

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BUREAU STAIRS MILITARY 1913-21
NO. W.S. 1402

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS.

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 1402.

Witness

Edward Young,
Kilbarry Road,
Dunmanway,
Co. Cork.

Identity.

Member of Brigade Column, Cork III Brigade.

Subject.

Activities of Dunmanway Company, Dunmanway Battalion,
Cork III Brigade, and
Brigade Flying Column, 1914-1921.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil.

File No

Form B.S.M. 2

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STATEMENT BY EDWARD YOUNG

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

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Kilbarry Road, Dunmanway, Co. Cork.

I was born at West Green, Dunmanway, Co. Cork, on 3rd March 1892. My father was a saddler by trade. I was educated at Dunmanway Convent and De La Salle Brothers National School until I reached the age of 16. I then went to serve my time to the saddlery business with my father. Having completed my apprenticeship, I continued to work at home.

My parents were supporters of William O'Brien's All for Ireland Party which was in opposition to the Irish Parliamentary Party controlled by John Redmond. My father was a prominent worker in the Land League.

After leaving school I joined the Gaelic League and Gaelic Athletic Association. I think that the Gaelic League in the district was organised by Peadar O'Hourihan. The teachers at the Gaelic League classes were:- Tadhg O'Shea, Mrs. Hourihan and Brother Theodorus, De La Salle Schools. The members of the committee of the Gaelic League were:- Catherine Young (Rúnaí), Dan McCarthy, Cornelius Hallissy, Brother Gildus, Rev. Mr. Miller, Brother Cartan, Ned Roche, Tim Burke, Jerh. Crowley, Canon Wilson.

When the Irish Volunteers were formed in Dunmanway in the summer of 1914, I joined up, as did my two brothers, John and James. Some of the pioneer members in the area were:- Liam Duggan, Tadhg O'Shea, Florence Crowley, Eugene McCarthy, Jim White, John Young, James Young, Jack Sheehy and Edward Young (witness). As far as I can recollect, the Irish Volunteers were, at this stage, controlled by a committee, some of the members of which were: Florence Crowley,

Liam Duggan, John Young and James White. The strength of the unit was about 120.

Training, which took the form of close order foot drill and arms drill with wooden guns, was carried out under Sean O'Hourihan, who was the drill instructor. Parades were held twice weekly. Weekly contributions of threepence were collected from each member, the proceeds going into an Arms Fund.

When John Redmond, leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party, made a speech at Woodenbridge, Co. Wicklow, appealing for recruits for the British army to fight for the freedom of small nations, there was a split in the Dunmanway Company. All O'Brienite supporters and members of Sinn Fein were opposed to Redmond's policy. They were, however, in the minority and so left the Volunteers, forming a fresh unit of their own. The strength of this new unit was about 20/25. Amongst the members were:- Liam Duggan and Tadhg O'Shea - both representatives of Sinn Fein - Michael McCarthy, Con Ahearne, a member of I.R.B., John Young, Edward Young (witness) and James Young. The officers of the new unit were:- O/C. Con Ahearne; 1st Lieut. Michael McCarthy; 2nd Lieut. Liam Duggan.

The remainder of the original company - supporters of John Redmond - still continued to serve after the split as Irish National Volunteers. They carried on for some time until the spring of 1915 when, following a big parade of the Irish National Volunteers in Dublin, they gradually disappeared.

Our unit was affiliated to the Irish Volunteer Executive and was attached to Cork Brigade. The brigade was commanded by Thomas McCurtain.

Under the guise of G.A.A. Clubs and Gaelic League branches, the members of the Irish Volunteers organised feiseanna, concerts and other Irish Ireland activities. In this way, the Volunteers helped to keep the national spirit alive amongst the general public.

The work of organising and training went on throughout 1914 and 1915. The strength of the unit was in the neighbourhood of 30. At this time, the company took part in a number of Irish Volunteer parades in Cork City when all companies in the brigade were represented.

Route marches were usually held on Sunday afternoons and were utilised to visit neighbouring districts with a view to organising Irish Volunteer units in them. Units were organised in Behagh and Ballinacarriga about this time as a result of the activities of Dunmanway Company. These units were drilled and trained by representatives of our company (Dunmanway). Field exercises were carried out by the combined units on the occasion of our visits to the areas.

Early in 1916, an Officers Training Camp was held in the Volunteer Hall in Sheares St., Cork. Con Ahearne, O/C. and Michael McCarthy, 1st Lieutenant, of Dunmanway Company attended. The training officer at the camp was J.J. O'Connell, Dublin, and the O/C. was Tomás McCurtain.

About this time a sum of money (£33 or £34), which had been lodged in a bank in Dunmanway by members of the I.R.B. as the nucleus of an Arms Fund at some previous date, was withdrawn by Dan McCarthy (East Green) with the consent of the other depositors (Jim McCarthy, Cruhig; Patrick McCarthy, Cruhig. The money was handed over to Peadar O'Hourihan, who took it to G.H.Q. to get some arms. As far as I can remember,

he got two revolvers and a Howth rifle which he brought from Dublin in the sidecar of the motor cycle. These arms were handed over to the O/C. of the unit. (Con Ahearne).

On Easter Saturday, 1916, Terence McSwiney - he was, I think, Vice O/C. Cork Brigade - met Tadhg O'Shea (2nd Lieut.) Dunmanway Company) by appointment at Manch Bridge on the Ballineen road. They then proceeded to Ballinacarriga where they met Paddy O'Brien, Con Ahearne and some officers from Behagh unit. Terence McSwiney, I understand, then appointed Con Ahearne as O/C. of the units in Dunmanway area and instructed him to mobilise Lyre, Behagh, Ballinacarriga and Dunmanway units on Easter Sunday morning and to march to Inchigeela under arms. He was given a specified time - two hours, I think, from time of mobilisation - to reach the assembly point with his force.

On Easter Sunday morning, 1916, the Dunmanway Company under Con Ahearne, O/C., Michael McCarthy, 1st Lieutenant, and Tadhg O'Shea, 2nd Lieutenant, assembled after 8.30 a.m. Mass at the Market Square, Dunmanway. Lyre Company under Jim Walsh, O/C., were already on parade as they had marched to Mass in Dunmanway. Nearly all members of Dunmanway Company were on parade, including Liam Duggan, Tim O'Brien, Richard O'Neill, Con O'Sullivan, Edward Young (witness), Con Hurley, James Delaney. The following members of Behagh unit were also present:- Tom Donovan, Denis Donovan, Michael Murphy, Patrick Corcoran, Tim Corcoran, John Hennessy, Dan Kelliher, James Donovan, James Coakley, Jerh. Deasy. All men on parade were armed - mainly with shotguns. A few carried rifles and revolvers and all carried 24 hours rations.

The parade under Con Ahearne moved off between 10 a.m.

and 10.15 a.m. We marched to Inchigeela where we arrived at noon. The parade was followed by two members of the R.I.C. (Reilly and McMurrough). On our way we had to pass by Inchigeela R.I.C. Barracks and, before reaching this point, we were instructed to be prepared for an attack by the R.I.C. This, however, did not take place and we reached Inchigeela without incident. On our arrival, we were congratulated by Tomas McCurtain (Brigade O/C.) on our punctuality.

Units from several other districts were already on parade and our unit took up its allotted position. The combined force was then drilled by Tomas McCurtain, who later reviewed the parade. After the march past, the parade was dismissed - the whole force being ordered to reassemble about two hours later. On reassembly, all units were ordered to return to their home areas and to await further orders. The journey back to Dunmanway was undertaken in a downpour of rain and it was close on midnight when the parade was dismissed in Dunmanway.

On the Tuesday of Easter Week 1916, Michael McCarthy (1st Lieut.) Dunmanway Company, cycled to Ballinadee to seek instructions from Tom Hales, who was O/C. of the area. He returned with instructions to 'stand to' until further orders were received from Cork or Dublin. All during Easter Week we were awaiting orders, but none arrived.

When news of the surrender in Dublin came to hand all arms held by the Dunmanway Company were dumped.

During the first week in May 1916, the following members of the Dunmanway Company were arrested:- Liam Duggan, Con Ahearne, Tadhg O'Shea, Dan McCarthy, Tim O'Brien, Con Sullivan. They were removed to Cork and later to prisons in England. With Mick McCarthy I went 'on the run'. We continued to move

about the district until the end of 1916 and during this period we were raided for by the R.I.C. on several occasions. While 'on the run' we were engaged in keeping the skeleton organisation, which was in existence, going, and were looking after the dumped arms and ammunition.

When the prisoners were released from Frongoch in the summer of 1917, a procession of welcome was organised and all available Volunteers took part in it. The return of the officers (Con Ahearne O/C. and Tadhg O'Shea, 2nd Lieutenant) led to a renewed effort at reorganising the Irish Volunteers in the area and, within a short time, the strength of the Dunmanway Company began to increase. The officers were: O/C. Con Ahearne; 1st Lieutenant Michael McCarthy; 2nd Lieutenant, Tadhg O'Shea.

The work of organising the political wing of the republican movement - Sinn Féin - now devolved mainly on the Volunteers. Sinn Féin clubs were organised in each parish. The membership of those clubs consisted mainly of Volunteers and the members of their families. The leading members of Sinn Féin in Dunmanway were: Dan McCarthy (Cooper), Patrick Ahearne, Tom Donovan, John Young, John McCarthy, Ned Young (witness), Michael McCarthy, Con Ahearne, Tim O'Brien, Jerh. Crowley, Con O'Sullivan, Con Hurley.

The members of the Irish Volunteers were now the prime movers in organising all Irish Ireland activities in the area. They were members of the Gaelic League and G.A.A. In their capacities as such, they took part in the organisation of feiseanna, ceilis, concerts and tournament games - mainly with a view to raising funds for the Volunteers.

After one of the earliest public parades held by the

reorganised company in September 1917, four members of the company (Dunmanway) were arrested. These were Michael McCarthy, 1st Lieutenant; Con Ahearne, O/C.; Richard O'Neill and Patrick O'Mahoney. The arrests took place immediately following the death of Thomas Ashe on hunger-strike in Mountjoy Jail. The prisoners were sentenced to terms of imprisonment but they immediately went on hunger-strike and were released after five days.

Normal training in close order foot drill was continued under our own officers. Parades were usually held in the fields at night.

The next public parade of the unit (Dunmanway) was held on the occasion of a visit by de Valera to address a public meeting in Dunmanway in December 1917. On this occasion I was in charge of a bodyguard armed with hurleys. I should mention that the carrying of hurleys was illegal at this time. When de Valera left the train at the railway station where the Volunteers were drawn up on the platform, he drilled the company on parade.

When conscription was threatened by the British in the spring of 1918, there was a big increase in the strength of the company (Dunmanway). The membership was in the neighbourhood of 100. Some of the new recruits lost contact with the Irish Volunteers when the conscription scare had passed and the strength dropped to about 65. During this period all members took part in normal drills and parades. Several raids for arms were carried out at this time and a number of shotguns were obtained in this way. Many of the raids were only camouflage as the owners of the arms were only too anxious to hand them over to the Volunteers. About this time also two rifles were seized from British soldiers home on leave from France.

The prisoners who had been released after hunger-strike in October 1921 were re-arrested on 25th March 1918. These arrests led to a change in the officers of the company (Dunmanway) and an election resulted as follows: O/C. Edward Young (witness); 1st Lieutenant, Michael McCarthy; 2nd Lieut. Tadhg O'Shea.

Beyond normal training there was very little activity during the remainder of 1918. Training was becoming more advanced and selected men were being trained in scouting, signalling and suchlike activities.

Dunmanway Battalion was formed in 1918. There were twelve companies in the battalion, viz: Dunmanway, Aultha, Ballinacarriga, Behagh, Coppeen, Togher, Ballineen, Derinchara, Shanaway, Clubhouse, Kilbarry. The officers were:- O/C. Con Ahearne; Vice Commandant, Liam Driscoll; Adjutant, Patrick O'Brien, Q.M. Mick Dwyer.

There was little activity in the area in connection with the General Election in December 1918. We were, however, engaged on protection duty at meetings and on work on the political side for Sinn Féin. I remember that during the election campaign the R.I.C. tried to arrest Mick Collins when he came to address a meeting in Dunmanway. There was a baton charge at the meeting against which the Volunteers defended themselves, and so enabled Mick Collins to get away from the meeting and escape through Fr. Carmody's house. Amongst the Volunteers who took part were:- Jerh. Crowley, Con McCarthy, Tom O'Brien, Ned Young, Con Ahearne.

When Cork III Brigade was formed in January 1919, Dunmanway Battalion, to which my company (Dunmanway) was attached, became a unit of the new brigade. The battalions in

the brigade were:- Bandon (1st), Clonakilty (2nd), Dunmanway (3rd), Skibbereen (4th) and Bantry (5th). Battalions were later organised in Castletownbere (6th) and Schull (7th). The first officers of Cork III Brigade were:- O/C. Tom Hales, Vice O/C. Charlie Hurley, Adjutant Liam Deasy, Q.M. Pat Harte.

During the summer of 1919 all Volunteers were engaged in organising and collecting the First Dáil Éireann Loan. About this time also we were engaged in dealing with the boycott of Belfast goods. Goods consigned from firms in Belfast were seized at the railway station and in some cases destroyed.

When the Battalion Vice O/C. (Liam O'Driscoll) left the area at the end of June 1919, Mick McCarthy (1st Lieutenant, Dunmanway Company) was appointed to replace Liam O'Driscoll.

Several members of the company were arrested on 16th March 1920. They were sent to Belfast Jail and Wormwood Scrubbs. They took part in the breaking up of Belfast Jail under Austin Stack and were then sent to Wormwood Scrubbs where they were on hunger-strike for 18 days before being released.

About this time also I was engaged in transferring arms from one dump to another in order to avoid their capture by enemy search party. A few raids for arms were also carried out from which we secured four shotguns and two revolvers.

There was no exceptional activity until Easter 1920, when, with other members of the company (Dunmanway) I took part in the destruction of Ballygurteen evacuated R.I.C. Barracks.

When arrangements were being made to attack Mount Pleasant R.I.C. Barracks on 2nd May 1920, I was one of those selected from Dunmanway Company to take part in the operation. I took a wrong road on my way to the barracks and, as a result, missed this engagement.

Shortly after the attack on Mount Pleasant Barracks I took part in a raid for arms and ammunition at Atkins, Gun Dealers, Dunmanway. We got a small quantity of shotgun ammunition, but no arms. I cannot recollect who was on this job with me, with the exception of Michael McCarthy.

About June 1920, I lay in ambush with five others on Dunmanway-Drimoleague road, quite close to Drimoleague village. We were awaiting an armed patrol of R.I.C. and, although we remained in position for about four hours from about 10 p.m., the patrol did not put in an appearance. Five of the party were armed with shotguns and one (Michael McCarthy) had a rifle. The only other member of this party, whose name I can recollect is Tim Turley. For this abortive operation we had taken up our position on high ground south of the Dunmanway-Drimoleague road.

Several raids were carried out on the local mails about this time, but no information of military importance came to light. Other activities at this time were the seizure of 200 gallons of petrol consigned to British military, at the railway station, the seizure and burning of all copies of the newspaper "The Skibbereen Eagle).

Towards the end of July or early August 1920, in company with Michael McCarthy, I disarmed a British soldier at Kilbarry, Dunmanway, and seized a Lee Enfield service rifle. Following this incident, the enemy forces in Dunmanway were reported to be about to set fire to several shops in the town. The members of the local company were mobilised and took up positions at various vantage points. All were armed, mainly with shotguns, but the enemy forces did not carry out their threat, so all members withdrew to their homes.

On 8th September 1920, a party of about ten took up a

position at Manch Bridge to await a military patrol. The patrol arrived unexpectedly a few shots were fired by our party, but we were forced to withdraw. Liam Deasy (Brigade Adjutant) was in charge of this operation. Others who took part were Tom Donovan (2), Michael McCarthy, Paddy O'Brien, ... Murray and Ned Young (witness), also Sonny Dave Crowley.

During September and October 1920, the members of the company (Dunmanway) were engaged in collecting the Arms Fund levy in the area. The levy was based on the number of cattle carried on the holding in the case of farmers. In the case of shopkeepers and others, the levy was based on what we estimated we could get from each individual.

About the middle of September 1920, I travelled to Kilbrittain in Bandon Battalion area with Con Ahearne and Michael McCarthy. Here we joined a number of men from the other battalions in the brigade (Cork III) and underwent a course of training at a camp in Clonbuig. Tom Barry was O/C. Others at this camp were Sean Hales, Liam Deasy, Con Crowley, Denis O'Brien, Jack Roche, 'Spud' Murphy, Stephen O'Neill, 'Flyer' Nyhan. The total number at the camp was between 20 and 25. The camp was carried on for one week and, during this time, we were instructed in the use of arms, the throwing of bombs, guard duty, as well as going through a course of physical training. At the conclusion of this camp we (Con Ahearne, Michael McCarthy and witness) returned to Dunmanway area where we put selected men from the various companies in the area through a somewhat similar course.

Dunmanway R.I.C. Barracks was attacked by the members of the local company about mid-October 1920. The party were armed mainly with shotguns and we had one or two rifles.

One member of the enemy garrison was wounded. Amongst those who took part in this attack were Michael McCarthy, Con Ahearne and Ned Young (witness).

About this time we arrested a man named James Mahony - a watchmaker by trade - on a charge of spying. He was staying at Denis Kelly's, Dunmanway. After his arrest he was handed over to the men of the Skibbereen Battalion at Hayes, Lahane, Drimoleague. He escaped from his gaolers while being detained in that area and reported to the British forces at Skibbereen. He apparently gave the names of those who had arrested and held him prisoner to the British; as there were wholesale raids following his escape. He was, however, shot dead a short time later as he left Skibbereen Workhouse.

Early in October 1920, the brigade flying column was mobilised at Tom Donovan's, Behagh. Amongst those present were:- Tom Barry (O/C.), Sean Hales, Charlie Hurley, Stephen O'Neill, 'Flyer' Nyhan, ... O'Neill (Gaggin), ... Roche, Denis O'Brien, Michael McCarthy, Con Ahearne, Ned Young (witness), Tom Donovan, Denis Donovan, ... Corcoran. There were several others whose names I cannot recollect. The column took up a position behind the roadside fence on both sides of the road at Fanlobbus, about 3 miles from Dunmanway on the main road to Cork. This position was within $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles of an enemy post at Dunmanway Hospital. Although we were in position from about 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., there was no appearance by the enemy. After this abortive attempt I returned home with Michael McCarthy and Con Ahearne, but within a day or two intensive raids were carried out by enemy forces and we were forced to go 'on the run' for good.

We moved round the area until we were called up for service with the brigade column early in November 1920. In the meantime we had searched Dunmanway on a number of occasions at night for a Black and Tan who was to be shot on account

of his activities, but had failed to make contact with him. I reported to the Column O/C. (Tom Barry) with Michael McCarthy (Battalion Vice O/C.), Florence Carey and Batt Coughlan at Togher, about 10 miles north west of Dunmanway. There were a number of other men also in billets in the area. The full strength was about 28. We were put through a course of training in arms drill, physical exercises and close order drill. Training was carried out in Togher district for some days and, about the middle of the week, we moved to Aghilane near Ballineen where we billeted in a vacant house belonging to a man named O'Sullivan. I would like to state that it was customary for the members of the column to recite the Rosary before retiring each night; the Rosary was usually given out by Michael O'Driscoll. On Saturday evening, Canon O'Connell, P.P., Ballineen, had arrived and heard our confessions. He then addressed us and wished us luck saying that we were in the middle of the Sassenachs, by this he meant that, in the area in which we were billeted, we were surrounded by anti-Irish elements.

We remained in billets until about 2 a.m. on Sunday morning, 28th November 1920, when we were again paraded. Nearly every man on parade was armed with a rifle and about 50 rounds. There were also some shotguns in the party. We were then informed by the O/C. (Tom Barry) that we were to attack the enemy, but he did not say where. However, we moved off across country towards Kilmichael area, where an ambush position had been selected. This position was in a barren bogland on the main Macroom-Dunmanway road about 7 miles from the latter town and at a spot where the road from the north (Macroom) turned south west for a distance of about 150 yards. We reached this position about 8 a.m.

The column was divided into two sections -

- (a) Section 1. which was posted north of the road at the Dunmanway (eastern) end of the position was behind the fence of a boreen, which led north off the road and on a rock some 25/30 yards from the road. This section was under the control of Tom Barry (column O/C.) and included, amongst others, 'Flyer' Nyhan, Jack Roche, Florence Carey, 'Spud' Murphy, Mick O'Herlihy, Tim O'Connell, ... Cotter, Sonny Dave Crowley.
- (b) Section 2 was also posted north of the road and about 150 yards nearer Macroom at the western end. This section, which included amongst others John Lordan, Jack Hennessy, Mick Crowley, Mick O'Driscoll, Pat Deasy, Jim Sullivan and Ned Young (witness) was in charge of Michael McCarthy (Vice O/C. Dunmanway Battalion). They took up positions - some underneath a big rock close to the road - and the remainder on top of the rock some distance to the rear.

There were, in addition, scouts to the north (Macroom) and south (Dunmanway).

All sections were in position about 9 a.m. I had been detailed by Michael McCarthy (O/C. No. 2 Section) to take up a position behind some rocks on the opposite (southern) side of the road to the main position at Macroom (western end) and within about 50 yards of the road. There were also some men from No. 1 Section similarly placed at the eastern end.

There was no activity until about 4 p.m. when the column O/C. (Tom Barry) left his position to visit No. 2 Section at the Macroom end. While he was there scouts signalled the approach of the enemy convoy from the Macroom direction. Tom Barry dashed back towards his own position at Dunmanway end and, on the way, he met a horse and trap with four men who had come to join the column. As it was now too late to allocate them to any position he ordered them to drive off as fast as they could to a byroad leading southwest at the Macroom end of the position. This party had only driven into the byroad when the leading lorry in the enemy convoy drove into the position. This lorry was allowed to proceed to the eastern

(Dunmanway) end before fire was opened on it by the men of No. 1 section north of the road. This lorry veered off the road towards the northern side. Some of the occupants jumped from it and dashed for cover to the south of the road. These were taken care of by Paddy O'Brien and the party from No. 1 section who had been placed in position south of the road.

In the meantime, the second lorry had driven into the position at the Macroom (western) end and halted opposite the rock where the men of No. 2 section were in position. Fire was immediately opened on them. The occupants jumped from the lorry and lay on the road fighting all the time. The driver of this lorry reversed about 20 yards out of the position. Two members of the enemy party then jumped from the lorry and made a dash up the road towards Macroom. I then left my position south of the road and followed this party. One of them went across the bog at Kelly's house. I followed and fired at him until I saw him fall into a boghole. As I thought that this 'Auxie' was 'finished', I set about looking for the second one. I found him underneath the lorry on the road where he was shooting at my comrades who were in position on the rock north of the road. I immediately opened fire on this man and firing ceased from his position. In the meantime, the survivors from the second lorry had been continuing the fight, but in a few minutes all firing ceased. The section under the column O/C. (Tom Barry), which had dealt with the leading lorry, now advanced along the road towards the second lorry shooting as they came. The surviving members of the column were now ordered on to the roadway. All enemy arms, equipment and papers were collected and the lorries were set on fire.

The column was now paraded by the O/C. (Tom Barry) who

addressed us. I cannot recollect the remarks he made on the occasion. We now found that we had lost two dead (Michael McCarthy and Jim Sullivan) while Pat Deasy was seriously wounded and died later. The column was drilled for a few minutes at the site of the ambush and then we moved off to Granure via Manch Bridge, a distance of about 18 miles. We reached billets in Granure about midnight after having marched through driving rain since shortly after leaving Kilmichael. The whole column billeted together in one house - sleeping on bundles of straw strewn about the floor. Scouts and sentries were posted while a meal was being prepared by the members of the local company (Ballinacarriga). Within a very short time we were all sleeping soundly. We remained under cover in our billet throughout the next day but were called upon to 'stand to' on a couple of occasions as strong parties of enemy troops were observed in the vicinity moving towards Dunmanway. However, the enemy passed on without incident.

On the night of 29th November 1920 (Monday) five members of the column were detailed to come to Manch Bridge to snipe any parties of enemy troops who might be moving towards Dunmanway. Enemy activity of this nature was anticipated, as a rumour had reached the column that the British forces were going to burn Dunmanway. The party detailed for this job was in charge of Stephen O'Neill and included witness (Ned Young), Batt Coughlan and two others whose names I cannot recollect. Although this party remained in position at Manch Bridge on Monday and Tuesday nights, there was no appearance by the enemy.

The column now moved around the area for about 10 days or so until 8th December 1920 when we took up a position on the main Clonakilty-Bandon road at Gaggin, about 4 miles from

Bandon. Charlie Hurley (Brigade O/C.) was in charge as the column O/C. (Tom Barry) was ill. I should have mentioned that between the date of Kilmichael (28th November) and December 8th, 1920; the column O/C. (Tom Barry) paraded us on several occasions and asked anybody who desired to leave the column to step forward. All present maintained their positions. All sections were in position at Gaggin about 8 a.m. The main body was placed south of the road. I was a member of a section which was in position at the eastern end of the ambush site north of the road. As far as I can recollect, Dan Harte, Clonakilty, was in charge of this section. About noon, scouts signalled the approach of an enemy lorry from the west (Clonakilty). Just as the lorry was about to enter the ambush, a shot was discharged accidentally by a member of the main body. This alerted the enemy who put on speed and drove madly through the ambush position. Some shots were fired at the enemy party, but it got through. The lorry was halted some distance nearer to Bandon. The occupants detrucked and entered the fields south of the road - moving back towards the position occupied by the main body of the column - with the apparent intention of taking the column in the rear. However, the column had already begun to withdraw from their position and so made contact with this enemy party before it had carried out an encircling movement. The retiring column was fired upon and returned the fire - driving off the enemy. The whole column then withdrew safely to the mountain area where we rested and talked over the happenings of the day. There was, however, as far as I can recollect, no mention of cowardice by the O/C. (Charlie Hurley) or anybody else on this occasion, although such is mentioned in "Guerilla Days in Ireland" (page 58).

Following this engagement, Michael McLean - a member of the column who had injured his foot and had been instructed to stay in a house in the vicinity until the engagement was over - was shot by enemy reinforcements which came out from Bandon.

The column continued to move round the area until close to Christmas when they were disbanded, all members returning to their home areas.

On New Year's Day 1921, as I was about to go to Mass at Togher with three other members of the column (Florence Carey, Batt Coughlan, Con Ahearne), we were informed that a party of Black and Tans had been raiding in the district. We received this information just as we were about to enter the Church. We immediately withdrew, but not before we had been spotted by some of the enemy party. It was only our knowledge of the country which saved us from being rounded up on this occasion.

I was not recalled to the column till about mid-January 1921, as I was engaged on organisation and training work in Dunmanway area.

The column was in Crossmahon area on the evening of 24th January 1921, when we were informed that it was proposed to attack a curfew patrol in Bandon that night. The strength of the column, at this time, was about seventy. It was divided into a number of sections some of which were to enter the town and take up positions to attack the patrol. Other sections were engaged as covering parties on enemy posts in the town. I was one of a section of about ten who took up a position on the Dunmanway road to cover off the military barracks. There was another section covering the 'Tan' post in the same area. All sections moved into position about

10.30 p.m. I cannot r ecollect the names of the members of my section nor the name of the officer i/c. We remained in position until about 3 a.m. when instructions were given to open fire on the enemy post. Several rounds were fired during a period of about five minutes. Firing by our party then ceased and all sections withdrew from the area.

After this incident I was detailed to return to Dunmanway battalion area where I operated until again called to the column towards the end of March 1921. On this occasion I joined the column in Kilmeen area. Some members of the column at that time were:- Jim Hurley; 'Spud' Murphy, Pete Kearney, 'Nudge' Callanan, Tim O'Donoghue, Tim Warren. The column were moving round the area for some days and were at Benduff - some distance west of Rosscarbery - on the night of 30th March 1921. We were paraded about 9 p.m. and told that we were to move before midnight to attack Rosscarbery R.I.C. Barracks. The column were divided into a number of sections. I was one of a party of six who were detailed to block the Rosscarbery-Skibbereen road, about one mile from Rosscarbery. The party were armed with rifles. We cut a trench and felled some trees at the selected spot and then remained on guard at the road-block until the fight was over. We were then recalled to Rosscarbery where the whole column was paraded in the square. The R.I.C. Barracks had been captured and burned - all arms and ammunition had been taken by the I.R.A. The column now marched away from Rosscarbery towards the west. This was done to mislead the public, as we soon changed direction north and later moved east to Rossmore, where we billeted.

About mid-April 1921, I fell sick and was compelled to remain in bed in a friend's house for over a month. I

returned to H.Q. Dunmanway Battalion about mid-May 1921. When a section of the column entered Dunmanway to shoot up British forces as a reprisal for the execution of I.R.A. prisoners of war on 14th May 1921, I was on outpost duty at the southern end of the town. The members of the column - entering from the south - were scouted to their positions by Daniel O'Mahony, a member of Dunmanway Company. The scouts were placed in position by Denis McCarthy. Some members of the column who took part in this engagement were:- Paddy O'Brien (battalion adjutant), Sonny Dave Crowley (battalion vice O/C.), Dan Hourihane (battalion Q.M.), Dan O'Donovan, Patsy O'Connell, Mick O'Donovan. The column searched a number of publichouses usually frequented by the enemy, but failed to find anyone. The column then marched down the main street towards the R.I.C. Barracks, firing a few shots at it, but there was no reply or appearance by the enemy.

When the column withdrew from the town, I returned to Battalion H.Q. in Behagh company area. About this time, all units were engaged on cutting enemy lines of communication by trenching roads, felling trees and suchlike. I was engaged on guard duty, more or less regularly, for men engaged on this work up to the Truce on 11th July 1921.

The brigade column took up an ambush position at Gloundaw on the main Dunmanway-Drimoleague road on the morning of 28th May 1921. On this occasion I was a member of a party lying in ambush on the Kilbarry road on the eastern flank of the main body at Gloundaw. The section was in charge of Sean Murphy (Battalion O/C. Dunmanway) and numbered about twenty. Six or eight members of the section were armed with rifles. The remainder carried shotguns. There was no activity, as the expected enemy party did not put in an appearance. It was

later learned that the 'Auxies' in Dunmanway had been advised of the I.R.A. activity at Gloundaw and so did not move out.

About this time my father, who was an old man, was arrested with a number of others. While he was held prisoner he was regularly taken around as a hostage in the lorries by the 'Auxies' stationed in Dunmanway.

Between the end of May and July 11th, 1921, ambush positions were taken up on several occasions in the vicinity of Dunmanway, but we failed to make contact with the enemy.

Just prior to the Truce, a party of column members drove in a motor car through the town of Dunmanway and fired several shots at the 'Auxiliaries' who returned the fire. One of the I.R.A. party was wounded, but enemy casualties were not known. Members of the I.R.A. party on this occasion were:- Pete Kearney, 'Spud' Murphy, Sean Murphy, Ned Young (witness) and Harry Smith - driver of the car.

My rank at the Truce: O/C. Dunmanway Company, Dunmanway Battalion, Cork III Brigade.

Strength of unit:- About 75.

The officers of Dunmanway Battalion in the period 1918-1921 were:-

1918	-	O/C.	Con Ahearne
		V.O/C.	Liam O'Driscoll (left district June 1919)
		Adjt.	Paddy O'Brien
		Q.M.	Mick Dwyer.

June 1919		O/C.	Con Ahearne
		V.O/C.	Mick McCarthy
		Adjt.	Paddy O'Brien
		Q.M.	Mick Dwyer

Dec. 1919		O/C.	Sean Murphy
		V.O/C.	Mick McCarthy (killed at Kilmichael Nov. 1920)
		Adjt.	Paddy O'Brien
		Q.M.	Dan Hourihane

November 1920. O/C. Sean Murphy
 V.O/C. "Sonny" Dave Crowley
 Adj. Paddy O'Brien
 Q.M. Dan Hourihane

July 9th 1921 - O/C. Sean Lehane
 V.O/C. "Sonny" Dave Crowley
 Adj. Sean Murphy
 Q.M. Dan Hourihane

Signed: Edward Young

Date: 14th April 1956

Witness: P. L. Donnell

