

ORIGINAL

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS**DOCUMENT NO. W.S.242.....****Witness**

Mr. Liam Tannam,
29 Garville Ave.,
Rathgar, Dublin.

Identity

Captain 'E' Company 3rd Battalion
Dublin Brigade;

Member of I.R.B.

Subject

- (a) National activities 1914-1916;
- (b) Account of Rising Easter Week 1916 -
G.P.O. Area.

Conditions, if any, stipulated by Witness

Nil

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Statement by

Liam Tannam, 29 Garville Avenue, Rathgar, Dublin.

First I joined the Volunteers in the A. O. H. Hall, Donnybrook, in 1914. It was Eamon Ceannt who induced me to join the Irish Volunteers. His office was next door to mine in the Municipal Buildings, Castle Street.

One day he asked me to buy a ticket for a Sinn Féin concert and he asked me did I belong to the Volunteers. I said, "No". They were then referred to as the Sinn Féin Volunteers and many of us thought that Sinn Féin did not go quite far enough. I had read Griffith's "Resurrection of Hungary". I thought Griffith was in a sense satisfied if the country were similarly placed to Hungary in coming under a dual monarchy, and it seemed to me that Sinn Féin would be satisfied with getting back the parliament that once sat in College Green, i.e. subservient to the British.

I declined to buy the ticket. Ceannt asked me the reason and told me that the Volunteers should not be referred to as the Sinn Féin Volunteers, that they meant to go much further than Sinn Féin. He said, "Suppose I tell you we'll fight, would you join?". I said, "Yes". My brother and I

and two Gormans of Clonskea, one of whom was, I believe, "out" in Enniscorthy, arranged to join the Volunteers in Donnybrook, but something intervened which prevented us from going up that particular week. We joined "E" Company, 3rd Battalion, the following week but unfortunately in the meantime the Howth Gun-running had taken place and so we missed it very much to our disappointment. Eamon De Valera was O/C. of the Company. A. Donnelly was an officer; O'Connell-Fitzsimons a member.

I was present at the Redmondite split. As far as I can recollect the Company was about 130 strong. The majority were present on the night of the split. Eamon De Valera put the matter bluntly that the parting of the ways had come, and he explained the situation and then said, "Those who side with Ireland will go to that side of the hall, and those who would like to support the British Empire will take the other". As far as I remember there was no count but I was almost certain that there were two or three of a majority remained with the Irish Volunteers. The drill hall belonged to the A.O.H. which was as you know Redmondite, and, therefore, we had to march out.

About fifty on our side were mostly juveniles and

their fathers and mothers advised them to keep away from the Irish Volunteers because the old people at the time had been backing Redmond.

The next parade mustered about 25. The parade was held in a field opposite Donnybrook Catholic Church. In a few weeks' time our numbers had declined to 7, i.e. De Valera plus seven men. Even with that small number De Valera carried on as if he had a full Company and solemnly issued orders to form fours with the seven men. De Valera told each of us to be a recruiting Sergeant and so by acting as such we built the Company up to 25. Our numbers were then increased by the addition of the remnants of the Dundrum Company.

We got a drill hall in Beaver Row when our numbers increased to about 40. We then moved into Pearse's old school in Oakley Road, Ranelagh. The first job I got was the job of Company Scout, so I studied Baden Powell on tracking and map reading, etc., making use of cover, etc.

Some of our men lived in Goatstown, Ranelagh, Dundrum, Milltown, Donnybrook, Leeson Street. We were not long in Oakley Road when I was directed to join the Battalion which went under the name of Battalion Cyclists. We assembled in Camden Row, so many from each Company, who

periodically came together on parades for training runs and manoeuvres. I was placed in charge as a 1st Lieutenant.

In the Cyclists I became a friend of Mick Malone who was killed in action in No. 25 Northumberland Road. He succeeded me in command of the Battalion Cyclists.

When Captain De Valera was promoted in March 1915, he instructed me to go back to the Company and stand for election as O/C. of the Company. There was an officer, George Murphy, I think from the 2nd Battalion, who supervised the election. There were about 45 men on parade. I was elected O/C.

About this time a series of lectures for officers was arranged and started at 41 Kildare Street and was continued at Headquarters, Dawson Street, which I attended. Most of the lectures were given by Tomás MacDonagh. MacDonagh was a very good lecturer. He started, I think, at the Campaign of Xerxes and went on to the South African War. After the lectures there were examinations held in tactics. My examination took place at Greenhills. I think Ginger O'Connell was the referee. Eimer O'Duffy was also present. After this I was gazetted in the "Irish Volunteer", dated 4th December, 1915. It was given out at the time that anybody who failed to pass this test would not be confirmed in his rank.

I was not quite 20 years when I was Company Commander and I felt I was really too young for that responsible post. In the Company we had all kinds of people from doctors to labourers and they were all older than I was. De Valera seemed to have recognised that I was rather young and for four weeks, twice a week, he brought me to his house in Morehampton Terrace and instructed me as to what I should study and advised me about the running of the Company.

In July, 1915, I became a member of the I.R.B., The Teeling Circle, which met in Lower Gardiner Street, the Dublin Typographical Society premises. Eamon Ceannt swore me in looking over the wall of the Liffey, and then we went direct from that on to the meeting. Cathal Brugha was Centre.

After one of the officers' lectures I went to MacDonagh and asked him if I was wanted for anything. I was prepared to take on any dangerous work even if it were necessary to go to England, but he laughed as he said, "We have not come down to that yet". I then asked him to give me a job of organising for the Irish Volunteers during the period of my fortnight's annual leave. He did. I organised Tallaght and on to Glencullen and Enniskerry. A short account of the recruiting meetings which were held in connection with this is given in the "Irish Volunteer" of this period. I remember Cosgrave and

Desmond Fitzgerald were speakers, and The O'Rahilly spoke at Bray.

One night I had 20 men on parade in the Main Street of Tallaght when I was approached by Sergeant O'Driscoll, R. I. C. He ordered me to disperse the men. I refused to do so and asked him why he did not go up north and arrest Carson's Ulster Volunteers for parading. He threatened to arrest me and I drew a .38 revolver and invited him to go^o with the arrest. He did not go on with it.

During the period I was organising I put up at a house called Old Mill House on the Oldbawn Road and at the time all visitors had to register under the Aliens Act. I was only there one day when a policeman called and left a form. I filled it up in Irish, marking in the space where you were to declare you were a British subject, the word "Éireannach". The form was duly called for by the same policeman. He read it and said, "This wont do". I said it was the only form he would get from me, that I was entitled to use my own language. He became very vexed and tore up the form.

Coming on to three or four weeks before Easter Monday, 1916, I was asked to have a squad of men present as a guard at Headquarters, No. 2 Dawson Street. I think the intention was to hold back members of the "G" Division until papers were

cleared away, e.g. in the event of a raid.

The office staff at the time consisted of:-

Bulmer Hobson, Secretary,
Barney Mellows, and a girl
Maevé Ryan (who was Champion Stepdancer),
clerks, and a messenger, Seumas Cooling.

I was appointed a member of the County Dublin Board of the Irish Volunteers. As far as I remember Tom Hunter, Tom Slater, M.W. O'Reilly, Liam Clarke and one of the O'Hanrahans were also members. We met in No. 2 Dawson Street. I think the function of the Board had something to do with outings and social functions. Henry O'Hanrahan asked me could we get any buck shot, five or six pellets, to fit into a 12 bore cartridge. He gave me a mould which turned out about 20 at a time and I had to pinch lead piping and my mother ran the moulds every night. I brought the buck shot to No. 2 Dawson Street and handed it over to Henry O'Hanrahan.

I was active in the I.R.B. about arms and securing arms. In the I.R.B. I got instructions that in the event of conflicting orders I was to take the orders of my next superior officer who was a member of the I.R.B. as against the orders of any other officer. As far as I can remember it was Eamon Ceannt who gave me these instructions. I think it was on Holy Thursday, 1916.

About five or six weeks before the Rising Tomás MacDonagh asked me and Seán Heuston to attend at 2 Dawson Street for special lectures on house fighting, but I was too busy with my Company and my girl and so failed to attend these lectures. Seán Heuston did attend and I believe that's why he got charge of the Mendicity Institute in Easter Week.

On Holy Thursday I got a message from Barney Mellows to come to 2 Dawson Street. He told me he thought the police were on to a consignment of high-power .22 rifles, a couple of cases of them, which were in Volunteer Headquarters, and that he was anxious to remove them to a safe place. He had already got in touch with Jimmy Fitzgerald of Great Brunswick Street (now Pearse Street). I arrived at 7. I was then armed with a .38 revolver. Barney Mellows, Jimmy Fitzgerald and I think, Seumas Cooling, were there. Hoey, the "G" man, was standing on the opposite side of the street. Barney said, "I wonder could we shift Hoey".

I left the building and crossed the road, stood behind Hoey and coughed. He turned round quickly in surprise and as I continued to stand behind him, he apparently got a bit nervous and changed his position and moved down about ten yards. I followed him down and repeated the manoeuvre. When he turned I gave him a rather determined look and he left

his position. A taxi came round the corner of Nassau Street, pulled up opposite No. 2 Dawson Street by arrangement. I don't know who the driver of the taxi was. We were ready in the hall with the cases and put them quickly into the taxi which they almost filled. We got in beside them and drove off and by a circuitous route eventually arrived at the back of Clarendon Street Church. Fitzgerald's father, a painter, was doing some work there. We got the cargo inside. I believe they were placed at the rear of the altar but cannot say definitely as I did not help to carry them in - I was left in the car.

Holy Saturday evening came. The air was rather electric; almost all officers suspected that the Easter manoeuvres arranged for were really "the day", but no positive orders had been issued to Company Commanders. We had been told that for every weapon we had to our Company's armaments, we would be given another one to accompany it. I think it was O'Rahilly who made that promise.

I changed into uniform after dinner for swank, I think, to meet my girl. I got a message from Commandant De Valera that he wanted to see me at 144 Great Brunswick Street which he was using as Battalion Headquarters. I went there and De Valera asked me if I would go to P. H. Pearse, the Hermitage, Rathfarnham, and get from him a couple of small light parcels

and a packet of safety pins. He mentioned something about armlets. I proceeded to Rathfarnham, arrived there about 4 p.m., saw P.H. Pearse and gave him my message. "I have them for you", he said, "these are for tomorrow". I put two and two together. I had heard of a convention in International Law that men taking part in an insurrection were required to wear some distinguishing mark or they could be shot as spies or looters, and I took it that these were armlets and were to be used by men not wearing uniform.

I had been mobilised for Beresford Place for 4 o'clock on Easter Sunday and being now convinced that the Rising would take place tomorrow, I said to P.H. Pearse: "My Company extends from Leeson Street to Goatstown and I have received a mobilisation order for 4 p.m. at Beresford Place". I said, "I think it would be better if I mobilised in my own area and marched in with my Company adopting a formation that would not admit of our being surprised on the way". I said that in case of trouble it might be difficult to get our men into the city simultaneously or in small groups, they would not be so vulnerable in the way I had suggested. He agreed. He said, "Suppose we have to fight, where do you think would the British hold?". "The first place I suppose they would hold", I said, "would be the line of the canal". I asked him had

I permission to fight if I found the bridge I proposed to cross, held. He said, "If you find the bridge held, try another. If that is held, try another. If that is held, fight".

I then assured him that I would fight my way across the canal.

I returned to 144 Great Brunswick Street. When the door was opened I found a strong guard in the hall but I was recognised and admitted. Commandant De Valera was in the return room in uniform. I told him what I had got out of P.H. Pearse, and the poor man was absolutely amazed that P.H. Pearse had spoken to me of what was evidently such a great secret. He said, "Liam, I want you to do something for me, to go to my house with a message". He sat down and wrote a letter to Mrs. De Valera. I thought this would be the last I would ever see of him and on account of my Company belonging to his Battalion I said, "We have been together for a long time and I would like to fight with you".

I asked him if there was any possibility to arrange this. He said, "No, arrangements are made that your Company will go to make up Headquarters Battalion". He said, "I would like to have you, but it is ordered otherwise, but I know that wherever you go, you will win your spurs". Needless to say this made me feel seven feet tall and we shook hands and parted.

I went with the letter to Mrs. De Valera. She answered the door and invited me in to the sitting room, sat me down and read the letter. She drew her chair close up in front of me until our knees were meeting and she said very confidentially: "Liam, what's going to happen tomorrow?". "Oh", I said, "we are on big manoeuvres tomorrow". She repeated: "Oh Liam, what's going to happen?". I said, "Why should anything special happen tomorrow?". She said, "Dev has been like a lodger for the past week and there is going to be trouble tomorrow and you know it". "Oh", I said, "you are aware that there is a rumour that we are to be disarmed and you know that we are under promise not to part with our arms without a fight. The only trouble I can contemplate is in the event of such an attempt being made tomorrow or any other day". "Oh", she said, "why don't you tell me the truth?". "There is something on tomorrow". However, I got away without parting with any information.

Years after this when I was sitting between De Valera and Colonel Moore at a function in the Mansion House, De Valera related to Colonel Moore how amazed and how shocked he was that such a young officer as I then was, should have been placed in possession of such vital information. I asked De Valera: "Did you write instructions to Mrs. De Valera to

pump me that day when you got me to bring her the letter?".

"No, Liam, I did not", he said, "I trusted you".

On Sunday I got up for 10 Mass and got into uniform.

I read MacNeill's countermanding order in the "Sunday Independent". A couple of members of the Company whom I met, I advised not to pay any attention to this countermanding order, stating that any order they were to obey should come through me.

On Sunday we mobilised at about 3 o'clock in Oakley Road and we had about 58 out of 63 on parade, the others being accounted for mostly by illness - Alf McLoughlin and Reddigan were down with pneumonia. I was positively delighted with the number on parade especially since this happened in spite of MacNeill's countermanding order. Some of the boys had come in to me at dinner time and I had told them not to pay any attention to it.

At about 3.15 a white-faced young fellow, sweating and panting, arrived on a bicycle. The Volunteer on the gate pointed me out to him and he threw his bicycle against the wall and ran over to me with a letter. It was already opened and was addressed to "An tAthair MacMathghamhna, St. Mary's, Rathmines". He panted. "Father MacMahon said you were to do

whatever is in the letter at once and to let me know that you will". I said, "I don't know Father MacMahon".

I opened the letter and even today I remember every word of it. It said:-

"A Athair, a Chara,

This is to authenticate my statement in this morning's "Sunday Independent", every word of which is true. Great influence is needed immediately and in all directions to ensure implicit obedience to that order and so to avert a frightful catastrophe".

Eoin MacNeill".

I said to the messenger: "Go back to Father MacMahon and tell him that I can only accept orders from my immediate military superiors". The boy departed. I pulled the men together again and placed the man with our flag in front. That flag was subsequently flown from the Distillery near Bolands Mills. It was a green flag, 3' x 2', with a harp. I believe Mrs. De Valera now has custody of that flag.

Just then I saw Captain French Mullen passing by on a bicycle. He was in uniform and pulled over to the gate and said: "Have you your men demobilised?". I said, "No, I have received no orders to demobilise them". He said, "That's funny, the whole thing is off". I said, "Not as far as I am concerned". He said, "Don't be a fool. I can tell you that

the 4th Battalion to which I belong, has been sent home".

He told me that Commandant Geannt who was O/C. of his Battalion,

was in charge of the parade and definitely demobilised his

Battalion and that I could take it as official. I said,

"I am sorry, but I am taking orders from Commandant De Valera

or Commandant MacDonagh". "I can't stop you", he said.

I said, "No".

Just as I was about to give the order to proceed I saw my brother Michael riding up Oakley Road. I waited.

Michael handed me the demobilisation order. He got it from

De Valera. It was signed by Tomás MacDonagh and countersigned

by De Valera. I stopped the men who had begun to march.

Just as I turned from the gate I saw the two Pearses and

Tomás MacDonagh coming up the road. I approached MacDonagh.

I said: "I have only received the demobilisation now".

"Are the men here?", he said. I answered, "Yes". "Well, tell

them to go home in groups and to stand-to and be ready for a

sudden mobilisation". We parted and I told the men. I think

it was about 3.45 then.

I went home, bitterly disappointed, and thinking here is another case of conflicting orders. I went to bed very tired

and disappointed that night and did not waken till 10.30 on

Easter Monday when I heard a rapping on the door. I ran down

to the door and a man named Stephenson was there with an order that "E" Company was to parade at 10.a.m at Beresford Place. "Look here", I said, "you are handing this to me at 10.35". "It can't be helped", he said, "you are to do the best you can", and he went away.

I had a written mobilisation scheme but how was I to initiate it quickly. I got my brother up and told him he would have to help mobilise the Company. He said, "I'll do no such thing". "Don't you know", he said, "that since I am Assistant Battalion Quartermaster I am no longer a member of "E" Company and must report to Headquarters". Without putting on a collar or my puttees and without lacing my boots I went for a namesake, a cousin of mine. He was only a little boy then. I gave him some mobilisation orders. I myself called to a couple of mobilisers. I had timed the mobilisation for 11.30 at Oakley Road although I knew very well that half the men could not get there. I came back into the house, dressed myself, got my revolver, etc. and went off to Oakley Road.

It was just 11.30 when I arrived. I found there about 10 men. In another few minutes a 2nd Lieutenant named Darcy came along. Paddy Doyle (Milltown), Musketry Instructor, was also there. Doyle was later killed in Clanwilliam House.

I gave Doyle orders to remain in Oakley Road and at 12 o'clock to move off then to Beresford Place with as many men as had reported, leaving one man in Oakley Road to direct late ones.

I got Darcy to fetch a hackney car and Darcy and I went in the hackney car to Milltown, Dundrum and Goatstown. The idea was to try and mobilise the outlying districts. I called at Doyle's house in Milltown and collected a Lee Enfield rifle.

I went on to Cullens and Dillons of Dundrum. I did not see the Company Adjutant, Alec Cullen, but I told his brother and father that the men were to be contacted at once and got into Beresford Place.

I then went on to Goatstown and neither of the Cunninghams were in. It must be remembered that in country districts they work on bank holidays and don't work on ^{Church/}Holidays so that quite a number of the men were working. I found I had no more time and was anxious to get back to command my Company and returned at once to Oakley Road.

I found it deserted and then drove straight through the city to Beresford Place. About 25 men had gone in from Oakley Road. A few later reported to Bolands, the G.P.O., the Mail Office and the College of Surgeons. On the way into the city we noticed an air of excitement. When crossing Butt Bridge I heard some firing going on up the Liffey. I subsequently

found out it was at the Four Courts. The jarvey became very nervous but I made him go on. I paid him off at the steps of Liberty Hall and Darcy and I entered. At the foot of the stairs at Liberty Hall I saw a very excited young man. Strange to say he was in Volunteer uniform. I asked him, "Where is Commandant Pearse?". He said, very excitedly, "No. 7 Room, Sir". I dashed up the stairs, found No. 7 Room, it was deserted. I ran down again, abused this young man for having sent me on a wild goose chase, and he then stammered, "they are in the General Post Office. They have taken the General Post Office".

Darcy and I proceeded around by Eden Quay, passed the Abbey Theatre, turned left into Abbey Street and there I heard sounds of crashing which seemed to come from the direction of the G.P.O. I forgot about Darcy and began to run and turned into O'Connell Street and saw the windows of the G.P.O. being broken out and the windows being barricaded. I dashed up to the front door. It was opened at once as I was recognised and in uniform, and I reported to P.H. Pearse. He told me to report to Connolly who was now O/C., Dublin Command. I said to Connolly: "I am O/C. 'E' Company, 3rd Battalion. Is my Company here?". He said, "No". I got a terrible shock. Connolly said: "You need not worry about

this; they are with Commandant De Valera". I said, "May I go with them?". He said, "No. Commandant De Valera is well enough supplied with officers and he is short of men."

I heard afterwards that Paddy Doyle had proceeded in the direction of Beresford Place and somewhere near Holles Street he was met by a couple of men of the 3rd Battalion who advised Doyle to take the men at once into Bolands Mills where Commandant De Valera had taken possession. Doyle said: "My instructions are to proceed to Beresford Place". However, he consented to wait for word from De Valera. The person who stopped him returned from Bolands in a few minutes with orders to say that the men were to proceed to Bolands and De Valera reported at once to Connolly what had happened.

I had to be content to remain in the G.P.O. and I was given charge of the windows on the right as you look out of the middle door on the ground floor. We reinforced the barricades at the windows with all kinds of heavy books, etc. Later we built up a second line of barricades on top of the counters with bags of coal in case we were beaten from the windows. George Plunkett took turns with me in command of those windows.

When we had the thing more or less straightened out I got a job to bring out about a dozen men and relieve men who were posted at the corner of Henry Street, the corner of Mary Street

and Liffey Street, at the corner of Liffey Street and Middle Abbey Street and at the corner of Abbey Street and O'Connell Street. I did not know what instructions the men had, so I told those whom I replaced them with, that in case of an advance by the enemy they were to open fire and send back one of their number with word and take cover.

After that O'Rahilly got me to assist him in collecting Postal Orders, money, stamps and everything that might be of value from all the drawers. They were emptied into sacks from the drawers and with the assistance of a couple of men were carried upstairs and placed in a room overlooking Prince's Street. The room next to that was used for prisoners and I think that the guard on the prisoners was also keeping an eye on the valuables.

I raided the Metropole Hotel for food and bedding. Our transport was one of those Post Office basket cars and when I entered the Metropole Hotel I saw a British Officer making a hasty retreat upstairs. I sent a man after him and he captured his .45 and a sword.

When I entered the Metropole Hotel the Manager, a foreigner, stood in my way and said: "You cannot enter here". I said, "We are entering and you better not try to stop us".

He said: "My duty is to prevent unauthorised persons from entering this place", and again got in my way. I saw what he really wanted and I pushed him with the flat of my arm out of the way. He was satisfied he had done his duty, so he turned after me then and said, "What do you want?". He said: "Will you give me a receipt for what you have taken?". I said, "Yes", and we proceeded at once to take any foodstuffs we wanted and a certain amount of bedding. He produced the receipt later on when claiming compensation. I remember O'Rahilly saying that we would require to have a supply of candles in case the light was cut off and instead of setting out to commandeer them he instructed a Cumann na mBan girl to purchase them and I gave her the money. She purchased the candles and gave me the change out of a pound note.

I was in command of the windows before-mentioned when it was reported that the British were moving into action against us. The Nelson Pillar partly obscured my view of the oncoming lancers, but orders were issued (I think by Joseph Plunkett) to hold fire until a general order was given. We all crowded to the windows and thrust our weapons through the barricade and just as the first two lancers came into view of my window, someone let off a shot and with that I immediately gave the order to fire. Some lancers and

several horses were shot and the remainder of them galloped away.

One of my men on the windows on Monday afternoon told me that I was required at the window, that there were two strange-looking men outside and I went to the window and I saw two obviously foreign men. Judging by the appearance of their faces I took them to be seamen. I asked what they wanted. The smaller of the two spoke. He said: "I am from Sweden, my friend from Finland. We want to fight. May we come in?". I asked him why a Swede and a Finn would want to fight against the British. I asked him how he had arrived. He said he had come in on a ship, they were part of a crew, that his friend, the Finn had no English and that he would explain.

So I said: "Tell me why you want to come in here and fight against England". He said: "Finland, a small country, Russia eat her up". Then he said: "Sweden, another small country, Russia eat her up too. Russia with the British, therefore, we against". I said: "Can you fight. Do you know how to use a weapon?". He said: "I can use a rifle. My friend - no. He can use what you shoot the fowl with". I said: "A shotgun". I decided to admit them. I took them in and got the Swede a rifle, the Finn a shotgun.

I put them at my own windows.

There was another alarm and again we manned the windows but it was a false alarm. Everyone cocked his piece, including the Finn, who cocked his shotgun. When the alarm passed he stepped down off the barricade, banged the shotgun against the terrazzo floor and off it went and down came a shower of plaster over six or seven of us. Joe Plunkett ran up on hearing the explosion and started to abuse the Finn. The Finn looked at him, looked at me, at everyone. Joe said: "Can you not talk, man?". The Swede spoke up and said: "No. He has no English". "Who are you?", Joe said. I intervened then and I explained to Joe. Joe looked at me and said: "Amazing, but obviously that man there is a danger", pointing to the Finn. "We will have to get him another place out at the back of the Main Hall.

Some of our men were filling fruit tins with explosives and bits of metal, and Joe thought it would keep him out of danger at the time. I was transferring the Finn when the Swede spoke up: "Where he go, I go; we together". I had to take the two of them. They were there to the end and were captured. The Swede, through his Consul, got out in no time. The Finn was with us for three weeks. He was with us in Kilmainham Jail. The Finn was not a Catholic. He had no

English but before he left he was saying the Rosary in Irish. His name was Tony Makapaltis - his name appears in the Sinn Féin Handbook, Irish Times. I never heard the Swede's name.

I have no clear memory of Tuesday morning of doing anything particular, but on Tuesday afternoon I was sent for by Connolly. He said: "I want you to go over to take charge of Reis's and the D. B. C." Reis's was on the corner of Abbey Street and the D. B. C. next door. He said: "Captain Weafer who was in command of the post, is in hospital". He mentioned that we had somebody in the Hibernian Bank. I now know that there was a First Aid Post in the Hibernian Bank.

He called a typist, Miss Kearney I think it was, and he dictated an order. He commenced the order by addressing it to me personally, but after the typist had printed my name he told her to remove the sheet from the machine and commence again. This time he headed the order "To the Officer in Charge".

Army of the Irish Republic
(Dublin Command)

Headquarters.

Date 25th April 1916.

To

Officer in Charge Reis's and D. B. C.

The main purpose of your post is to protect our wireless station. Its secondary purpose is to observe Lower Abbey Street and Lower O'Connell Street. Commandeer in the D. B. C. whatever food and utensils you require. Make sure of a plentiful supply of water wherever your men are. Break all glass in the windows of the rooms occupied by you for fighting purposes. Establish a connection between your forces in the D. B. C. and Reis's building. Be sure that the stairways leading immediately to your rooms are well barricaded. We have a post in the house at the corner of Bachelor's Walk, in the Metropole Hotel, in the Imperial Hotel, in the General Post Office. The directions from which you are likely to be attacked are from the Custom House, and from the far side of the river, D'Olier Street or Westmoreland Street. We believe there is a sniper in McBirney's on the far side of the river.

Signed.

James Connolly,
Commandant General.

I understood I was deputising for Captain Weafer whose own Company was there. I went over to Reis's and had to introduce myself as I knew nobody there. Paddy McGrath and his son who got his eye out, and a man named Mulvey from Bray were there; the rest were black strangers. Upstairs in the Wireless Room of the Atlantic College I saw Fergus Kelly and Blimey O'Connor. Blimey was engaged on the job of climbing up the wireless mast to fix some wires and he was being sniped at all the time, but he fixed it. How he had the pluck to carry on and how he was not riddled beats me.

I learned from Fergus Kelly that he could send out messages but that the instrument was unable to receive. He could not send them very far but perhaps ships could pick them up and relay them.

I proceeded as instructed in the order to barricade the building, fill all available vessels with water and investigate the possibilities of the use of the tower of the D. B. C. as an observation post. I established communication between Reis's and the D. B. C. by throwing planks across the rere windows of each building. On the banister of the window outside the Ballroom of the D. B. C. I had a rolled carpet placed and I got down behind it in order if possible, to deal with the sniper in McBirney's, Astons Quay. Bullets came over

alright and I appeared to see what I took to be a servant in the middle top window of McBirney's.

After dusk had fallen I saw the spit of a rifle beside this figure. I had taken a 5-shot B.S.A. .303 rifle from the G.P.O. in place of the Lee Enfield I had brought in (because the Lee Enfield had disappeared). While I was taking this B.S.A. rifle a man named Murray, a close friend of big John O'Mahony, called out for O'Mahony. O'Mahony came and said, "that's my rifle". Then somebody else whom I forget said, "leave it with Liam". "I happen to know he has an excellent shot". When I saw the spit of the rifle I suddenly thought that the figure I had seen was a tailor's dummy and that the sniper was operating from behind further back in the room. I immediately fired at the spot where I saw the flame. I fired five rounds and on the following morning I counted two hits near the jam of the window, the other three bullets got through and from that on there was no further firing from that building.

During that night someone had let loose a lot of horses; maybe they were hungry or might have been released from a place on fire. Some of our boys thought it might be cavalry and blew out the lamp in front of the premises with a shotgun so that the enemy would not see us at the window.

Next morning myself and another, a stranger to me (he was a young red-head) went up into the tower of the D. B. C. We could see the Helga down the river. We also saw an enemy group on the top of Trinity College. They must have observed us. Machine-gun fire was opened on the tower of the D. B. C. (which I think was mostly constructed of copper), and the bullets went clean through it, luckily without striking either of us.

We dived down through the opening into the room below in which was stored boxes of raisins, currants, etc. and all things used in confectionery. We lifted one of these into the opening of the tower, pushed another beside it and so on until we had a barricade erected on the Trinity College side of the tower. We then got into position and replied to the fire from Trinity College, and to our amazement they cleared off the roof. (I think our fire must have disabled their machine-gun). The Helga bombarded Liberty Hall. Since the tower of the D. B. C. was such a good observation post I instructed the man who was with me not to fire any more from it but report on everything he saw. We did fire about four rounds at the Helga from the roof of the D. B. C.

I think it was about midday on Wednesday when in the course of an inspection I saw from a side window overlooking

the Hibernian Bank, Captain Weafer who was in the Hibernian Bank. I shouted to Weafer: "Welcome back. I am now returning to the G.P.O." He waived his hand and shouted: "Right oh". I had great difficulty in getting down the stairs of Reis's as we had it barricaded with chairs from the door up. I emerged on the street and suddenly there was a burst of machine-gun fire striking the Hibernian Bank. The firing was so intense that clouds of dust were falling down on to the path from the impact of the bullets.

I decided to cross O'Connell Street immediately after a burst and sprinted across the street when I thought the time was ripe. As I started to sprint I heard something flop on the first floor of the Hibernian and thought I heard "My Jesus! Mercy", but I didn't know whether I had heard it right or not, I was wearing hob nailed boots. When in the middle of O'Connell Street I wanted to change direction suddenly as the machine gunner was on to me and bullets were striking the roadway at my feet, the nails of the boots then slid on the paving stones and I came a cropper. When I arrived at the G.P.O. I discovered that I had left my haversack containing, amongst other things, my shaving gear, and I decided to return to Reis's for it and successfully negotiated the journey to and fro, being all the time under machine-gun fire.

When I returned to the G.P.O. I went to my window, saw George Plunkett who suggested that I should have a rest. I lay down under a counter. I was about to settle myself when Joseph Plunkett looked at me and said: "Aren't you supposed to be in charge of Reis's and the D.B.C.?" I told him that Captain Weafer was again on duty and that I was glad to see him out of hospital. I asked Plunkett was there anything wrong and while I was talking to him word came along that Captain Weafer had been killed in the Hibernian Bank and possibly this was the thud and flop I had heard.

I then asked permission to go back again. I went with Plunkett to Connolly to do so. Connolly said "No. I want you to go to the roof and relieve Lieutenant Mick Boland ("E" Company, 4th Battalion (Pearse's)) and let him come down for a meal. I sent word to Reis's that Lieutenant remains in command". I went up to the roof and relieved Boland. We were not then being fired at on the roof. Boland reported back after having a meal and on my way down I heard someone shouting that the Gresham Hotel was occupied by the British. I had a look through the window on the Henry Street corner and I could see a movement on the parapet of the Gresham. I thought I could see the figure of a soldier lying in the lead gutter facing our way. I got into

position and fired, but while getting my sights on, he fired first. His bullet struck the granite edge of my window and ricocheted past me, taking down a big piece of plaster from the wall opposite the window.

The dust of the granite blinded me. I was very angry and it was half an hour before I was able to use my eyes. I then went to the window again. A young fellow had been firing from this window with a high-powered .22. It was this rifle I used, and at my first shot the sniper ceased firing. I saw one of his comrades emerging from a skylight, more in the nature of a door, flop into the parapet gutter and pull the sniper by the legs back in through the skylight. This was repeated twice more.

In the Post Office at several times I saw an Indian Army Officer, an Irishman I believe, assisting Dr. James Ryan. He had his tunic off. I also saw a Dublin Fusilier and a Connacht Ranger assisting in washing and peeling potatoes. The Dublin Fusilier volunteered to go into action with us but this was the job allotted to him. You must remember that I had practically no sleep and I cannot even remember what meals I had.

From this on things were very slack at my windows, so

I decided to go on the roof as there were rumours of action there. This was about Friday.

I went up with Lieutenant Boland. He preceded me up the ladder which led out on to the roof through a trap door. There was a young man about 18 years of age there. He was a very thin young fellow and half his body was inside the building and from the waist up was exposed. He had the job of holding a heavy hose pipe in such a manner as to bend it round a chimney breast on the roof. The roof was then under artillery fire.

As Boland and I approached him I could hear his teeth chatter. I saw him hold up the hose with one hand and take his handkerchief from his pocket and insert it into his mouth and he bit on that while Boland and I passed him so as not to let two officers hear his teeth chatter. I thought that fellow was the bravest man I ever saw. I don't know his name.

At that time the roof was not on fire but it was expected that incendiary shells would be dropped on it and the idea of using the hose was to flood the lead roof with water in order to combat such shells.

Boland and I had just emerged on to the roof when a shell burst beside us. The spot seemed to be suddenly deprived of

air and we were left gasping. I saw two spots of blood on Boland's face and ran to catch him as I believed he might be dangerously wounded but he pushed me off, wiped the blood off his face with the back of his hand and said, "Don't mind that, it's only b..... shrapnel". Boland had been in the South African War.

Some of the roof garrison were relieved from time to time in relays. I was having a meal below when the incendiaries came over. The water, of course, was quite useless and these incendiaries melted the lead I understand, and so the building was set on fire. It burned from on top downwards, floor after floor. It was well ablaze on Friday night. At the same time the Imperial Hotel opposite and many buildings on that side of the street were also on fire.

I think it was on Thursday night that the garrison of the Imperial ran out of foodstuffs and Noel Lemass and, I think, two others volunteered to cross under fire to the G.P.O. in order to replenish their stores. They were given sacks of bread, and dashed back across the street with the sacks on their backs. To our great horror the Imperial door from which they had emerged was closed and we thought every instant would see them drop but eventually they succeeded in gaining an entrance.

I noticed from Thursday there were many tracer bullets used by the British and a constant shower of such bullets hit the Nelson Pillar. The front of the G.P.O. received very little rifle fire. From the time that the buildings on the opposite side of O'Connell Street went on fire we ceased to fear any frontal attack. Before the fire reached the ceiling of the ground floor the garrison was assembled and ordered to take provisions in preparation for evacuation. There were piles of cooked rashers, some ham, I think, cases of eggs and bread, which were hastily divided. I remember one man named Gallagher who was assisting to slice some meat, got his hand in the slicer and sliced a piece off his thumb and he immediately passed it on between two pieces of bread as a sandwich.

The men were supplied rather sparingly with the food and Desmond Fitzgerald who was in charge of the catering was heartily cursed in every jail in England where men were confined when, starving with hunger, they thought of the food they had left behind them in the G.P.O. I myself even dreamt of it.

Finally, pieces of burning timber began to fall from the ceiling over us. I remember seeing men carry bread boards full of home made bombs, i.e. tin cans with a piece of fuse sticking out of the top, the end of which had been dipped in match composition, and damp sacks had to be placed across these

for fear they would light and explode. I heard Tom Clarke declare that he would never leave the G.P.O. alive. He said: "You can all go and leave me here. I'll go down with the building". He had an automatic pistol and was finally prevailed upon to go with the others. I think it was MacDermott who finally persuaded him otherwise.

Although there was no sign of panic I felt that panic might set in. I had a supply of cigars which I had taken from the Metropole. I lit one of these and walked up and down trying to appear as nonchalant as possible. I did this because I was an officer and felt that the eyes of the men were on me as they would be on all officers, but inwardly I was very far from feeling as nonchalant as I assumed to be.

There was grave danger that the ceiling would now collapse bringing a burning mass down on top of us. Although I did not see what was going on at the Henry Street side door at that time, I learned that O'Rahilly had left the building with about 35 men in an effort to open the way of retreat through Moore Street. At this point I thought a song would be a good thing and I sang the "Soldiers' Song", accompanied by a Cumann na mBan girl named Madge Fagan. Shortly after this I went to the Henry Street door to see what was happening and I saw most of H.Q. staff there, the two Pearses, Plunkett, MacDermott, Tom Clarke.

P. H. Pearse called me. He informed me that O'Rahilly had not returned and he asked me would I take some Volunteers and see what I could do in the way of securing a place to which the garrison could be evacuated in the direction of Moore Street. I thought a small party would be best and I pointed to the nearest seven men. I had an officer's sword which we had captured earlier and in order to put up a show I jumped out into the street, waived it over my head and shouted "Come on". I did not know the position at the time as to how far the enemy might have penetrated and I expected to come under fire and to my great surprise did not.

We rushed across the road into Henry Place and at the end of Henry Place turned the corner left and when we showed up opposite Moore Lane we came under fire from troops apparently in Parnell Street or some little distance up Moore Lane. We stooped and ran across. The only damage done was one man's belt was cut through with a bullet.

The corner house of Moore Street (now occupied by Bacon, Shops Ltd.) seemed the best place that could be got especially as my mind was then running on the imminent danger of the collapse of the ceiling in the G.P.O. I instructed the men to enter at once and dashed back myself to the angle of Henry Place. The reason I did that was I did not feel like asking any of the

Volunteers to cross under fire again at Moore Lane, and then dashed in the direction of the G. P. O. The side door seemed rather crowded and I shouted at once "Come on", and the garrison poured out into Henry Place with no semblance of order.

I was searching through the men for Pearse.

I eventually found him and accompanied him back down to the angle of Henry Place. I showed him where my men were and pointed out to him that there was very heavy firing on a white-washed cottage which faced Moore Lane. He then told me to take what men I wanted and act as rearguard. I took three men and we stationed ourselves at the junction of Henry Place and Henry Street. I learned afterwards that either Pearse had taken me up wrong or the person to whom he issued instructions took him up wrong and it was understood through this error that there was heavy firing from the white-washed cottage instead of on the white-washed cottage and that about a dozen men were detailed to charge the white-washed cottage in order to clear it and a number of these were wounded by the firing from Moore Lane before they gained an entrance.

I also heard that when they did gain an entrance they found a .45 service revolver, the remains of a meal at a table.

The assumption was that some enemy agent had been using it. Eventually the last of the garrison passed from my sight. I could hear tremendous crashes in the G.P.O. and the heat was so intense that I had to retreat down Henry Place, bit by bit. There were a couple of tenement houses in Henry Place and I thought it would be a good idea to occupy a couple of windows in them. The doors of these two houses were locked and I turned the corner of the angle, entered by a stable of O'Brien's, Mineral Water Factory, in an attempt to get into those houses from the rear.

I climbed up an outside stairs, thinking I was getting in the general direction of the houses and entered the door. The lurid flames from the burning buildings that moment flashed up and disclosed about a dozen heads ranged along the room and apparently without bodies. I put my hand on something hairy and nearly died with fright. I then found it was a workshop belonging to Drago, a Hairdresser & Wig Maker. I then heard a voice say, "I surrender. Don't shoot", but I could not see anything. A man advanced from the back of the room with a beads in his hand. He was in Volunteer uniform, middle aged. I calmed him down and we descended the stairs together. I then went back to Henry Place. The two men who entered O'Brien's with me had

disappeared, but the third man waived to me from the post in Moore Street. A barricade had been thrown across by the retreating garrison at the head of Moore Lane.

I joined him and found that the garrison was engaged in breaking through the walls of houses of this block in the direction of Parnell Street. I reported to Joe Plunkett what had taken place. I must mention at this point that the corner of the Henry Street/Moore Street block had begun to burn. Plunkett then said: "You can now take turns with the squad of men in breaking through the walls with the others". I was rather exhausted and hungry and the only thing I could get to eat was a raw egg and a square of Chivers jelly. I ate this and then made my way through several holes until I came to where men were working. I got some fresh men and proceeded with the work allotted to me.

A curious thing occurred here about the middle of the Moore Street block through which we were boring - I had got through one wall having handed over picks and crowbars to a fresh gang, I dropped on the floor under a table to be out of the way and I noticed a horse rug rolled up. I thought I should cover myself with this and when I unrolled it I found it had the name of the horse embroidered on it. The name was "Irish Volunteer". It was owned by a car owner

named McGurk who was known as the "Brave Dublin Jarvey" because he had saved a number of people from drowning.

When we got as far as Hanlon's Fish Shop I saw a number of our wounded lying about. They were quite cheerful although in some cases they were wounded through the lungs. There was one British soldier there, shot through the thigh, and he was moaning and groaning. This was a fellow who had been given the opportunity of leaving the General Post Office with the other prisoners on Friday night but had been afraid to do so in case they would be shot down.

The next thing I remember is hearing that Seán MacLoughlin on the strength of his knowing the district very well, was instructed to get the remainder of our forces to, I believe, Williams & Woods Factory across Parnell Street into Kings Inns Street, that being the next strongest building within easy reach. It was proposed that 18 men with fixed bayonets under the command of Captain George Plunkett should assemble in the yard of Kelly's Fish Shop, suddenly emerge into what is now known as O'Rahilly Parade, turn left and then right and charge the barricade held by the British at the Parnell Street end of Moore Street. There was no proper way of covering this charge and

I personally thought it was doomed to failure. I remember George Plunkett getting these men ready to go. He had to select men who had rifles on which bayonets could be fitted and he had to collect some bayonets from Volunteers whose rifles they did not fit for this purpose.

At that time I heard no talk of surrender. I sought a brief rest on a bed in Kelly's house alongside Tom Clarke. It seemed to me I had just laid my back down on the bed when I was shaken up by, I think, M.W. O'Reilly, who said I was wanted in Headquarters room. I am unable to state if Tom Clarke accompanied me there.

In the room I saw Joe Plunkett, Seán MacDermott, Willie Pearse, Diarmuid Lynch, Michael Staines and others whose names I cannot recollect at the moment. Connolly was lying on a stretcher in the room. This may have been another room in Kelly's house or in a room in the house next door to Kelly's. M.W. O'Reilly told us to divest ourselves of our arms and ammunition and told us we were to take Commandant General Connolly to Dublin Castle Hospital. We still heard nothing about a surrender.

Four men were detailed to carry Connolly. The names are, Paddy Byrne, Seumas Devoy, Michael Nugent and Tallon, Michael, I think. The three officers were, Diarmuid Lynch,

Michael Staines and myself. Willie Pearse preceded us downstairs, opened the door and exposed a white flag. We got a signal from the end of the street and we marched and proceeded towards Parnell Street. Standing in the lane opposite O'Rahilly Parade, i.e. on the other side of Moore Street, was a soldier with a Mills bomb in his hand. Lying partly round the corner of O'Rahilly Parade as well as I can remember, partly on its face was the body of O'Rahilly. I thought I saw marks of bullets from the left hip to the right shoulder.

The barricade at the Parnell Street end of Moore Street was simply crammed with British soldiers bending over it and more standing behind them again and on it were two machine guns. Facing up Cole's Lane - it runs parallel with Moore Street - was a piece of artillery, probably a 4.7. Every house in Parnell Street was crammed with British soldiers and an overflow of the troops were lying down on the paths. Just around the corner of Moore Street towards the Parnell Monument, a couple of yards or so, we were searched.

Having literally obeyed the order to divest myself of arms, I had not removed the documents in my pocket - the documents were the Mobilisation Order for Easter Monday, the Demobilisation Order of the day before, a leaflet showing the

equipment we carried, the Order issued to me as officer in charge Reis's and the D. B. C. Whether I carried Eoin MacNeill's letter to Father MacMahon or not, I am uncertain, as I had been showing it to quite a number of people during the week.

Two rounds of .38 ammunition were found in the corner of my tunic pocket and a Captain made a great fuss of this but was silenced by a Major whom I heard referred to as Major Wilks or Walsh, I am not sure which. We were then brought to the centre of the road and ordered to march in the direction of the Parnell Monument. We were surrounded by 30/50 soldiers with fixed bayonets. Of course, Connolly was being carried by the four men. We proceeded across by the Parnell Monument and into the next portion of Parnell Street and halted directly opposite Tom Clarke's shop, a Newsagency & Tobacconist. I understand that Headquarters of the British units operating against our post was situated there.

A couple of officers left us, entered that building and returned and we were ordered to about turn and proceed back along by the end of Moore Street along Parnell Street through Capel Street across Essex Bridge through Parliament Street and through the upper gate of the Castle, i.e. in Castle Street. As we passed through Parnell Street and Capel Street every house in these streets seemed to be occupied and masses of soldiers

and officers were reclining on the road and looking out of windows. I took no note of the regiment. Connolly was a heavy man and the four worn-out men carrying him were quite unable to do so without help, and during that march three of us, officers, took turns carrying him.

Although Connolly was in great pain he took it all smiling, and said to our lads: "Boys, you were great". When we entered the Upper Castle Yard we made a left wheel and halted. Some soldiers who were knocking about the yard assumed a very threatening attitude. One of them belonging to an Irish Regiment made an attempt to get at us with a bayonet in his hand; of course, he was prevented by the escort. Connolly then was taken from us and brought into the Castle Hospital and we were immediately marched through the archway into the Lower Castle Yard, turned right and finally arrived in the guard room of Ship Street Barracks, and we were bundled in together with about 15 or 20 men of all descriptions. Some were Volunteers, some from the Citizen Army and some looters, and I met a member of my own Company, a doctor named O'Donoghue (now a Dispensary M. O. H. in Kerry).

Before being put into the guard room we were again searched. Our personal belongings were carefully inventoried. I refer to such goods as money, pocket books, fountain pens,

and curiously enough my First Aid Outfit which was sewn under the end of my tunic.

After a very short time spent looking around us and recognising an odd person we had a little talk amongst ourselves and found out that none of us knew what had happened immediately prior to our being detailed to bring Connolly to hospital. We distinctly remembered being instructed to take Connolly to hospital and we thought that having discharged that duty we should be returned to Moore Street, so we decided to demand our return.

I kicked on the door and was answered through the spy hole by a Corporal who wanted to know did I want my eye put out for kicking up a row. I said we must see the Officer in Charge of the guard and he forthwith proceeded to find the officer. A very young 2nd Lieutenant eventually presented himself. He had the door opened, advanced a few paces into the room with an escort of two and asked who wanted to see him. Lynch, Staines and I stepped forward, and demanded to be returned to Moore Street. He said: "Hold on a minute now; let me understand this. Weren't you made prisoners?". We replied that we were not. "Well, didn't you surrender?". We said: "No, we had not surrendered". He said: "Well, then, how do you come to be here?". And we replied that we

had come as an escort with a wounded officer, and he then asked what did we want. Did we really want to be sent back to Moore Street. We said: "Yes". "Why! Moore Street is in ruins by this and you want to be sent back, haw-haw". He turned on his heels and left us.

The following morning all prisoners were paraded outside the building and inspected by Detective Officers and Intelligence Officers. We were then marched to Kilmainham Jail. My recollection is faulty as to when I learned of the surrender. At Kilmainham Jail we were marched into cells, three men to each cell. Before being marched into his cell, Diarmuid Lynch was ordered to pluck a tricolour bow out of his hat. He refused to do so and the Chief Warder struck him under the chin with a baton, drawing blood.

We were not in the cells any more than ten minutes when we were taken out again and marched out of the main building and put in an upstairs room in some smaller building on the left. About 30 prisoners were crammed into each room. When the executions began the volleys awakened us each morning and we were informed each morning by a red-haired Royal Irish Regiment Sergeant that our turn would come very soon, and he gloated over having been present at the executions, and in one instance described how he had seen the brains scattered over

the wall. I cannot remember how long we were kept in Kilmainham but I think it was from ten days to a fortnight.

We were then marched over to Richmond Barracks where we were disposed of alphabetically to our rooms. In the room to which I was allotted were two men named Ó Tainnín, which is the Irish form of my own name. They were from Galway and had taken part in the attack on Oranmore Barracks. I was rather proud of this.

There was a huge number of prisoners in Richmond Barracks. Asquith came along and interviewed quite a number of them and expressed the opinion that they were all very fine fellows, had fought a clean fight and acted like gentlemen, and ordered that they be treated of the best. His order was taken literally by the chief cook who had been employed, I believe, in the Dolphin Hotel, and from the date of Asquith's visit until I was shifted to Knutsford about the 6th June, we had eggs and ham for breakfast, tins of jam, genuine butter and porridge (if anyone liked it). For dinner we had roast beef or perhaps mutton and plenty of vegetables (far more than we could eat), more bread, jam, butter and tea. Tea was on a similar lavish scale, while the soldiers garrisoning the place were on the roughest of rations, and in carrying the stuff from the cook house to our quarters we were besieged by hungry

soldiers, begging tins of jam, hunks of cheese or bread or anything that could be conveniently handled.

On the 6th June a party of us were paraded, marched down the Quays to the North Wall. On the way down by Capel Street Bridge I heard some encouraging cries from some people.

This came as a great surprise for my last memory of people had been an unhappy one. I had experienced some of the spitting through the windows of the G.P.O.

We were embarked on a cattle boat in filthy surroundings and tightly crammed; almost everyone vomiting under these conditions. We were entrained to Knutsford where we were again searched. We were sent to cells, this time to single cells. I was very happy because I got the condemned cell - it was larger than others. Prison regulations at this time were that when first introduced to this jail, prisoners must sleep for a fortnight without a mattress on bed boards.

I had been loaded up with good things by my relations and friends and I was allowed to retain some of the eatables after objecting very strongly to their removal.

Shortly after being placed in the cell a bell was rung, doors were flung open and we were brought out to exercise. I stuck an orange in my pocket. We were supposed to march round in circles, but prisoners who had been there for a month

or so before us left their circles and ran forward to greet their new friends. What a sight the prisoners presented! Most of them had beards and their clothing was discoloured in patches from their being put through a disinfecting apparatus. They were terribly excited as they had been kept in solitary confinement for a long period. Thoughtlessly I produced my orange and proceeded to peel it. Then I noticed the men stooping down, picking up the peels and ravenously devouring them. I divided the orange and went back to my cell to get the rest of my stuff. I was stopped by a military policeman. A few minutes afterwards when his back was turned, I raced through the entrances up the iron stairs and fetched my case of eatables and I rushed past this military policeman, and before he could take anything from me, handed out all I had got.

I could not eat the prison food for a few days. At the end of a week I was wetting my thumbs and picking up crumbs off the ground. The diet was practically starvation diet and the meat I believe was horse flesh.

The next move was to Frongoch, North Wales. I was allotted to the North Camp composed of hutments, and, there, of course, made many friends. After some time classes were formed, language classes mostly, and a choir.

Later I was transferred to the Distillery Camp (South Camp). Before being transferred, however, we had trouble. The British made an attempt to segregate for the purpose of conscription those of our comrades who by virtue of their residential qualifications could be conscripted according to British Law. Of course, these persons were mostly those who composed the Kimmage Garrison. In order to foil this it was decided that no man in the Camp would answer to his name or number. The British Camp Adjutant accompanied by N. C. Os. visited each hut, called the list of prisoners. Nobody answered. The hut leaders were then arrested. I was a hut leader when the arresting took place, acting temporarily in that post while my hut leader Kilgallon was ill. The hut leaders were locked up in a special clink in the Distillery grounds.

Amongs those arrested were: P. Lennon, Dick Mulcahy, P. Murphy, T. D. Sinnott, Wexford, Dick Gotter, J. O'Neill, Mick Moriarity, Frank Shouldice, Charlie Murphy, Joe Stanley, Pat Scollan and myself.

We were charged and subsequently tried by Field General courtmartial. Mr. Gavan Duffy was briefed to defend the case. He came down to the Camp and a defence was prepared. He decided to take my case first for the simple reason that

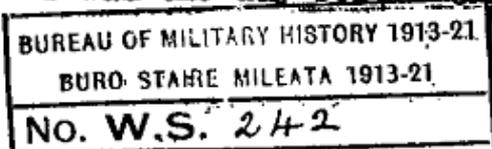
Kilgallon had been in charge on the day of the alleged offence. The case against me was dismissed and the rest were sentenced to, I think, 28 days, but whatever period it was, we were all released together as we had already done the period in the Camp clink.

While in the clink we were fed on the best, simply because our own cook house had the allocation of the food. The British attempt to conscript the people referred to was abandoned. A very good account of this occurrence is given in W. Brennan Whitmore's "With the Irish in Frongoch".

In the Distillery there seemed to be two lines of thought. One party thought ranks as they existed during the fight should be adhered to, and the remaining prisoners organised and commanded as far as possible by officers. The other party succeeded in having a committee appointed to run the camp, this committee being composed entirely of members of the I.R.B. Although I was an I.R.B. man I sided with the military idea and came in conflict with Collins over this.

I remained in Frongoch until the very last batch of prisoners was discharged and I was given charge of those.

This was the day before Christmas Eve, 1916.



Signed

Sean Lannan

Witness *Sean Brennan, Const.* Date

30th April 1949