

W.S. 1,340  
**ORIGINAL**

**BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21**  
**BURO STAIRÉ MILEATA 1913-21**  
**NO. W.S. 1,340**

ROINN



COSANTA.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS.

DOCUMENT NO. **W.S. 1,340**.....

Witness

Mr. J.R.W. Goulden,  
48 Dean Swift Road,  
Glasnevin,  
Dublin.

Identity.

Son of Sergeant Goulden (R.I.C.)  
who was stationed in Tourmakeady  
Co. Mayo, 1921.

Subject.

Tourmakeady ambush, Co. Mayo, 3rd May 1921,  
and events immediately preceding it.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil

File No. **S. 2669**.....

Form B.S.M. 2

# ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21  
BURO STAIRÉ MILEATA 1340  
NO. W.S. 1,340

STATEMENT BY MR. J.R.W. GOULDEN

48 Dean Swift Road, Glasnevin, Dublin.

Tourmakeady R.I.C. Barracks was situated on the east side of the road a little south of the bridge which crossed the Tourmakeady river. The post office was almost directly opposite on the west side of the road. I was born in the barracks on 31st October 1907. My father had come there as sergeant in charge either in December 1906 or January 1907. At first, I went to school in the Protestant National School and when it was closed, through lack of numbers, to the Monastery National School.

The people of Tourmakeady were always very friendly and my father knew them all by their first names. The events of Easter Week 1916 scarcely changed our relationships with the local people and the only hostility we ever experienced was during the summer months when the students attended the Irish College to study the Irish language. In most cases in those days, the study of Irish was almost a badge of nationalist political views. Many of the young people who came to Tourmakeady hated the R.I.C. and all that they stood for and I feel that they influenced some of the people around against the abstract of foreign government rather than against the individuals who represented it. In the months following Easter Week, the police going on patrol carried their carbines but they still went about singly and, beyond this small display of force, life went on much as before. The district was very free of crime except an occasional petty theft or a row at a fair. There was one meeting about the time of conscription. The people around were all small landowners and they were receiving good prices for their cattle and other produce *owing to the war* and were better off than they had ever been before.

*J.R.W.*

So, when 1916 became a memory, most of them had little to worry them except the inconveniences of sugar-rationing and the 'war flour', as it was called. It was not a good ground, one would have thought, in which to nurture the seeds of rebellion.

Yet, from the end of the war in 1918, there was a different feeling abroad. The younger men were not really hostile but were to some extent openly defiant, as though unsure how far they could go. They did not seem very clear as to what form this new attitude should take or as to where it would lead them. For the most part, they expressed themselves in more or less friendly discussions with my father about the day which was coming when he and his like would have to leave. In the meantime, 'outrages', as they were called, were taking place in other parts of the country. In our part, everything was still fairly normal on the surface.

Our barracks was inspected and it was obvious that if attacked it could not be defended by my father and his three or four men. It had at that time no defence except the bars common to all R.I.C. stations on the downstairs windows. There were no steel shutters nor even sandbags. In 1916, each policeman had, I think, 20 rounds of rifle ammunition and, even though that had been increased to 60 immediately afterwards, four men could not do much against a serious attack, especially as half the building was taken up with married quarters which were occupied by my mother and the four of us children.

It is difficult to know who was the more surprised - the local people or my father and his men, when the station was closed by order, 11th November 1919. I remember the date because it was the first anniversary of Armistice Day

and previous instructions had been received for the observance of two minutes silence by the whole 'party'. Needless to say, that in the excitement of packing the matter was overlooked.

That evening my father and one or two men went to Partry Barracks, and two men went to Derrypark. My mother, my brother and two sisters <sup>and I</sup> remained. My father visited us every day through the winter of 1919-20. Sometimes he carried a revolver, but very often he did not bother because of the weight. He was completely confident that no local would ever interfere with him. Often they met him on the road and they used to remark: "Are you not afraid we would shoot you some night going home?". He always turned it aside as a joke and still called them all by their first names.

I think it was Easter Week 1920, that a large number of barracks from which the police had been withdrawn were burned and the women and children who had been left behind were turned out. For a little time before this we had found difficulty in getting milk, and generally used condensed milk. However, on occasions on which any child was ill, we always managed to get supplies. There was always a sort of undercurrent to be felt, but no one was unpleasant though we were frequently asked if we were going away soon. I think the local people did not wish us to be put on the road and just wished to know that we were going.

It must have been early in the May of 1920 that we left when a house was available in Ballinrobe. We shared it for a few months with an Englishman called George Howard and his wife. He had been the first 'Black and Tan' in the area and came to Partry clad in a policeman's cap and tunic

and a khaki trousers. He was a very decent fellow and my father held he would in normal times have made an excellent policeman. He had been a miner in England before taking part in the 1914-18 war. He was a much better type than some of the others who came later.

Three weeks after we left Tourmakeady the barracks was burned. An attempt to use explosive on the south gable did little damage. During the early summer of 1920, no danger was anticipated in the area. I went out with my father in the Crossley to Tourmakeady the day the steel shutters were sent to Derrypark. There was no escort except my father, who carried a revolver, and I sat between him and the driver, Baker, who was unarmed. Baker had a curious way of tapping his left arm with his right hand as he drove. I stayed poking around in the ruins of my former home until they picked me up on the way back. I quote this as an example of what little danger was anticipated at that time.

Afterwards, and until Partry Barracks was closed, I often got a trip out on a lorry and learned the use of fire-arms and how to use a Mills bomb, and a thing called an 'egg bomb'. I always considered the latter very dangerous. Ballinrobe R.I.C. Barracks had been strongly fortified by this time. All the windows were fitted with steel shutters. These were inside the glaás, unlike the ones I have seen in some drawings. They were kept in place with iron bars fitted into cuts in the wall. They did not cover the whole window but the top was protected by a net-wire frame on the outside. This was to keep out grenades and it could be lowered from inside to permit of the defenders throwing them out. The party walls with the adjoining houses were bored to the plaster in those houses so that a hole could be made in a

moment if those houses were being used to attack the barracks. Floor boards were also sawn in the upper rooms so that hand grenades could be dropped into the lower rooms if they were captured. I was a frequent visitor, as I used to bring meals to my father when he was busy or when my mother wished to spare him an unnecessary journey late at night. I knew all the police and 'Black and Tans' and watched these preparations with interest. I never discussed what I saw with anyone - not even my brother.

The garrison, as I suppose it could be called, consisted of the D.I., Captain Pococke (he continued to live at Mile Hill on the <sup>c</sup>long road) *g.p.f.*

- Head Constable Martin Frawley ✕
- Sgt. Henry Richard Goulden (my father)
- Sgt. John Regan ~~xxx~~
- Sgt. Charles Fox
- Sgt. John ~~Hartle~~ *Hartle* *g.p.f.*
- Sgt. Lucas

- Constable <sup>\*</sup>Cruse (driver) ✕ (replaced Baker)
- " O'Regan (driver) ~~xxx~~
- " Power ~~xxx~~
- " Ted Donaghue ✕
- " Slevin ✕
- " John Morrow ~~xxx~~
- " Pat Flynn ~~xxx~~

- ♠ George Howard
- ♠ Coghlan or Coughlan ✕
- ♠ Mussin
- ♠ Bebberley
- ♠ Tom Trant
- ♠ Shore
- ♠ Wright ✕
- ♠ Moore
- ♠ Oakes ~~xxx~~

- ♠ English. ✕ In Fourmakeady ambush.
- ~~xxx~~ Wounded at Tourmakeady.
- ~~xxx~~ Killed at Tourmakeady.

*\* I have since been told that his name was  
Claw. g.p.f.*

There were probably half a dozen other constables whose names I cannot recall and I am not sure if all the Englishmen were there at the one time. They came and went. Mussin did not last long and Trant resigned. In all there were some 20-24 constables besides the drivers who did no duty beyond maintaining their cars.

In the military barracks there were soldiers of the Border Regiment, and I remember Captain Chatfield, Lieut. Ibberson, Lieut. Smith and a Lieut. Craig. I did not like the last-named and he had no use for small boys.

Patrols went out by day and night from Ballinrobe and the first trouble came in the Spring of 1921. A party of soldiers from Ballinrobe was ambushed at Partry. Captain Chatfield and two or three soldiers were wounded. One died of his wounds, I think. This was the background to the Tourmakeady ambush.

The village of Tourmakeady was a good point for an ambush from the point of view of the element of surprise, and it had another advantage to which attention has never been drawn as far as I know. Every house, with one exception, in the area belonged to a Protestant and by the standards of those days, therefore, to a 'loyalist'. The first house, the hotel, was owned by a Mrs. Stewart (wife of an R.I.C. sergeant); on the left was the old Protestant School; on the right in the trees, the rectory; next on the right, the 'grand' gate leading to the lodge occupied by a Protestant steward, Tom Whitty, and the housekeeper, Maggie Middleton. Across the bridge was Moloney's shop (Catholic) and the post office run by Willie Billington and his recently-widowed mother. Across the road was the shell of the old barracks. Further on was an empty house on the left owned by Miss

Louise McDonald of Drimbawn House. It was at the gateway of this house that the first car was attacked. Drimbawn House at that time was in charge of the steward and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. George Callow. Next on the right was Tom Robinson's house and it was into it that all the people of the village were herded in the early hours of 3rd May 1921. It was not unusual in those days for houses used in an ambush to be burned in reprisal and it may have occurred to those who planned the ambush that the choice of ground would confine the attentions of those carrying out crown reprisals to the houses of those who were potential enemies of the I.R.A. At any rate, it implicated the house of no supporter. Certainly, Tourmakeady village was one place through which patrols always drove with feelings of security.

On the other hand no attempt was made to block the road at the limit of the ambush position and, if the driver had not been killed or disabled by the shot fired at him, the first car would have been clear. It is difficult to understand the choice of the fair-green as a site for men armed mainly with shotguns. It undoubtedly gave the attacking force a clear field of fire as there was no wall or fence bounding the road at this point, but the ditch on the westward side is at what must be the extreme limit of effective shotgun range and the line of retreat from this ditch is over open rising ground with little or no cover. The wood on the opposite side of the road does not appear to have been used and afforded welcome shelter to the R.I.C., who would have been completely without cover if even one or two guns had been placed there. Escape for the column would have been much easier if the attack had been made on the return journey. The remaining hours of daylight would have been much fewer



taking 40 gallons of petrol. This meant that it would be absent for some days - probably until the weekend. At that time the only transport at the disposal of the R.I.C. in Ballinrobe was a Ford car and the Crossley. My father consulted with the Head Constable and decided to send out provisions that day so that the tender would have been able to set out for Swinford later in the day. My father, who was in charge of the office, made out the duty list as follows

- Ford - Sergeant John Regan, Constable O'Regan (driver), Constable Oakes, Constable Pat Flynn.
- Crossley - Himself, Constables <sup>blows</sup> ~~Bruce~~ (driver), Power, Morrow, Donaghue, Wright, Coghlan. (or Coughlan), Slevin and another.

The total party including the drivers consisted of thirteen men. The provisions were gathered at shops in the town and it must have been between 12 noon and 12.30 p.m. when they moved off. Before leaving, Head Constable Frawley changed with my father. He knew my father was busy in the office and he looked forward to a pleasant run as the day was fine.

Trouble was always anticipated at Derrymore Bridge, so they dismounted there and walked across prepared for what might come. They remounted beyond the danger spot and came on to Tourmakeady. The Ford was leading and, on coming up to Drimbawn gate, a charge of shot was fired from the gate side of the road. This killed O'Regan, the driver, and the car swerved into the gateway and crashed against the inturn of the gate. The mark of the repair still showed on the wall when I last saw it. The three other occupants of the car were thrown out on the road by the impact and, <sup>leaving</sup> ~~leaving~~ the man who had fired the shot running through the wood, they tried to see him over the wall and were all cut down by a volley from the opposite side of the road. Oakes was killed at once, but Sergeant Regan and Flynn were wounded. Flynn

told me that he was lying near the gate and could see under the car. The attackers then came 'running' - to use his words - and began to disarm Regan and Oakes. He heard someone say: "You summoned me for a light once, Regan" and then he shot him. I did not hear this from Flynn until some time afterwards, but my father told me that there was a gaping hole in Regan's stomach from which rags of his clothing, which were shot into the wound, protruded. This gave rise to the idea for some time that dum-dum bullets or something of the kind had been used. Flynn feigned death when his turn came and suffered no further injury. He made a good recovery and lived in Dublin until some years ago.

A single bullet was fired at the Crossley as it passed the fair green. This killed Power, who was facing that way, and wounded Morrow in the arm. This was amputated afterwards. Power rolled on the driver and he pulled up short of the hotel - how much I cannot say. The uninjured returned the fire with rifles and rifle grenades. If Mr. Ernie O'Malley is right - and it is almost certain that he is - on this point, then the I.R.A. section 2 was situated at the wall covering the road and the entrance to the hotel. Certainly, loopholes had been contrived in the wall. This section must have been dislodged before anyone could reach the hotel gate. I never heard that any firing was done from the hotel, but I know that blankets were obtained there for the wounded and that Patrick Feeney (captured after the attack opened) was locked up there and escaped. One of the Englishmen told me that he shot him, and it was not to him a matter of which he would boast or be ashamed. He said Feeney got out by the yard and ran up towards the rectory gate. He knelt on the road and fired at him and missed, or appeared to miss. He

killed him with the second shot. Some of those who were listening when he told me must have seen what happened and they made rather a joke of him because he missed his first shot. He was very proud of his shooting and was the best shot with a rifle I have ever seen. They even told me I should have heard his language when he missed. On the inturn of the gateway of the rectory (or <sup>what</sup> was the rectory) <sup>gang</sup> is a bullet mark in the cement. The late rector (Rev. D. Manning) told me that this hole had been plastered more than once but the locals had picked out the plaster and when I saw the place last, the hole was still visible, as it may be still. I had no doubt then, nor have I any now, that this is what happened. None of these men felt that he had anything to hide in the matter and the fact that they let this man take what amounted to the credit proved the matter to me at any rate.

Contact must have been made with the Ford before the message was sent to Ballinrobe, because when Mrs. Fitzpatrick tapped the window in the day-room of Ballinrobe R.I.C. Barracks, she said Sergeant Regan was dying. The information was 'phoned from Tourmakeady P.O. to Ballinrobe P.O. There was no wireless in Derrypark nor in Ballinrobe - nor even in the military barracks. This tale sprang up from a statement in Maguire's report. It does not explain how the news could be got there. Derrypark is six or seven miles from the scene of the ambush and, even if they could hear the shooting at that distance, which is most doubtful, they could not know what was happening or where. Even if there had been a transmitter in Derrypark it would have been quicker to return to Ballinrobe and tell the news than to drive in low gear into the hills to have the message sent

from there. In Ballinrobe there would have been medical assistance as well as reinforcement. Derrypark had nothing to offer except added danger. The seven surviving R.I.C. remained in Tourmakeady with their dead and wounded until help came.

In Ballinrobe the military authorities were informed and the steps taken are given in Major Ibberson's statement. So far as the R.I.C. were concerned, every available man, except my father and two constables, left at once in requisitioned cars for Tourmakeady without waiting for the military.. There cannot have been more than a dozen men. It must be remembered that this happened in 1921 and that cars were scarce then. In one of the cars, Mrs. Regan and Mrs. Flynn went out to see their husbands who were reported injured. Mrs. Regan came too late.

I have lately met ex-Sergeant Fox and he told me that he brought in the dead later in the afternoon. It may be possible to get him to make a statement, but I doubt if it would be of much value. I saw the dead come in. They were laid in the day-room.

That evening, my mother and I visited the barracks. The dead were in coffins by then. In my father's room his bed was full of revolvers. He kept things well under control and the only damage done in Ballinrobe that night was the breaking of three windows - Newton's, Feeney's and Bernie Joyce's in Main Street. Many people who felt that they might be visited left the town for the night. Monsignor Dalton publicly thanked my father for his part in preventing damage that night. The next day, Sergeant Regan's body was removed by road and Constable Power and O'Regan

were placed in the Catholic Church. Oakes' body lay in the vestry in the Protestant Church. Next morning they were all taken to the station in the Crossley and sent by train to their several destinations.

On the 4th, a mixed party of police and military visited Tourmakeady and searched the mountain around the place indicated by the then Lieut. Ibberson. My father was with this party. They found O'Brien's body and some 27 guns, and Sergeant Regan's rifle and revolver. In "Sunday Press", 8.1.1956, Thomas Maguire denies that any guns were lost. My father, who was a truthful man, told me that he got 27 guns. I saw the weapons myself, though I did not actually count them. In An t-Oglach, 21.8.1921, an account of the ambush is given, said to be by the O/C. Mayo South, which one must presume to be Maguire. Here it is stated that eight guns were captured. This statement is repeated in "War by the Irish" by John McCann (Kerryman, 1946), page 196. It is also stated in "The Red Path to Glory" (Kerryman, undated page 213, in an article by Edward Gallagher.

Besides the printed accounts, Dorothy Macardle quotes the "Irish Bulletin" account in "The Irish Republic". In the "Sunday Press", 20.11.1955, 27.11.1955, 4.12.1955, there are three articles dealing with this ambush by Mr. Ernie O'Malley. In these his map is inaccurate - Tourmakeady river is confused with a road. He marks the position of the 'second lorry' beyond the P.O., i.e., south of it, when he himself states that it stopped between the fair green and the hotel. In an illustration he shows Buckawn Mountain where it should read Bohaun. Buckawn is <sup>seven</sup> some/miles south near Derrypark. He is confused in his times and there are many obvious mistakes, i.e., Drumbane for Drimbawn. Beyond

the padding they add little to Gallagher's account.

Seen at a glance the results are as follow:

4 R.I.C. killed; 2 wounded; Lieut. Ibberson wounded.

Lost arms:- R.I.C. - 3 rifles, 3 revolvers (one  
of each recovered).

I.R.A. - killed, one. wounded, two.

*Lost arms - 27 sections. J.R.W.*

Actually, the whole event is one of the most extraordinary sequence of coincidences from the actual setting out of the convoy to escape of the column from the reluctant Lieut. Craig. The figures of the numbers taking part have been magnified out of all proportion. Many are confusing the enormous concentrations of the following days with those who took part on the day.

The Co-operative Stores, the empty house near Drimbawn Gate, and Tom O'Toole's in Tourmakeady were destroyed as a reprisal on the night of the ambush. My father was ordered, some time later, to take a party to burn the house belonging to O'Brien's mother in Cross. He refused to obey the order and resigned.

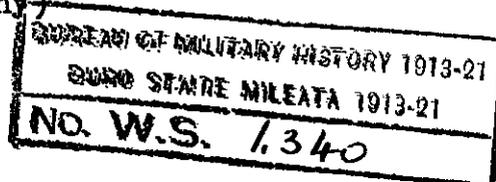
Signed: *J.R.W. Goulden*  
(J.R.W. Goulden)

Date: *23<sup>rd</sup> Jan 1956* *6 ppup*

23rd January, 1956.

Witness:

*J.M. MacCarthy*  
(J.M. MacCarthy)



Statement by  
The

Mrs. J. R. W. Goulden,

ORIGINAL

48 Deanswift Road, Glasnevin, Dublin

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21

No. W.S. 1,340

Journakeady R. I. C. Barracks was situated on the east side of the road a little south of the bridge which crossed the Journakeady river. The Post Office was almost directly opposite on the west side of the road. I was born in the barracks on 31<sup>st</sup> Oct. 1907. My father had come there as sergeant in charge with in Dec. 1906 or January 1907. At first I went to school in the Protestant N.S. and when it was closed through lack of numbers to the Monastery N.S.

The people of Journakeady were always very friendly and my father knew them all by their first names. The events of Easter Week 1916 scarcely changed our relationships with the local people and the only hostility we ever experienced was during the summer months when the students attended the Irish College to study the Irish language. In most cases in those days the study of Irish was almost a badge of nationalist political views. Many of these young people who came to Journakeady hated the R. I. C. and all that they stood for and I feel that they influenced some of the people around ~~there~~ against the abstract of foreign government rather than against the individuals who represented it. In the months following Easter week the police ~~were~~ going on patrol carried their carbines but they still went about singly and beyond this small display of force life went on much as before. The district was very <sup>full of</sup> crime ~~with~~ on occasional petty theft or a row at a fair. There was one meeting about the time of conscription. The people around were all small land-owners and they were receiving good prices for their cattle and ~~were~~ other produce and were better off than they had ever been before. So when 1916 became a memory most of them had little to worry them with the inconveniences of sugar rationing and the 'dew-flow' as it was called. It was not a good ground one would have thought in which to nurture the seeds of rebellion.

Just from the end of the war in 1918 there was a different feeling abroad. The younger men were not really hostile but were to some extent openly defiant as though

measure how far they could go. They did not seem very clear as to what form this new attitude should take or as to where it would lead them. For the most part they expressed themselves in more or less friendly discussions with my father ~~and~~ ~~then~~ they about the day which was coming when he and his like would have to leave. In the meantime 'outrages', ~~was~~ as they were called, were taking place in other parts of the country. In our part everything was still fairly normal on the surface.

Our barracks was inspected and it was obvious that if attacked it could not be defended by my father and his three or four men. It had at the time no defence except the bars common to all R.I.C. stations on the downstairs windows. There were no steel shutters nor even sandbags. In 1916 each policeman had, I think, twenty rounds of rifle ammunition and, even though that had been increased to sixty, ~~in~~ immediately afterwards, four men could not do much against a serious attack especially as ~~the~~ half the building was taken up with <sup>more</sup> quarters ~~which~~ which were occupied by my mother and the four of us children.

It is difficult to know who was the ~~most~~ <sup>more</sup> surprised - the local people or my father and his men when the station was closed by order 11<sup>th</sup> Nov. 1919. I remember the date because it was the first anniversary of Armistice Day and previous instructions had been received for the observance of two minutes silence by the whole party. Needless to say that in the excitement of lacking the matter was overlooked.

That evening my father and one or two men went to Party Barracks and the two men went to Burybank. My mother, my brother and two sisters remained. My father visited us every day through the winter of 1919-20. Sometimes <sup>he</sup> carried a revolver but very often he did not bother because of the weight. He was completely confident that no local would ever interfere with him. Often they met him on the road and they used to remark 'are you not afraid we would shoot you some'

ing to going home? He always turned it aside as a joke and still called them all by their first names.

I think it was Easter week 1920 that a large number of barracks from which the police had been withdrawn were burned and the women and children who had been left behind were turned out. For a little time before this we had found difficulty in getting milk and generally used condensed milk. However on occasions on which my child was ill we always managed to get supplies. There was always a sort of undercurrent to be felt but no one was unpleasant though we were frequently asked if we were going away soon. I think the local people did not wish us to be put on the road and just wanted to know that we were going.

It must have been early in <sup>the</sup> May of ~~the~~ 1920 that we left when a house was available in Ballinroe. We shared it for a few months with an Englishman called George Howard and his wife. He had been the first 'black-and-tan' in the area and come to Party class in a blue man's coat and tunic and a khaki trousers. He was a very decent fellow and my father held he would in normal times have made an excellent policeman. He had been a miner in England before taking part in the 1914-18 war. <sup>was a</sup> He must have been better than some of the others who come later.

Some weeks after we left Gournakerry the ~~the~~ barracks was burned. An attempt to use explosives on the south gable did little damage. During the early summer of 1920 no danger was anticipated in the area. I went out with my father in the bussey to Gournakerry the day the shell shatters were sent to Derryglave. There was no escort except my father, who carried a revolver, and I sat between him and the driver Baker who was unarmed. Baker had a curious ~~to~~ way of tapping his left arm with his right hand as he drove. I stayed poking around in the ruins of my former home until they picked me up on the way back. I ~~for~~ quote this as an example of <sup>what</sup> little danger was anticipated at that time.

Afterwards and until Parley ~~was~~ barracks was closed I often got a tub out on a lorry and learned the use of firearms and how to use a Mills bomb and a thing called an 'egg-bomb'. I always considered the latter very dangerous. Ballinrobe R.I.C. barracks had been strongly fortified by this time. All the windows were fitted with steel shutters. These were inside the glass - unlike the ones I have seen in some drawings. They were kept in place with iron bars fitted into cuts in the wall. They did not cover the whole window but the top was protected by a net-iron frame on the outside. This was to keep out grenades and it could be lowered from inside to permit of the defenders throwing them out. The party walls with the adjoining houses were bonded to the plaster in those houses so that a hole could be made in a moment if those houses were being used to attack the barracks. Floor boards were also sawn in the upper rooms so that hand grenades could be dropped into the lower rooms if they were captured. I was a frequent visitor as I used to bring meals to my father when he was busy or when my mother wished to spare him an unnecessary journey late at night. I know all the police and 'black-and-tans' and watched their preparations with interest. I never discussed what I saw with anyone - not even my brother.

The garrison, as I suppose it could be called, consisted of the D.I. Capt. Pooche (he continued to live at <sup>rule Hill on the loop</sup> <sub>road</sub>)

- Head-constable Martin Farley \*
- ~~Sergeant~~ Sergeant Henry Richard Goulden (my father)
- Sergeant John Regan \*\*\*
- Sergeant Charles Fox
- Sergeant John Harte (e)
- Sergeant Lucas (replaced Baker)
- Constables Cruise (driver) \* (~~Andrew~~)
- Regan (driver) \*\*\*
- Power \*\*\*

## Constables contd.

Ted Donaghue \*

Slevin \*

John Morrow \*\*

Pat Flynn \*\*

+ George Howard

+ Coghlan or Coughlan \*

+ Muscin

+ Beberley

+ Tom Grant

+ Shove

+ Bright \*

+ Moore

+ Oakes \*\*\*

+ English.

\* in Journakeady ambush \*\* wounded Journakeady \*\*\* killed Journakeady

There were probably half a dozen other constables whose names I cannot recall and I am not sure if all the English men were there at the one time. They came and went. Muscin did not last long and Grant resigned. In all there were some twenty - twenty-four constables besides the drivers who did no duty beyond maintaining their cars.

In the military barracks there were soldiers of the Border Regiment and I remember Capt. Chatfield, Lieut. Ibberson, Lieut. Smith and a Lieut. Craig. I did not like the last named and he had no use for small boys.

Patrols went out by day and night from Ballinrobe and the first trouble came in the spring of 1921. A party of soldiers from Ballinrobe <sup>or there</sup> was ambushed at Partry. Capt. Chatfield <sup>was wounded</sup> ~~was wounded~~ and two ~~other~~ <sup>were wounded</sup> soldiers. One died of his wounds, <sup>I think.</sup> ~~the~~ ~~made~~ ~~him~~ ~~him~~ This was the background to the Journakeady ambush.

The village of Gournahady was a good point for an ambush from the point of view of <sup>the element of</sup> surprise ~~and~~ and it had another advantage to which attention has never been drawn so far as I know. Every ~~single~~ house, with one exception, in the area occupied belonged to a Protestant and by the standards of those days therefore to a loyalist. <sup>The first house,</sup> the lodge, was owned by a Mr. Stamb (wife of an R.I.C. sergeant); on the left was the old Protestant school; <sup>on the right</sup> in the trees - the rectory; next on the right - the 'grand' gate leading to the lodge occupied by a Protestant steward, Tom Whitey, and Maggie Middleton. Across the bridge was Moloney's shop (Catholic) and the Post Office ~~run~~ run by Willie Bellingham and his recently widowed mother. Across the road was the shell of the old barracks. Further on was an only house on the left owned by Miss Louise McDonald of Drumbawn House. It was at the gateway of this house that the first car was attacked. ~~The house~~ Drumbawn house at that time was in charge of the steward and his wife - Mr. and Mrs. George Callow. Next on the right was Tom Robinson's house and it was into it that all the people of the village were herded in the early hours of 3<sup>rd</sup> May 1921. It was not unusual in those days <sup>for</sup> ~~that~~ houses used in an ambush to be burned in reprisal and it may have occurred to those who learned the ambush that the choice of ground would confuse the attentions of those carrying out coroner's removals to the homes of those who were potential enemies of the I.R.A. At any rate it indicated the house of no sympathy.

Certainly Gournahady village was one place through which patrols always travel with feelings of security.

On the other hand no attempt was made to block the road at the limit of the ambush position and if the driver had not been killed or disabled by the shot fired at him the first car would have been clear. It is difficult to understand the choice of the fair-green as a site for men armed mainly with shot-guns. ~~It is~~ It is undoubtedly gone

the attacking force a clear field of fire as there is well  
 a fence of bounding the road at this point but the ditch on  
 the westward side is at least must be the <sup>retreat</sup> limit of <sup>effective</sup> shot gun  
 range and the line of retreat from this ditch is over open  
 rising ground with little or no cover. The wood on the opposite side of  
 the road does not appear to have been used and afforded  
 welcome <sup>shelter</sup> ~~cover~~ to the R.I.C., who would have been completely  
 without cover ~~to the extent~~ if even one or two guns had been placed there.  
 Escape for the column would have been much easier if ~~the~~ <sup>it</sup> had been made <sup>the remaining</sup> hours of daylight  
 had waited ~~the~~ attack on the return journey. Hours of daylight  
 would have been much fewer and darkness would have helped to  
 cover retreat or dispersal.

The following account of the ambush is a composite  
 history built from the following sources.

- my personal memories.
- Stamps & account from my father.
- Constable Pat Flynn (only survivor of the first car)
- Constable Ted Donoghue
- Constable Slavin.
- Billie Billington (Postmaster Tournakerry)
- Narrative accounts, especially Sligo News and  
Western People of 5/11/1921. Western People June & July 1921.

Before going further it may be well to point out that research  
 in local papers ~~particularly~~ ~~and~~ will give some evidence of  
 Crown losses. The hearings of claims for malicious injuries  
 always followed <sup>ambushes</sup> and claims by the injured who survived  
 and rest of kin of those who died were heard and reported  
 at length. At the same time claims were heard for the  
 damage inflicted in reprisal by the Crown forces and useful  
 estimates of the extent of the destruction may be formed.

early

On the morning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> May 1921 the I.R.A. occupied the village of Gournashedy in expectation of a convoy to provision Derryhank Station. All the inhabitants except Willie Billington (the Postmaster) were brought to Robinsons. He was kept under guard at the Post Office to answer the phone and presume the show of normality if messages had to be received from Ballinrobe.

in Ballinrobe

In the meanwhile there had been no intention of sending a convoy, on that particular day (to Derryhank). Actually provisions were sent every fortnight and I am not sure that the pay ever went by road by convoy rather than by post. However it may have been sent in this way and part of the idea may have been to capture it also. <sup>The total sum</sup> It would have been somewhere in the region of £250.

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> May an order was received in Ballinrobe that the Crossley tender was to go to Sionford that afternoon taking forty gallons of petrol. This meant that it would be absent for some days - probably until the week-end. At that time the only transport ~~at~~ at the disposal of the R.I.C. in Ballinrobe was a Ford car and the Crossley. My father consulted with the Head-constable and decided to send out provisions that day so that the tender would have been able to set out for Sionford late in the day. My father who was in charge of the office made out the duty list as follows.

Ford. Sergeant John Ryan, Constable O'Ryan (driver)  
 Constable Oakes, Constable Pat Flynn  
 (driver)  
 Crossley. Himself, Constables Bruce, ~~Constable~~ Power,  
~~Constable~~ Morrow, Donoghue, Wright, Coghlan  
 (or Coughlan), Slaven and another.

The total party including the driver consisted of thirteen men. The provisions were gathered at shops in the town and it must have been between 12 noon and 12.30 p.m. when they moved off. Before leaving Head-constable Frawley changed with my father. He knew my father was busy in the office and he looked forward to a pleasant run as the day was fine.

Trouble was always anticipated at Demyriane Bridge so they dismounted there and walked across prepared for what might come. They remounted beyond the danger spot and come on to Jounakady. The Ford was leading and on coming up to Drombawn gate a charge of shot was fired from the gate side of the road. This killed O'Regan the driver and the car swerved into the gateway and crashed against the interior of the gate. The mark of the repair still showed in the wall when I last saw it. The other <sup>three</sup> occupants of the car were thrown out on the road by the impact and leaving the man who had fired the shot running through the wood they tried to see him over the wall and were all cut down by a volley from the opposite side of the road. Oakes was killed at once but Sergeant Regan and Flynn were wounded. Flynn told me that he was lying near the gate and could see under the car. He attacked the car running to use his words and began to discern Regan and Oakes. He heard someone say "you summoned me for a light once, Regan" and then he shot him. I did not hear this from Flynn until some time afterwards but my father told me that there was a gaping hole in Regan's stomach from which rays of his clothing, which were shot into the wood, protruded. This gave rise to the idea for some time that dum-dum bullets or something of the kind had been used. Flynn picked death when his turn came and suffered no further injury. He made a good recovery <sup>some years ago</sup> and lived in Dublin until ~~some time about 1916~~.

A single bullet was fired at the horse as it passed the fair-green. This killed Power who was jumping that way and wounded Hornors in the arm. This was amputated afterwards. Power & rolled on the horse and he pulled up short of the hotel - how much I cannot say. The innkeeper returned the five with rifles and ~~two~~ rifle grenades. If Mr. Ernie O'Malley is right and it is almost

~~After the attack~~ certain that he is on this point then  
 the D.P.C. section 2 was situated at the wall covering  
 the road and the entrance to the hotel. Certainly loopholes  
 had been cut in the wall. This section must have  
 been dislodged before anyone could reach the hotel gate.

I have heard that any firing was done from the hotel but

I know that blankets were obtained there for the wounded and

that <sup>Patrick</sup> ~~Shannon~~ (Captured after the attack opened) was locked up there and escaped. One of the

Englishmen told me that he shot him, and it was not to  
 him a matter of which he would boast or be ashamed.

The Irish ~~Shannon~~ got out by the yard and ran up  
 towards the rectory gate. He knelt on the road and

fired at him and missed or appeared to miss ~~the~~ <sup>him</sup> ~~him~~ <sup>bullet</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>bullet</sup>  
 him with the second shot. <sup>and?</sup> Those who were listening <sup>must</sup>  
 have ~~seen~~ <sup>heard</sup> what happened and <sup>they</sup> made rather a joke of him

because he missed his first shot. He was very proud of his  
 shooting and was the best shot with a rifle I have ever seen.

They were told me I should have heard his language when

he missed. On the return of the gateway of the rectory

(or was the rectory) is a bullet mark in the cement. The

late rector (Rev. S. Manning) told me that this hole had been

plastered more than once, but they locals had picked out the

plaster and when I saw the place last the hole was still

visible, as it may be still. I had no doubt then nor have

I any now that this is what happened. None of these men felt

that he had anything to hide in the matter and the fact that

they let this man take what amounted to the credit proved

the matter to me at any rate.

Contact must have been made with the Lord

before the message was sent to Ballinrobe because

when Mrs. Fitzpatrick tapped the window in the dayroom

of Ballinrobe R.D.C. barracks she said Sergeant Regan was

dying. The information was shown from Fourmeaddy P.O.

to Ballinrobe P.O. There was no wireless in Downpark

now in Ballinrobe - now even in the military barracks. This  
 tale sprang up from a statement in Maguire's report. It does  
 not explain how the news could be got there. Derrybank  
 is six or seven miles from the scene of the ambush and  
 even if they could hear the shooting at that distance, which  
 is most doubtful, they could not know what was  
 happening or where. ~~There is the possibility that some~~  
~~would have driven a vehicle driving six miles back into~~  
~~the mountains and even if they abandoned their dead~~  
 Even if ~~that~~ there had been a transmitter in ~~the~~  
 Derrybank it would have been quicker to return to  
 Ballinrobe and tell the news than <sup>to</sup> drive in low gear  
 into the hills to have the message sent from there.  
 In Ballinrobe there would have been medical assistance  
 as well as reinforcement. Derrybank had nothing to offer  
 except added danger. The seven surviving R.I.C.  
 remained in Journakeady with their dead and wounded  
 until help came.

In Ballinrobe the military authorities were  
 informed and the steps taken are given in Major  
 Stiberson's statement. So far as the R.I.C. were concerned  
 every available man, except my father and two constables,  
 left at once in requisitioned cars for Journakeady  
 without waiting for the military. There cannot have been  
 more than a dozen <sup>men</sup> ~~cars~~. It must be remembered  
 that this happened in 1921 and that cars were scarce  
 then. In one of the cars Mrs. Regan and Mrs. Flynn  
 went out to see their husbands who were reported  
 injured. Mrs. Regan came too late.

I have lately met re-sergeant Gore and he  
 told me that he brought in the dead later in the afternoon.  
 It may be possible to get him to make a statement  
 but I doubt if it would be of much value. I saw  
 the dead come in. They were laid in the day-room.

Next evening my mother and I visited the barracks. The dead were in coffins by then. In my father's room his bed was full of revolvers. The kept things well under control and the only damage done in Ballinrobe that night was the breaking of three windows - Newton's, Gurney and Bernie Joyce's in Main St. Many people who felt that they might be visited left the town for the night. Monsignor Dalton publicly thanked my father ~~was~~ for his part in preventing damage that night. The next day Sergeant Regan's body was removed by road and Constable Power and O'Regan were placed in the Catholic Church. O'Keefe's body lay in the vestry in the Protestant Church. Next morning they were all taken to the station in the bus and sent by train to their several destinations.

On the 4<sup>th</sup> a mixed party of police and military visited Townshendy and searched the mountain around the place indicated by the then Lieut. Osborn. My father was with this party. They found O'Brien's body and some twenty seven guns and Sergeant Regan's rifle and revolver. In "Sunday Press", 8/1/1956, Thomas Maguire denies that any guns were lost. My father, who was a truthful man told me that he got twenty-seven guns. I saw the weapons myself though I did not actually count them. In an O'Glach 21/8/1921 ~~that~~ is an account of the ambush is given said to be by the O.C. Mayo Smith which one must presume to be Maguire. Here it is stated that eight guns were captured. This statement is repeated in "Was by the Irish" by John McCann (Roryson 1946) p. 196. It is also stated in "The Red Path to Glory" (Roryson undated) <sup>p. 213</sup> in an article by Edward Gallagher.

Besides the printed accounts Dorothy Melville quotes the "Irish Bulletin" account in "The Irish Republic". In the "Sunday Press"

