The main purpose was to try and confine the enemy to the towns as much as possible and so relieve the pressure on the column which was frequently threatened with encirclement by superior forces.

#### The Burgery, Dungarvan, Ambush.

On 18th March 1921, I was with the column in the vicinity of Dungarvan when the Abbeyside, Dungarvan, Company were engaged on bridge demolition work. Word was received by the column that whilst destroying Tarr's Bridge, two lorry loads of military accompanied by a private car had passed, going in the direction of Waterford city. The time was about 8 p.m. Tarr's Bridge is about a mile north east of Dungarvan on the main Dungarvan-Waterford road.

After a conference between George Plunkett, George Lennon Pax Whelan and myself, it was decided to attack the British on their return to Dungarvan and to divide the column into

two groups. One group under Plunkett was to cover the Ballycoe road which leaves the main Waterford road at Tarr's Bridge, joins the main road again at the Master McGrath monument and by-passes the town of Dungarvan on the north west. I was in this party together with Pat Keating of Comeragh, Jack O'Meara of The Nire Valley and 8 or 9 others of the column. All of us carried rifles. The remainder of the column, about 10 in number, under George Lennon, took up positions at The Burgery, which is on the main Waterford-Dungarvan road and about a mile north west of the town of Dungarvan. I was in position with Plunkett's party for about an hour when we heard a bomb explosion and rifle fire coming from the direction of The Burgery. We knew then that Lennon's party was in contact with the British. We struck across country towards The Burgery, about a mile away, and came under heavy fire from the enemy as we were crossing fields to get out on to the road at The Burgery. Before we reached the road we met Lennon and some of his lads and then heard the noise of men walking on the road. We cried: "Halt" and asked "Who goes there?" We got the reply: "Captain Thomas looking for buddies". (Captain Thomas was O/C. of the Buffs Regiment stationed in Dungarvan). I could not see how many were in the British party as the night was very dark. Shots were exchanged with Captain Thomas's group who were chased by Lennon, Plunkett, Jack O'Meara, Pat Keating and Mick Shalloe along the Burgery road towards Dungarvan. Capt. Thomas was captured and taken prisoner by Plunkett and Lennon.

While this was going on, myself and 5 or 6 of the boys got out on to the Burgery road and moved after Lennon, Plunkett, O'Meara and the others. We had only gone a short distance down the road when we came under fire from British military who had got off the road and were in behind a hedge. We shot it out with these fellows until they ceased firing and made their escape in the darkness.

Meanwhile, the Abbeyside, Dungarvan, Company, who were engaged on demolition work, were scattered all over the place. They had pickaxes and shovels only, so I proceeded to round them up and order them to disperse to their homes.

Intermittent firing was going on all around us and it was difficult, in the darkness, to pick out friend from foe as the British Tommies had left their lorries on being attacked and were running helter-skelter through the fields. The British Marines stationed at Ballinacourty, four miles to the east, were firing Verey lights, and a garrison of British troops in Nugent Humble's place, about half a mile to the north of The Burgery, were firing wildly in all directions, too.

By this time, some of our men had set fire to the military lorries at Tarr's Bridge from which the British had fled and, when the firing had died down, I got together all the men I could and retired towards Kilgobnet, four miles to the west, as previously arranged.

It was early in the morning (about 2 or 3 a.m.) when my party arrived at Kilgobnet. Not long afterwards, Lennon, Plunkett, Keating and others of the column came along. They had with them two prisoners, viz: Captain Thomas of The Buffs Regiment, and Sergeant Hickey of the R.I.C., Dungarvan. The latter had, apparently, been acting as 'spotter' for the British raiding party the previous night.

After some discussion, it was decided to release Captain Thomas after taking his equipment and papers from him (he had earlier been disarmed). Sergeant Hickey was courtmartialled because of his activities in assisting the British to hunt down I.R.A. men. He was sentenced to be shot and this was carried out. A local Catholic Curate was brought along to give spiritual attention to the sergeant, after which he was shot by a firing party from the column.

At 7.30 a.m. on 19th March 1921, Plunkett took about six men from the column back to Burgery to have a look around for guns which were discarded by the British in their flight the previous night. Amongst those in the party were: Pat Keating, Commandant of the Kilrossanty Battalion, and Sean Fitzgerald, Captain of the Kilrossanty Company.

I might mention here that all of the officers were very much against this proposal of Plunkett's to return to the scene of the previous night's encounter, so soon afterwards. It was argued that the British would be out in strength and that it was simply asking for trouble to approach the Burgery ambush position again. Notwithstanding the representations made to him, Plunkett was determined to go ahead with the idea so, as already stated, he set off with five or six men towards the Burgery, Dungarvan. Crossing a field near the road where most of the fighting had taken place the previous night, Plunkett's party ran into heavy fire from a party of military and Black and Tans. Sean Fitzgerald was killed outright and Pat Keating mortally wounded. One Black and Tan named Redmond was killed. Plunkett had no option but to carry out a fighting retreat which he did, returning to Kilgobnet without further loss.

In the ambush which took place on the night of 18th March, 1921, and which is known as "The Burgery Ambush", a few rifles, some ammunition, a quantity of Mills bombs and a couple of revolvers were captured from the British. It is not known what casualties we inflicted. We heard that there were heavy British losses as a result of the ambush, but, the night being so dark, it was impossible to say whether this was correct or not.

After the Burgery, the column went northwards to Kilbrien in the Comeragh mountains to rest up for a few days. We had been marching 15 to 20 miles across mountainous country and

we were all tired out.

From March 1921, onwards, I was mostly concerned with road cutting (trenching) and, as brigade engineer, I was out every night with different companies, blowing bridges, mining roads and doing everything to disrupt the British military transport system. We succeeded to such an extent that the enemy could only move through the country on foot (using mules to carry tents and supplies) in columns of a few hundred men.

Early in the month of May 1921, the body of our comrade, Pat Keating, killed at the Burgery, was taken from its temporary burial place and brought to his native Kilrossanty for interment. The burial took place at night time. Members of the column formed a firing party. Immediately after the interment, we got word that one of our men belonging to the Kilmacthomas Coy. had been shot in that village. George Lennon, Paddy Joe Power and I decided to go to Kilmacthomas to investigate the occurrence. We travelled in a pony trap with two Cumann na mBan girls named Cullinane (sisters) from Kilmacthomas. Lennon, Power and myself carried rifles.

Knowing that the British were out in force in the locality we sent four unarmed scouts on bikes some distance in front of us. The night was a dark one. As we approached to within about two miles of Kilmacthomas we drove right into a column of British soldiers, about 200 strong, who were advancing in file along the road from Kilmacthomas. We learned afterwards that our scouts had also run into the enemy in the darkness and had been captured, before they could send us back word as to what was happening. The military surrounded the trap with bayonets fixed and, realising our predicament, we "made a break" for it. Lennon and I jumped out of the trap and made over the fence on one side of the road. I clubbed a soldier with my rifle butt and made off in the darkness into a boggy field where I was soon up to my waist in bog-water. The soldiers

seemed to be panicstricken and commenced firing wildly in the darkness. Lennon and I waded through the bog until we reached the railway line about 200 yards inland from the main road. Meanwhile, the soldiers tried following us through the bog and, having failed, they doubled around and up on to the railway line hoping to cut us off. However, we succeeded in escaping them in the darkness.

Our comrade, Paddy Joe Power, was not as fortunate as we were. He made a dive for the fence on the opposite side of the road to us. He got through all right, but got stuck in the bog on the far side and was captured. He was brutally beaten up by the British. To make matters worse, he had been wounded in the neck in action, previous to this, and the beating he got opened up the wound afresh. He subsequently developed fever when a prisoner with the British and this fact, strangely enough, saved his life, because he was sentenced to death, but was in a British military hospital under treatment for fever when the Truce came in July 1921, and that saved him from execution.

The two Cullinane girls, who were in the pony trap with us on the occasion in question, were also arrested. One of them was, as far as I can remember, sentenced to six months' imprisonment.

I linked up again with the column after this escape and moved with them into the Mount Mellerau district where we billeted for some time, then moving east to Comeragh.

George Plunkett had left us at this time (late April or early May 1921).

#### Cappagh Train Ambush.

It was, I think, early in the month of June 1921, when word was passed on to us by the Brigade Intelligence Officer, Thomas Lincoln, of a British troop train en route from Fermoy to Waterford, and it was decided to ambush the train at Cappagh

station which is situated about six miles north west of Dungarvan on the main Dungarvan-Cappoquin road. The train was expected to arrive at Cappagh some time about 8 a.m.

The night previous, I was engaged laying mines on the roads in the neighbourhood of Cappagh. I remember we were at this work all night, the purpose being to prevent British reinforcements coming up from Fermoy or Dungarvan while the ambush was proceeding. All the men on the column together with some men from the local company were engaged. There were upwards of 30 men or perhaps more. This included scouts and those on outpost duty a distance from the ambush position.

There are level crossing gates at Cappagh station, and shortly before the troop train was due to arrive, we put the signal against the train and closed the gates.

The attacking party was divided into two groups in position on high ground on both sides of the station and within about 50 to 80 yards of the railway line. At the appointed time, the train pulled in to Cappagh and stopped. Immediately, heavy rifle and shotgun fire was opened by us. The military replied. Firing continued for probably about 10 or 15 minutes when the train was observed to begin to move. The next thing we knew was that the gates had been crashed and the train gathered speed and disappeared in the direction of Waterford.

It is almost certain that we inflicted heavy casualties on the British in this Cappagh attack, as there were a large number of soldiers on board and we had an excellent firing position. I am afraid I cannot, however, give any estimate of the British losses.

Following the Cappagh attack, the British sent out large columns of troops to cover the area between Clonmel and Dungarvan which was, roughly, our Brigade area. We countered these moves by constantly mining the roads, blowing bridges, trenching roads and hampering in every way possible enemy plans to encircle us. In this we succeeded.

At the time, the brigade headquarters was situated in a tent in a wood at Ballymacmague, Colligan, near Cappoquin. There, Pax Whelan and I received reports from dispatch riders. The routine was that each battalion would send a dispatch rider to a given point each day. He was met by a dispatch rider from brigade headquarters who collected the battalion dispatches and handed out any brigade dispatches. The rendezvous would be changed as circumstances dictated. Most of the work of carrying dispatches was done on a bicycle and a great part of it on foot. I remember one man from the 3rd Battalion used come on horseback carrying a stick, the centre of which was hollowed out. He put his dispatches inside the stick and, when he ran into a British patrol, his method was to drop the stick on the roadway, come back later for it when the danger had passed, and deliver his dispatch.

We were up in the Comeragh mountain district when the Truce came in July 1921. No time was lost in organising training camps in case of a resumption of hostilities. Brigade and battalion engineering classes were started by me. Munition making was begun by each battalion, dumps and dugouts-properly constructed, underground ones - were started and general intensive training undertaken.

Our store of arms was considerably augmented now following the landing of a cargo from Germany of "Peter the Painter" revolvers mostly. These guns were landed at Cheekpoint Co. Waterford, and were brought by us to dumps in the Comeragh mountains. Some of this stuff was, later, sent on to Dublin from Comeragh.

A further consignment of Mauser rifles and parabellum revolvers were landed at Helvick from a boat called "Hannah" skippered by Charlie McGuinness. I remember we were watching for this boat at Ring for some days and when she did come in sight, a gale blew up and we had to get the lifeboat crew

at Helvick to go out and stand by her. The "Hannah" discharged her stuff the following morning and we transported it in Crossley tenders (captured from a British convoy at Dunkitt, Co. Kilkenny) to the Comeraghs.

When the military barracks were being taken over by the Irish (Provisional) Government, I went with Sean Keating of G.H.Q. Dublin, to take over the barracks in Co. Waterford. I was then told to take charge of Dungarvan military barracks and was acting as divisional engineer in Fermoy Barracks, Co. Cork, when the civil war started in 1922. During my term as divisional engineer, depots for the manufacture of 'war flour', mines and bomb castings were set up in Fermoy, Buttevant, and Mitchelstown, Co. Cork.

#### Civil War Period.

When the civil war broke out in 1922, I returned to the Waterford Brigade area and when Pax Whelan was arrested by Free State troops fairly early on, I took up as Brigade O/C. in Waterford and acted in that capacity until the cease fire in 1923, fighting on the republican side.

Before the siege of Waterford by Free State troops, I was with de Valera and Erskine Childers during a tour of various divisional areas in the south. I returned to Fermoy barracks which was the headquarters of the 1st Southern Division, I.R.A. where I was appointed Field Inspector of Engineering, with Fermoy as headquarters.

When Waterford city was besieged by Free State troops, I was instructed to blow up the bridges over the Dealgan and Blackwater rivers, which I did.

There was quite a large Cork I.R.A. column under Sean Moylan in Waterford before the siege, but, on learning that their own area in Cork was being threatened by Free State troops, the column retreated westwards from Waterford into Cork. I cut the railway line and blew up the railway bridge

at Cappoquin when the Corkmen had crossed over to their own territory. I had from 20 to 30 men with me engaged in this work of demolition.

Sometime early in 1923, I think, I returned to our own column, very few of which had gone over to the Free State.

Things were very different now to what they were in 1920-1921. No place was safe for us now as the people were divided in their allegiance to the republic or Free State. It was impossible to know who was friendly or who was not.

Several engagements took place between the column and the Free State army, and conditions became very difficult for us after a period. The Free Staters started many a big round-up and, as a result, we found it impossible to keep the column intact, the risk of capture was too great with consequent loss of men and arms, which was something we wanted to avoid, as those of us caught carrying arms were liable to be executed.

Repeated offers of peace terms were made to me, as the Brigade O/C., by various people, all of which I turned down. On one occasion an ex-Captain of the British army (then a Free Stater) approached me in company with two of my comrades, Mick Shalloe and Cashin, and asked me to hand up one rifle as a token of surrender. In return, I was promised the post held by Major General Prout of the Free State army, in Kilkenny. Cashin, who had been a national teacher, was offered his school back, plus £100 compensation, and Shalloe was offered a high position in the Free State army. The offers were turned down as we were not prepared to treat individually, or even as a brigade; our view being that any peace terms, if considered at all, would have to be considered by I.R.A. General Headquarters.

As the months went by, the Free State troops in the West Waterford area became numerically stronger and stronger. Owing to the fact that our troops were ex-communicated by the Church, the people generally were less inclined to help us, except in very few areas. All sorts of pressure was brought on people

information of our movements to the Free State military authorities.

During this time my home in Old Parish, Dungarvan, was being continually raided by Free State troops, and when my father died it was necessary for me to go to my home, heavily armed, with an armed escort of men from the column to see his remains. I wish to record the fact that my father's body would not be allowed into the Church by the Parish Priest, neither would Mass be said for the repose of his soul, simply because he was my father.

When Liam Deasy of G.H.Q. was captured and sentenced to death by the Free State, he issued an appeal from gaol for a cease fire. That appeal had a certain effect on the men, but it didn't prevent them from fighting on.

A G.H.Q. meeting was held in the brigade area at Knockboy, Co. Waterford, in late 1923. Liam Lynch, Tom Derrig, Austin Stack, Bill Quirke and Tom Barry were amongst those present. I was called before the meeting and gave particulars of the numerical strength of our troops and the arms and ammunition at their disposal. I also made a statement on the general military situation in the Waterford Brigade area. While the meeting was in progress, a big round-up by Free State troops was reported, and the meeting had to disperse hurriedly. It re-assembled subsequently in the Nire Valley near Ballymacarbery, Clonmel.

In the course of an extensive sweep by the Free State troops in the mountain district of North West Waterford, our Chief of Staff, Liam Lynch, was mortally wounded, and one of our best column men, Thomas Keating of Comeragh was shot and badly wounded near Coolnasmear in the foothills of the Comeragh. Although he was so seriously wounded, Keating was dragged around in a horse and dray all the day by the Free State soldiers without receiving any medical attention whatsoever. Later

that same day the Free State military were congratulated by a priest in Cappoquin on getting one of the 'irregulars'. Poor Keating received no spiritual attention from the priest in question and he (Keating) died that evening.

Paddy Reilly and a man named Fitzgerald, both members of the East Cork Brigade I.R.A., who had come into our brigade area, were arrested by Free Staters near Clashmore; Co. Waterford. The two in question were sentenced to death and executed. Two others of ours, John Walsh of Kilrossanty, and Sean Edwards of Waterford city were arrested and shot in Kilkenny jail.

After Liam Lynch's death, conditions became very bad, and, even after the 'cease fire' order, it was almost impossible to get sleeping accommodation. It was also difficult to get sufficient food. Most of the time we slept out in the open with a waterproof covering. The Free State round-ups were continuing and it was a whole time job to evade capture.

One day, in the early morning, in company with Mick Shalloe, Sean Wade and Cashin, I approached my home in Old Parish in the hopes of getting some badly needed food and clothing. I received a signal (pre-arranged) from my sister warning me that Free State troops were in the vicinity. We all went to a point about a mile further back overlooking the road and lay down in a field. Some children going to school saw us and, on being questioned by Free State soldiers, said that they had seen men in this field. We knew nothing until a number of cattle in the field with us began to mill around and look over the fence. On looking over the fence ~~ourselves~~, we found ourselves surrounded by Free Staters. We were unarmed, as the 'cease fire' order had been given some time previously.

After a hurried consultation, we decided to make a dash

for it. The chances are that we would be shot anyway, if we were captured where we lay. We dashed through a gap in the hedge and the military opened fire on us. Luckily, we all got through without being hit. We were then chased and fired on for over three miles, but we succeeded in getting away.

After this, the hunt for us was intensified more than ever, but we escaped capture. Eventually, one evening a few of us put out from Helvick in a row boat and we were picked up by a coasting vessel and landed in Cardiff.

It was some years later before I returned to my home at Old Parish, Dungarvan.

Signed: Michael J. Mansfield

Date: 14<sup>th</sup> June 1955.

(Michael J. Mansfield)  
14th June 1955.

Witness: T. O'Gorman  
(T. O'Gorman).

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21  
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No. W.S. 1188