

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21  
BUREAU STAIRÉ MILITAIRES 1913-21  
NO. W.S. 423

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

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**Witness**

Vincent Byrne,  
227 Errigal Road,  
Drimmagh, Dublin.

**Identity**

Member of 2nd Battalion Dublin Brigade  
Irish Volunteers, 1915 - .

Member of 'The Squad' 1919-1921 .

**Subject**

- (a) National activities 1915-1921;
- (b) Jacob's Factory, Easter Week 1916;
- (c) Formation and activities of 'The Squad'.

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CONTENTS.

	<u>Page.</u>
1. The Rising	1
2. Reorganised company & training parades 1917/18.	8
3. Arms and ammunition - sources of supply.	10
4. Police raid training venues.	11
5. The unofficial squad and the shooting of Detective Officer Barton.	12
6. Attack on Lord French at Ashtown - 19th December 1919.	14
7. Shooting of D.I. Redmond , 21st January 1920.	21
8. Raid on Navy and Army Canteen Board Garage at Bow Lane, 8th February 1920.	22
9. Raid on Great Northern Railway Yard.	22
10. The attempted rescue of R.C. Barton on 12th February 1920.	24
11. Raid on B. & I. sheds Sir John Rogerson's Quay, 19th February 1920.	24
12. The tracking of Captain Hardy.	26
13. Raid on Castle Mails, Parnell St. February 1920.	28
14. Full-time Squad formed.	30
15. Squad dumps.	33
16. Shooting of Jameson at Ballymun, 2 March 1920.	36
17. Shooting of Molloy - 24th March 1920.	37
18. The tracking and shooting of Alan Bell, 26th March 1920.	38
19. The shooting of Detective Officer Dalton, 20th April 1920.	41
20. The tracking of Detective Officer Coffey	42
21. The shooting of Detective Sergeant Revelle, 9th May 1920.	42
22. The near capture of two squad men.	45
23. Shooting of Frank Brooke, P.C., Westland Row, 30th July 1920.	45
24. Newspaperman Hardy.	46
25. Attempt to get G-men on Sunday mornings.	47
26. The shooting of Sergeant Roche in Capel St. 17th October 1920.	48
27. The first Thompson guns.	49
28. Attempted attack on troop train at Killester.	50

	<u>Page.</u>
29. General hit-up in Dublin	52
30. Bloody Sunday, 21st November 1920.	53
31. Igoe.	57
32. The shooting of Doran at the Wicklow Hotel, 28th January 1921.	61.
33. Invitation to Auxiliaries to attack - 7th February, 1921.	61
34. Attempted rescue of Sean MacEoin at Lucan.	62
35. The burning of the Custom House.	63
36. Capture of Armoured car and attempted rescue of Sean MacEoin.	67
37. The shooting of a British Military Intelligence officer in Exchequer St.	69
38. The burning of wagons at the Goods Yard of the Misland Great Western Railway.	69
39. Raid on Gormanston Mails.	71
40. Raid on Guinness's boat.	73
41. The tracking of Detective Sergeant Bruton.	74
42. Raid for mails at Parnell Square.	74

# ORIGINAL

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BURO STAIRÉ MILÉATA 1913-21  
No. W.S. 423

STATEMENT OF MR. VINCENT BYRNE,

227, Errigal Road, Drimmagh, Dublin.

I joined the Volunteers in January 1915, being then fourteen and a half years of age. I was posted to E/Company, 2nd Battalion. The battalion commander was Tom Hunter, and the company commander was Thomas Weafer. J. Shiels and Billy Byrne were 1st and 2nd Lieutenants, respectively. Other officers were Mick McDonnell, Seamus O'hAodha and J. O'Reilly (company adjutant).

Up to Easter Week 1916, nothing of interest took place except company drilling and parades, manoeuvres around the streets and attending lectures by James Connolly on street fighting.

### The Rising.

On the Tuesday of Holy Week 1916, I was instructed to parade at Father Mathew Park on Easter Sunday at 11 a.m. I thought it was just an ordinary parade and did not realise at that time that there was going to be a Rising.

On Easter Sunday I read the countermanding order in the "Independent". Consequently, I did not parade as originally instructed. On Easter Sunday evening Davy Golden, who was the squad leader, called to my house and told me not to leave the city the next day (Easter Monday) as they expected there would be mobilisations at Stephen's Green on Monday morning at twelve o'clock. Later, he came to me again and told me that the parade was to take place at Stephen's Green, opposite the College of Surgeons.

Proceeding on parade on Easter Monday, I met Lieutenant James Shiels who asked me where I was going. I told him I was going on parade and that I was mobilised for Stephen's Green.

He told me I had better go home. I started to cry because I was being sent home. I met section commander Mick Colgan on my way down Grafton St. and he asked me what was wrong with me. I told him what Lieutenant Shiels had said to me. He said: "Come along out of that, and don't mind him". So I paraded at Stephen's Green with the remainder of the company and was armed with a .22 rifle. The Citizen Army had already taken up occupation in Stephen's Green at this time (twelve o'clock noon), and I heard some of them shouting out through the railing "Now or never, boys!" I noticed that there was a terrible lot of excitement among the older men of the company. I asked one man, named Doyle, who was with me, what was all the excitement about, and he remarked something like this: "There's a scrap on now". Company captain Weafer came along, inspected the company and went off. The company - about ninety strong - moved off and marched to Jacob's Biscuit Factory in Bishop St. We halted outside the last gate of Jacob's Factory.

The next thing I observed was Mick McDonnell with a big axe and smashing in the wicket gate. Some of the company entered Jacob's. I was detailed with a party of other men under Lieutenant Billy Byrne. We marched to Malpas Street and occupied two tenement houses there. Nothing exciting happened during the day until evening time when we were ordered to vacate the buildings. When we came out on the street, a lot of soldiers' wives and, I expect, imperialistic people - men and women - came around us. They jeered and shouted at us. One man in the crowd was very aggressive. He tried to take the rifle off one of our party. Lieutenant Billy Byrne told him to keep off or he would be sorry. The man, however, made a grab at the rifle. I heard a shot ring out and saw him falling at the wall.

We marched off and entered Jacob's factory at about

6.30 p.m. The first man I met inside was Mick McDonnell. He said: "Oh, good man, Byrne", and shook hands with me. We were posted to cover the windows in Peter's Row. I had a great time eating plenty of cocoa chocolate and biscuits galore. The next thing I remember was that we threw a lot of empty tins out through the windows which were spread out over the roadway, so that if any of the enemy came along in the dead of night, he would hit the tins and we would know that there was somebody on the move. Some time after, I was taken away from my post at the window and put on guard over two policemen in the factory. It must have been a strange sight indeed to see the two men, six-foot high, looking down on the young lad of about four feet who was guarding them. I was on this guard duty for a day or so. Then I returned to my post at the window.

On Wednesday, Commandant Thomas McDonagh, who was O/C. of the buildings along with Major John McBride, had apparently asked some of the officers did anybody know the district very well as he wanted to send a relief party, I believe, to Clanwilliam House. I stated that I knew the district in and out. I was brought before Commandant McDonagh and Major McBride and they asked me what route would I likely take to get to Clanwilliam House. I informed them that the best route as far as I could see, would be via Cuffe St., Stephen's Green, Leeson St., Winton Place and in to Baggot St., along by the canal to Mount St. and turn in to Up. Mount St.; there was a laneway running behind these houses; you could get into the houses and cross over Mount St. to the back of Clanwilliam House. The two officers held a consultation together. They remarked that they thought I was too young, so I was sent back to my post. A party did leave Jacob's factory, and one man was wounded in the attempt to reach Clanwilliam House.

We were running short of milk, and a forage party was sent out from Jacob's. The next thing I saw was Jimmy Slattery coming down the street with a milk-cart with two churns on it.

The majority of the firing was sniping from the top of the tower of Jacob's to Portobello Barracks, and I believe this sniping was carried out by a man named J. Lawless and Seamus Ó hAodha.

No other incident happened, so far as I remember, until the evening of the surrender. Between 5 and 6 o'clock on Sunday evening, we were all called to the basement floor where we were informed by Commandant McDonagh that a surrender had been called by the Commander-in-Chief, Patrick Pearse. There was a Franciscan Father in the building at the time, and he was pleading with the men to lay down their arms quietly. I remarked to the reverend father: "Is there no chance of getting out to the hills and fighting it out?". He said: "No, my son, and come along with me". James Carbury and myself were brought along by the reverend father to a low window in Bishop Street and just dropped out into the street and told to go home. At this time, our clothes were all white from flour bags which were being used as sandbags at the windows. There was a lot of people outside, women especially, who tried to manhandle us down the street. One woman took us into her house and brushed off the flour from our coats. She let us out and we proceeded on our way home.

I parted company with Jimmy Carbury at the corner of South Anne St. where I lived. He lived on the Church Road and was feeling doubtful whether he would be able to get home or not, as all the bridges were held by the military.

I told him that if he could not get across to his home he should come back to me and I would be able to fix him up until military activity had ceased. As I parted company with him, I passed a soldier who was standing in South Anne St. A shot rang out - fired by some sniper - and he was dead. When I got into my home, there was great jubilation and weeping of tears, as my father and mother believed that I had been killed in Stephen's Green.

I was home about a week when the house was raided by British military on a Saturday morning. I happened to be in the house at the time. An officer and a sergeant entered the house. One of them asked: "Does Vincent Byrne live here?" I replied: "Here I am". He said: "Come along with me, boy".

I was taken away in a military lorry to Ballsbridge Fire Brigade Station. The sergeant sat in the back of the lorry with me. He passed the remark: "You little ... you would shoot me!". I said: "Yes, it was either you or me for it". He was <sup>very</sup> friendly. When we arrived at Ballsbridge, I was brought before a council of officers. They asked me my name and address and where I was during the Rising. I told them: "In Jacob's Biscuit Factory, fighting for Ireland". I was told to leave the room. I went into another room where there were five or six other men. The sergeant came in, and called me out to the passage. "You got no dinner, sonny", he said. I replied: "No". He said: "How would you like some steak and onions?". I said: "I would like them very much, if I got them". He took me into one of the stables and told me to wait for a few minutes as he would be back. He came in with a plateful of meat and potatoes. He divided the meal into a dixie-lid, gave me one half and he had the other. He told me then to go back to the room which I had left, wishing me

luck and saying that he was finished with me now.

That evening, we were taken out in a military lorry and driven to a military barracks, the name of which, at the time, I did not know, or of the part of the city I was in. Later, I found out that it was Richmond Barracks (now Keogh Square). We were brought into the dry canteen. There were three officers sitting at the top of the room at a table and I went through the same questioning as to what I had done and where I was during the fighting in the city. They asked why did I not join the British army. I said I would be fighting for England then and not for Ireland. I was told to leave. I went to an outer room. There was a clergyman there. I learned later that he was Fr. Pat O'Flanagan. He asked me would I like some tea. He inquired of the corporal could he have some tea and cakes for "this little boy". The corporal replied that he would have to see the officer in charge. Fr. O'Flanagan asked him to lead him to him, or could he see him, or words to that effect. He must have been successful, because I got a mug of tea and two buns. Later that night we were taken to a military billet and given the usual three bed biscuits to lie on, on the floor. There would have been fifteen or sixteen young men in this billet. They were all in or around the same age as myself.

On the following day, two detectives arrived in the billet. Each individual was called out, and his fingerprints were taken. One of these detectives happened to be Mr. Johnny Barton.

Some of the boys in the billet smoked, and they were mad for a cigarette, but nobody had any. We all searched our pockets to make up the price of a packet. Some of us had three-halfpence, others twopence, threepence and so on. We put it all together and asked the soldier would he oblige us by getting a packet of cigarettes. We are still waiting for

the cigarettes and the money! The orderly officer came in during the day and asked us were there any complaints. We complained about the cigarettes. He just banged the door and walked away. We were going over to the lavatory under military escort, which was across the square and I met a sergeant of the Royal Irish Regiment there one evening. He remarked to me that he did not mind fighting with genuine rifles, but firing these Mauser guns was not playing the game. He told me that his captain had been killed at the South Dublin Union, or wounded - I am not sure now - "a very decent man". He said: "You know, I am a Dublin man, and it is hard luck to get shot down by your own". He asked me did we get any bread and butter since we came in. I replied, no, that we were only getting war ration biscuits. He said: "If you can manage to come over in the morning" - that is, to the lavatory - about 10 a.m. - he would see me there and would have some bread and butter. I got over there the following morning and received two quarter-loaves of bread with two big chunks of butter slapped on them. I duly hid them in my pocket as best I could, and brought them back to the billet where I shared them among the remainder of the boys that were in the room.

On Friday evening, we were told to "come on, get ready", and we all thought we were going to be deported. We paraded on the square - about twelve or fourteen young lads. We were given the command: "Right turn, quick march". We kept marching until we came to a big gate; the gate was opened for us and closed behind us. Someone of the party remarked: "Oh, God, lads, we are out", see the tramlines. We proceeded down Emmet Road in to James's St. and on into the city.

It might be well to mention that, strangely enough, in later years I was officer commanding this same barracks where I was held prisoner.

Reorganised Company and Training parades 1917-18.

The majority of the Company had been deported and, as a result, the company became disorganised for the time being. It is well to mention that two or three of us, who were too young for deportation, used to meet once a week on the North Strand. In that way, we kept up a semblance of organisation.

After the general release of the prisoners in England - the week after they had come home - the company was called together, on the orders of Lieutenant Shiels, who was now captain. Weafer had been killed during Easter Week in the Hibernian Bank in O'Connell St. Our place of mobilisation was Oriel Hall, Oriel St. for a short time, until the battalion got a hall on Clonliffe Road where all the companies in the battalion met on different nights in the week. Captain Jimmy Shiels fell into bad health at that period. An election was held and Lieutenant Byrne was promoted captain. The company carried on drilling week after week. I think it was Frank Henderson who commanded the battalion at this time. Mick McDonnell, I think, was battalion quartermaster.

We carried on with the general routine business of the company up to 1918 when this country was threatened with conscription. There was a great call for men to join the Volunteers at that time. Hundreds answered the call, putting down a pound each for rifle and ammunition. This company was called the Conscript Company among the older members and was formed into a special company of its own. I would say we had about seventy or eighty men.

I remember one incident in connection with this particular company. We took them out for training at Artane. The two men who instructed the training were Jimmy Slattery of E/Coy. and James Devoy of B/Coy. The first evening we took those men out for training I was detailed to take charge of the

cycle patrol along the road. We were to keep an eye out so that the enemy would not come upon them in the fields. I had four cyclists under me. Two of them were to watch Coolock Barracks; the other man and myself were to watch the approach from the city. We were cycling up and down the roads. I cycled up towards Coolock to see had the two men anything to report. As I left the two men, the Inspector of the R.I.C. came out of the barracks. He stopped me and asked me what I was doing cycling up and down the road. I replied: "Just having a spin round". He asked: "How do you mean, spin round, up and down the road?" I replied: "Sir, isn't it a free country? I can go where I like". He said: "Don't get cheeky now, or I will take you in". I replied: "Sure, sir, I'm doing no harm". He went into the barracks and I went down to the fields and reported the matter to Jimmy Slattery. The men kept on drilling. As I was cycling down towards Artane village, I saw in the distance a military lorry coming up along the road. I wheeled about, went as fast as I could to the field and reported to Slattery to clear off, that the military were coming. It turned out that the lorry contained only D.M.P. men. There were no military with them at all. The men scattered across the fields towards Raheny. I cycled up to Coolock and, taking the back road, arrived on the Swords road. No one was arrested. This company fell away after the conscription scare was over. About twenty men carried on, they were posted to different companies.

About this time, 1918, I was promoted to the rank of section commander in charge of No. 2 section, which covered part of the North Strand, Church Road and outlying district men.

Arms and ammunition - Sources of supply.

Activity was beginning to buzz again in the country as far as arms were concerned. At a parade of the company in Clonliffe Road it was the joy of my life when I was handed a .45 revolver and six rounds, arms being secured from various sources. Mick McDonnell had a "mark" in Islandbridge (now Clancy) Barracks, who supplied a good many arms to him. We also got a supply from Phil Shanahan, publican in Corporation Street. The rifles received from Islandbridge Barracks were left in a publichouse on the Conyngham Road and they were called for at night time. The man behind the bar was a member of D/Company, 2nd Battalion. I can't think of his name now. We would be asked: "Any message for Mick Mac?".

On one occasion, Mick McDonnell asked me was I doing anything on a particular night. I said, no. He asked me would I mind going up to this publichouse on the Conyngham Road where there were two rifles and bring them to his home at Richmond Crescent. I went on the Ballybough tram as far as Parkgate and walked the remainder of the way. Seeing a chap behind the bar, I asked him had he any message for Mick Mac. He said: "Yes, wait a minute". He brought me into a back room. He went outside some place to the back of the house and returned with two rifles the butts of which were disconnected. I put the butts in my pockets and tied the two rifles, one each side of me, under my overcoat. Needless to say, I found it difficult to walk. I got as far as Parkgate and I thought the best thing to do was to board the Ballybough tram. When I tried to get up the stairs I could not. With some effort, I succeeded in getting halfway, when one of the rifles slipped and fell down the stairs. Not being armed with small arms at the time, I was in a bit of a stew. The conductor remarked: "That is nice carrying-on". I said to him: "Will you carry on and pick it up for me?" He picked it up and gave it to me. I carried it openly up the stairs. I was very lucky there was no one on top of the tram, which was

an open one. I could not sit down with the other rifle, so I took it down from inside my coat and put the two of them lying on the floor of the tram, also the two butts, and if any police or military came, I did not own them. I got to my destination safely with the two rifles.

I paid several visits to Conyngham Road for rifles, revolvers and ammunition, and also for bicycles of the civilian type. The bicycles were sold afterwards to Volunteers for about two quid apiece.

#### Police raid training venues.

I was instructed by Captain Billy Byrne to attend a signalling class under Sean Lemass who was a member of C/Coy. 2nd Battalion. We were at a class one night in Clonliffe Hall, learning the Morse code, when a young lady, who was very sympathetic to us and who lived near the Hall, rushed in breathlessly and informed us that the police were on the Clonliffe Road getting out of a lorry. We gathered up the instruments, rushed upstairs to a loft and dropped out through a little window overlooking the grounds of Clonliffe College. Outside this window there was a tree. As I was jumping, the bottom of my trousers caught in a branch which ripped it up to the thigh. We all got safely away, wading across the Tolka river which was very low at the time. We parted on the Richmond Road. I was in a bad way with my torn trousers. Then it dawned on me that an aunt of mine lived on the Richmond Road and that I might get a makeshift there to get home. I got a pair of my uncle's trousers, which were about six inches too long for me, and got home safely. No arrests were made that night.

We had a parade of the battalion at Artane one Sunday morning, under Commandant Dick McKee. As we were marching down the roads, after having drilled in the fields, a lorry-

load of police arrived, stopped us and arrested Dick McKee, who was battalion commandant; Pat Sweeney, who was captain of F/Company, and, I think, Frank Henderson. The men got very restless and were inclined to attack the police. Comdt. Dick McKee appealed to the men to be calm and go home. Some members of the battalion threw a few stones at the lorry.

How I became a member of the Unofficial Squad  
and the shooting of Detective Officer Barton,

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One evening, about November 1919, I was down in Mick McDonnell's house; also present were Tom Keogh and Jimmy Slattery, sitting at the fire. As I went in, Mick said to me: "How are you going on?" I replied: "Well". After a few minutes he said to me: "Would you shoot a man, Byrne?". I replied: "It's all according to who he was". He said: "What about Johnnie Barton?". "Oh", I said: "I wouldn't mind" - as he had raided my house. So Mick said: "That settles it. You may have a chance". He told me to come along the following evening to College Green at about 5.30 or 6 o'clock. Jimmy Slattery and myself worked together at the cabinet-making in Anthony Mackey's "The Irish Woodworkers", No. 3 Crow Street. Jimmy said to me: "You had better bring in your gun after dinner," which I did.

After knocking off work, we proceeded to College Green and met Mick McDonnell and Tom Keogh. Mick said to the two of us: "You had better go up Grafton St. and see if you can pick up Barton". As we were proceeding up Grafton St. I said to Jimmy Slattery: "There he is on the far side of the street". We followed him along up Grafton St. He was walking on the left-hand side, and we were on the right. Somehow I think he had second sight, for, from the time we had seen him, he would just walk a few paces and, if possible, look into a mirror in the shop windows and then give a quick glance across to the right hand side. Perhaps

he was not looking across at us, but somehow that was the impression both Jimmy and myself got. We tracked him up to the top of Grafton St. where he stopped for a few moments looking into a bookshop, then crossed the road and started walking down Grafton St. carrying out the same actions as he had done on his way up. We kept a fair distance behind him, at the same time keeping him under cover, until we came nearly to the bottom of Grafton St. when he vanished as if into thin air. I said to Jim: "Oh, we have lost him". We carried on to the corner of College Green. When we looked back, Barton appeared coming out of a hallway. He crossed the street at the narrow part over to Trinity College side.

At this stage, we picked up Mick McDonnell and Tom Keogh. Then I saw Paddy Daly, Joe Leonard and Ben Barrett. They were on the same errand as we were. Now it was a race to see whose party would get Barton first. Barton sauntered along by the railings and around in to College St. keeping to the right hand side. Needless to say, the streets were crowded at the time as it was knocking-off time. As one party would pass out the other to have a go, people would come in between us and our quarry. Barton got as far as the Crampton monument and was in the act of stepping off the path to cross over to the police station in Brunswick St. (now known as Pearse St.) when fire was opened on him. He went down on his side, falling to the right slightly. Then he turned towards the left and raised himself a little on his right knee and said: "Oh, God, what did I do to deserve this?!" With that, he pulled his gun and fired up College St. I cannot say how, or in what direction, the remainder of my party or the other party went. Mick McDonnell and myself cleared up College St. on the right hand side and, as we came to the corner of College St. and Westmoreland St. a peeler tried to stop Mick. I drew my gun and let a shout at him. What I said, I do not

know; but we got round the corner, and so to safety.

The squad commanded by Mick McDonnell at that time was not a paid squad. I cannot say under whose instructions or authority it operated. All I know is that I got my instructions from Mick McDonnell.

Attack on Lord French at Ashtown,  
19th December 1919.

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There were several attempts to get Lord French. On one occasion I remember, there was some kind of a function being held in the Provost's house in Trinity College. We were mobilised by Mick McDonnell to take up positions around and about Grafton St. Whatever happened, I do not know, but the job did not come off.

Another attempt was to be made at College Green on the occasion of the celebrations of a victory march, or some such event. It was a Bank Holiday. French was to take the salute in College Green. The orders were to fire at him from the best point. However, the job was called off, on account of the fear of big loss of life among the people watching the march-past.

A proposition was put up to us - Jimmy Slattery, Tom Keogh and myself - that we should see if it was possible to get Lord French inside the Viceregal Lodge as, we were told, French took a walk around the grounds every day. It was suggested to us that, if we got over the railings on the R.I.C. Depot side and hid in the bushes, we could let him have it, in the event of his coming along. The three of us went out to the Park and scouted round the whole area to see if there was any chance of carrying out the job. We were unarmed. When we had finished our scouting, Tom Keogh said: "Well, lads, what do you think of it?". I replied: "I am no Robert Emmet!". So

we all agreed none of us were Robert Emmets. Looking back on it now, I realise that, if we had attempted to carry out the operation, it would have been madness.

On the night of the 18th December 1919, I was in the Sean Connolly Sinn Fein Club, North Summer St., where I met Paddy Sharkey, who was a member of my company, E/Company, 2nd Battalion. There were other members of the Club present, all sitting around the fire having a chat. Paddy was sitting beside me. This would be about 9 p.m. He said to me: "I had better be home early tonight". I said to him: "What's your hurry. Have you a date on or what?" He replied: "Oh, nothing like that. No, I have to get the father's basket ready" - or words to that effect. I asked him what was the basket for and he told me his father <sup>was a guard</sup> on the railway and that he was going down to Roscommon "to bring ould French back to Dublin tomorrow morning". I said: "Oh, is that so?". I then asked him what time his father would be back in Dublin, and he told me about eleven or twelve o'clock. When Sharkey left the Club, I immediately went to Mick McDonnell's house, which was in Richmond Crescent, and reported to him what I had heard. Mick said: "That's the best bit of news I've heard for a long time". The next thing he said was: "You had better be here in the morning at about ten o'clock, as we might have a go on French". As it was getting late, I said to him: "I had better be off. I will see you in the morning, please God".

On the following morning, I reported to Mick McDonnell on time. There was a group of men in the front room of his house and, as I went in, Mick said: "Byrne, you had better go up to the dump and bring down any grenades that are there". I did what I was told. I collected the grenades and brought them to the house. They were given out to some of the party. I was then told who the men were that were present. Of course, I knew Tom Keogh, Martin Savage, Paddy Daly and Joe Leonard.

Mick said: "This is Dan Breen, Seumas Robinson, Sean Treacy" and I think he mentioned Sean Hogan. They were about to depart when Tom Keogh said: "What about Vincie?" - meaning myself. Mick McDonnell passed some remark about me having no bike. Tom replied: "What about the one out in the back?". Mick said: "All right, get the bike, Byrne, and come on". Someone handed me a grenade.

So off we sailed up along the N.C.Road and out along to Ashtown, all cycling. We halted at Kelly's pub. Mick McDonnell, Dan Breen, Sean Treacy and Paddy Daly stood in a group and were having a conversation together. After a few minutes we all went into the pub. Minerals, as far as I remember, were ordered. When I had finished my glass, Mick called me and told me to get my bike, cycle towards the station and see if there was any sign of the train, or if there were any military or police there. I got my bicycle and started to cycle down the road towards the station. Q I had only gone about two hundred yards when I heard the sound of motor cars coming behind me. A motor horn sounded and I pulled into the side and let them pass. There were four cars in all. I wheeled round, cycled back as hard as I could and reported to Mick McDonnell about the military passing me going to the station.

In a very short space of time, we could hear a train arriving. Daly, Leonard, Treacy, Robinson and Hogan went into the back yard of the pub, and into a field, where they took up position behind the hedge covering the road. The remainder of us took up positions at the corner of the main Navan road, and the road leading to the station. Mick McDonnell, Dan Breen and Tom Keogh rushed into the yard and started to pull a big farm cart. They had pulled it out as far as the dip in the side of the road, where it got stuck. In the meantime, an Inspector and a policeman arrived, coming from the opposite

side of the road. The policeman stood in the centre of the crossroads, as a traffic man. I suppose he was there to see that His Excellency would have a clear passage. The Inspector disappeared - to where I do not know. We could hear the approach of the cars coming from the station. We had only time to get into the same positions when the cars were upon us.

As the cars approached, the men behind the hedge opened fire with revolvers and grenades. The first car to come was a dark blue one. Sitting beside the driver was a man in civilian clothes who, we learned afterwards, was Detective Officer Halley. He was firing from a revolver. As the car came clear of the corner, I let fly my grenade, which hit the back of the car and exploded. The next thing I saw was the peeler being blown across the road. The second car was stopped right opposite our men behind the hedge. This car was a closed one - khaki-green in colour. The third car was a box Ford type, with a canvas roof, which flew by with a continuous fire on it. The fourth car which came along was an open Sunbeam car, and in it were a soldier driver and a sergeant. The sergeant was lying across the back of the car, firing from a rifle. Where we were standing, we were an open target for him. In fact, you could hear the bullets whizzing by, finding a billet in the wall behind us. As this car was disappearing around the wide bend of the road leading to the Ashtown gate of the Phoenix Park, I heard Martin Savage saying something, and it sounded like this: "Oh, lads, I am hit". The next moment, he was dead, lying on the road. As far as I can remember, the lads behind the hedge came out on to the roadway.

At this time we were looking down the road towards the station, and I observed smoke coming out of the second car, which was stopped. Also, I saw a hand waving a handkerchief

Someone shouted to him to come out, with his hands up, which the soldier did. He was the driver of the car. Mick McDonnell, I think, asked him where was French, and the soldier replied: "Blown to bits in the car". No one took it upon himself to see whether he was telling the truth or not. As he was standing in front of us, someone suggested that he should be plugged. Someone else replied: "Oh, it's not him we wanted". So he was let go in safety. This soldier's name, it transpired, through the newspapers, was Corporal Applesby.

All this time, Dan Breen, who had been hit in the leg, did not notice it. Then he said: "I am hit in the leg". As we had only bicycles, we could not get Martin Savage's dead body away. The next thing was we were told to get back into town and to travel in twos. I was about to get away, when I was told to act rearguard action to Dan Breen who, after mounting his bicycle, had to lean on Paddy Daly's shoulder.

We proceeded along the Navan Road. As I was cycling by myself, I started talking to myself, in the strain that we would never see town. I honestly believed that we would never make the city, because I thought that the word of the attack would have been received by the military station in Marlboro' Barracks (now known as McKee Barracks), and that they would cut us off at a turning at the right-hand side. However, Dame Luck was with us. We travelled along until we came to the Cabra Road and proceeded down as far as St. Peter's Church Phibsboro, where we turned to the left, then to the right, and along down Connaught St. on to the Phibsboro Road. At this time, I was cycling near Paddy Daly and Dan Breen. Paddy said to me: "You carry on Vincie. We are all right now I'll look after Dan". I proceeded across town and was home in nice time for my dinner.

I went back to my job at two o'clock. The boss came in

Mr. A. Mackey - and asked me what happened me; what kept me out in the morning. I replied I was suffering from bad pains in my stomach. Everything passed off at that until the next morning, when the boss came in about 10 a.m. He came into the workshop. "Begorra, Vincent" he said, "you have a damn bad shot". I asked him what did he mean, and he just laughed at me. Seamus Kavanagh, who was charge-hand at the time, was present, and, turning to him, he said: "Isn't that right, Seamus?". Kavanagh, in later years, became Captain of "H" Company, 1st Battalion. Everything went well until Saturday morning, when I was called into the office to be paid. Mr. and Mrs. Mackey were there. The boss said to me: "Do you know, Vincent, if I thought you were out at Ashtown, I would gladly pay you for your half-day". I did not say anything. Then he said to me: "I will give you the benefit of the doubt, and have a better shot the next time". So I was paid my day's wages. I might mention here that both Mr. and Mrs. Mackey were great nationalists.

I later found out where Paddy Daly brought Dan Breen when he was wounded. It was to Mrs. Twomey's house at 88, Phibsboro Road; her sons, Joe, Jack and Eddie were all members of the Volunteers, and good ones at that; also, her daughter was a member of Cumann na mBan. Needless to say, on the night of the attack, I called over to Mick McDonnell and met Tom Keogh there. The whole conversation was about the loss of poor Martin Savage and having to leave him behind us. Perhaps while on this subject, it might be well to mention that Martin Savage was a grocer's assistant, working in Kerr's of the North Strand. On the morning of the ambush, he left the shop to bank some money for his employer. Instead of going to the bank, he came out on the job. It was, I believe, stated in the newspapers that a large sum of money was found in his possession. There was an old lad working on the Midland Railway at the North Wall.

I may be mistaking the correct name of the railway. However all day he was doing a lot of talking about Martin Savage, saying he had blood-money on his hands, called him an assassin and a murderer, and that he deserved what he got. Some members of the 2nd Battalion, who worked along with him, told Mick McDonnell what the old man had been saying. Mick McDonnell said to me: "I will want you this evening". I think I met him in <sup>his</sup> the house about 6 or 6.30 p.m. We left the house. On our way out, I asked him where we were going. "Ah", he replied, "we are going to teach an ould fella to keep his mouth shut". Tom Keogh was along with us. We got as far as the North Strand, when we picked up Mick Brennan of Clare. There were other members present, but I can't remember their names. We proceeded to Shamrock Cottages, which is just off the North Strand Road. Then someone said: "This is the number". Mick knocked and asked did Mr. So-and-so live there and he was told "yes". He then said: "Can I see him for a moment?". While the person went back to tell him that there was a man at the door wishing to see him, the door was left open, and we walked into the house. Just then, we met our man coming to meet us. Now, this man wore a beard. We made a grab at him and pulled him into the room. Mick Brennan produced a pair of horse clippers and started to shear off his beard. When the job was finished, he was told to be very careful of his tongue, so far as the Volunteers were concerned. Needless to remark there was a terrible row in the house, women starting to scream and children to cry. We considered that the old man had been effectively taught a good lesson.

I am of opinion that it was Mick McDonnell who was in charge of the Ashtown operation, for the reason that it was I who brought him the information about the arrival of

Lord French, in the first place, and, from the time he received that information until the actual operation took place, he seemed to be the man who was giving all the orders. During this operation, there were two squads of men working. The one of which I was a member operated under Mick McDonnell and the other party of men operated under Paddy Daly. We believed that Lord French would travel in the second car. The reason that the operation was not a success is due to the fact that we did not get time effectively to block the road with the farm cart. Had this been done, all cars would have been held up at this point, and would have thus given us an effective target.

Shooting of D.I. Redmond in Harcourt St.  
31st January, 1920.

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Redmond came down from Belfast and he was going to show them - Dublin Castle - how to smash the I.R.A. The first night we went after him it was in Dame St. He left the Castle, I would say, between 5.30 p.m. and 6 p.m., and proceeded along Dame St. until he came to the D.B.C. Restaurant, which was on the right-hand side going towards College Green, just facing Fownes St. He turned in to the restaurant. We waited for about two hours, but there was no sign of Redmond coming out; so the operation was called off.

On the following night, Redmond left the Castle about the same time, and proceeded along Dame St., College Green, into Grafton St. and along St. Stephen's Green. He crossed over the road at the corner of Harcourt St. and Cuffe St. to the left-hand side. He was living in the Standard Hotel. Just as he got outside the children's hospital, the squad let him have it. Mick McDonnell was in charge of this operation.

Raid on Navy and Army Canteen Board Garage  
at Bow Lane, 8th February 1920.

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I believe this was a Brigade job. The reason I say so is that Peadar Clancy, Vice-Brigadier of the Dublin Brigade, was there. Mick McDonnell mobilised his "trio" - Tom Keogh, Jimmy Slattery and myself - and told us he would want us that night for a "bit of a job". Of the nature of the stuff to be taken, I had no idea, but I do know we took away a lot of tools, motor parts and motor vans, one of which was to play a very prominent part afterwards with the 2nd Battalion and with the unofficial squad.

Raid on the Great Northern Railway -  
How it came about.

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Tom Keogh, who worked on the railway, loaded two wagons with gelignite on a certain day. Tom was working late. When he got home, he reported to Mick McDonnell about the job he was on. Tom, by the way, was a step-brother to Mick McDonnell and they both lived together. Tom, Jimmy Slattery and myself were pals outside our Volunteer duties. I will explain how the members of the 2nd Battalion were mobilised. The greater number of the men mobilised that night were members of E/Coy. 2nd Battalion. As Jimmy and I were calling down to see Tom that night, Mick McDonnell said: "Just the right men in the right place!". He gave us instructions to mobilise as many men as we could and to report to Oriel Hall in Oriel Street. He instructed us to tell any men who had small arms to carry them. The time of mobilisation was between 11 and 11.30 p.m. Jimmy and myself set off on our job. After finishing, we reported back to Mick McDonnell at Oriel Hall. There would be about twenty to twenty-five men present. He detailed Jimmy and myself, as we had cycles, to patrol around the block and to report anything we thought fit, in the way of activity of police or military. The men detailed for the taking of the

stuff got over the wall at the side or back of the Hall and proceeded to the wagons, directed by Tom Keogh who had, as I have already stated, loaded them that day and, consequently, knew their exact location. The wagons were opened; how, I do not know, but I suppose Tom Keogh, who had fastened them, knew how to open them. Another party of men were detailed to remove their boots. So the job began. The men on the railway carried the stuff to the wall running alongside the Hall, handed it over to the men who were in their stockinged feet; they, in turn, ran along Oriel St., across Seville Place into Lower Oriel St. and down to a house where Paddy Ennis lived, where the stuff was dumped, not two hundred yards away from where the wagons lay.

Our patrol duties consisted of taking opposite directions. I would cycle up Oriel St., along Sheriff St. into Amiens St. and down Seville Place; Jim going the opposite way, so that we had the whole area covered all the time. Everything went off very smoothly and the stuff was safely dumped. The removal of the stuff was completed within one and a half hours.

When everything was over, we were told to dismiss. I might mention that the majority of the men lived in the area. The next morning, the newspapers could not give any account of the great military activity around Oriel St. and Seville Place area. The area was completely cordoned off for a few days and nights, while every house in the area was being combed. Strange as it may seem, they searched Paddy Ennis's house, but did not find a thing, although the gelignite was under the floor. Needless to say, this stuff was a blessing to us when we started to make our own hand grenades.

The attempted rescue of R.C. Barton after  
his courtmartial in Ship St. Barracks,  
12th February, 1920.

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Some members of the brigade and squad were mobilised for the rescue of R.C. Barton, who had been tried in Ship St. Barracks. Mick McDonnell and myself were over at Ship St. Mick had his motor bike, with sidecar, and he was to get the 'tick-tack' as to what car Barton would be in when being brought to Mountjoy. As far as I can remember, one car came out and we made no move. A second car came out and Mick said to me: "Here it is". We took the streets in flying colours, as the saying is, up to the corner of Nelson St. and Berkeley Road. The plan of action was that two men, with a handcart with a very long ladder on it were to push the handcart out to the middle of Berkeley road at a given signal. As this particular military car came up Blessington St., the signal was given to the men to get ready. At a turn into Berkeley Road they pushed the handcart out in front of the motor van, which stopped. We rushed over, revolvers drawn, to find <sup>to</sup> our dismay that the only occupants of the van were two British soldiers who were unarmed; it was a Red Cross car. There was an officer in charge of the car. In the rushing over to the car a shot rang out and the officer shouted: "One of your own men", which was too true. Henry Kelly, who was carrying a parabellum revolver, when pulling the gun out of his pocket, shot himself in the foot. We allowed the car to carry on. Kelly was taken away in the sidecar - to where, I don't know. Afterwards we learned that Barton was brought to Mountjoy later under very strong escort, an armoured car front and back of the car conveying him.

Raid on B. & I. Sheds, Sir John Rogerson's Quay,  
19th February 1920.

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Information was received that military stores had

arrived by the B. & I. boat and were stored in the sheds behind the offices. This job, I believe, was a brigade one, but the majority of the men on it were 2nd Battalion. The raid took place between 10.30 and 11 p.m. (curfew was on at 12 o'clock). As far as I can remember, one of the party got over the railings and smashed a pane of glass in the lower window, allowing him to slip off the catch and get through. He opened a wicket gate from inside, the majority of the men entering the sheds. A number of Volunteers were posted around outside to see that no one interfered while the search was on, and also to report any activity of police or military. No one seemed to know where the stuff was, or in what kind of cases they might have been packed, so it was just a case of opening any likely-looking one. I remember opening a case and finding that its contents consisted of sticks of black liquorice. Needless to say, I filled my pockets and had a good chew for a day or two. The next case I opened contained small tins of café au lait, so I helped myself to a tin and a nice cup of coffee for my supper when I got home. The raiding party, I would say, numbered between twenty-five and thirty men. After all our trouble, we found nothing. Then someone gave the order to get out, as there was no use staying any longer. The majority of the men lived on the north side of the city and, so far as I was concerned, I thought I was the only one living on the south side on this particular night. As I parted from my comrades at Butt Bridge, I turned into Tara St. I was turning the corner into Townsend St. when I heard a few shots ring out. I wondered what had happened now, as the sound of the firing was coming from College Green, or from that direction. I proceeded into College St. and around by Trinity College, and I did not see anything unusual. I arrived at South Anne St. and home.

On the following morning, I soon found out the cause

of the shooting. Paddy and Gay McGrath, who were brothers and who had been on the raid, were on their way home.- they lived in Aungier St. - When called on to halt by two D.M.P. men. They opened fire on them. The D.M.P. men were armed at this time. In the encounter Paddy was wounded, arrested and taken to Mercer's Hospital, where he was guarded by an armed peeler. That evening, after the shooting, a party of Volunteers raided the hospital, held up the guards and got Paddy away, to where, I cannot say. I might mention that some members of the 1st Battalion were arrested on their way home after the raid.

#### The Tracking of Captain Hardy.

Captain Hardy was a member of the Auxiliaries, stationed in Dublin Castle. This individual walked with a limp. His treatment of prisoners brought into the Castle was cruel and brutal. Orders were received that he was to be got out of the way. He seldom left the Castle, except under very heavy escort.

Information was received by the Intelligence that Captain Hardy had gone to England and would be returning to Dublin on a particular Sunday morning, arriving by mailboat at Dunlaoghaire. At this time the mailboat used to arrive about 6 a.m. Tom Keogh, Jimmy Slattery and myself were detailed to go to Dunlaoghaire and have a go at him, if possible. On the Saturday night, we made arrangements for the carrying out of the operation. I was to meet Tom and Jimmy at the corner of Holles St. and Merrion Square at 5.30 a.m. on the following morning. We were to pick up a car, which was garaged in a stable in Fitzwilliam Lane. I slept it in on the Sunday morning. However, I got out as fast as I could to our place of meeting, and found no one there. I could hardly have been more than fifteen minutes

late, but every minute counted; so I made for home again.

As I was walking along Merrion Square, towards Clare St. I heard the rumble of a motor car approaching from the city and, by the noise, I guessed it to be a heavy lorry. As I was coming near the end of the Square, I observed that the car approaching me was an armoured one. As it crossed Clare St. to Merrion Square, the crew started to operate a searchlight, flashing it from side to side. I immediately threw myself on the ground, at the same time hugging my body as close as possible by the small stone base on which the railings were standing. I shall never forget that morning! As I lay there, the searchlight played about three feet away from me. I said to myself: "So this is the end". But, lucky for me, the operator turned it to the other side. I breathed freely again, for I believe while I was on the ground, I was afraid to breathe. I proceeded along Clare St. and was about to turn into Kildare St. when two D.M.P. men, who were approaching from Nassau St., called upon me to halt. I dashed round the corner and cleared up Kildare St. As I was crossing the street towards Frederick Lane, they again called upon me to halt. They were running also. When I reached the corner of the Lane, I pulled my gun and let go at them. They returned the fire. I was down the lane like a hare. As I lived in this locality I knew every nook and corner of the place. I crossed Frederick St., down Dawson Lane into Duke St., then into Duke Lane, and home into South Anne St. Later on in the morning, the military raided some houses in Frederick St.

I might mention that curfew was on, at that time, from 12 a.m. to 6 a.m. How Tom Keogh and Jimmy Slattery got safely to Dunlaoghaire with the car, without being challenged, I do not know. However, they arrived there and waited to see if they could locate Hardy. While waiting, a double-turret

armoured car arrived and drove straight down to the pier. It is surmised that Hardy got into it. I believe it was the same car that passed me in Merrion Square. Hardy was never got.

Raid on Castle mails, Parnell St. - February 1920.

This raid took place between 8 a.m. and 9.30 a.m. opposite the west side of Parnell Square. Jim Slattery, Paddy Kennedy, Joe Dolan, Charlie Dalton, Tom Kehoe and myself and other Volunteers were present. Pat McCrae was in charge of the motor van in Dominick St. - the van which I already mentioned was taken in the raid on the N.A.B.C. garage. The mails were in an ordinary two-wheeled horse-drawn vehicle, with a driver and a postman sitting up on a dicky-seat. The van left the Castle and travelled via Dame St. College Green, Westmoreland St., O'Connell St., into Parnell St. One of the Intelligence Officers gave the signal as the van turned into Parnell St. Our position was just standing at the edge of the footpath. As the van had to slow down when turning into the Square, Jim Slattery and Tom Keogh stepped off the path and caught the horse by the reins at the head. I joined with them and ordered the driver and postman to get down, which they did. Jim Slattery mounted the van and drove it along Parnell St. into Dominick St. where the mails were transferred into our own motor van and driven away to our dump in Mountjoy Court, off Gt. Charles St. near Mountjoy Square. The remainder of us made ourselves scarce. Tom and I went to the dump afterwards. When we got there, the whole Intelligence staff, which included Joe Dolan, Liam Tobin, Frank Saurin, Frank Thornton and Tom Cullen, were already at work going through the mails, opening every letter; so we took a hand also. There were special leather bags with official correspondence and these were dealt with by the senior officers. There was a humorous side to this. As we

were opening the letters, now and again we would come across a pound-note and, when the sound of the crispy notes was heard, all work would cease and everyone would turn towards where the noise came from. In the sorting out, there was a huge number of police photographs of people who were applying for passports to emigrate. Attached to each application was a seven-and-sixpenny postal order. Some of these were crossed and made payable to the Under-Secretary, but the majority were blank. So, when the Intelligence staff had finished their work and left the dump, leaving only three of us - Jimmy Slattery, Tom Keogh and myself, I got a brainwave. I said: "Hey, lads, how about changing some of these postal orders?". Jimmy said: "Oh, leave it to you, Vincie! You would think of something like that". Tom remarked: "Let's have a shot at it". So we waded through the letters flung all over the floor and picked out all the postal orders that were blank. We divided the number among us and then burned all the letters and any papers lying around and left. As I lived on the south side of the city, I parted with Jimmy and Tom, making arrangements that we would all meet at Tom's house in Richmond Crescent that night at eight o'clock. We promised that all monies received from the postal orders would be pooled, that there should be an equal share among the three of us and that there was to be no flanking.

So I started on my first call. I went into Parnell St. Post Office and changed two orders there. That was the first 15/- . I next called into the Post Office in Westmoreland St and changed another order there; then I went to Duke St. Post Office, changed one there, went home, had my dinner and started off again. My next call was to Aungier St. Post Office, and passed two orders there. I carried on into Camden St. and passed another one in Camden St. Post Office. Went up to Harcourt Place and cashed two more there. I said

to myself: "You are doing well". I then went on to Merrion Row and cashed two more. I think, as far as I can recall, that was the last postal order and the last post office. All the cash was in half-crowns. That evening I went over to Richmond Crescent and met Jim and Tom. They both said to me: "Well, Vincie, how did you get on?". I remarked: "Oh, all right - changed the lot". So, with that, I put all the half-crowns on the table and they did likewise. Somehow, I don't think they had done as good business as I had. However, we were all comrades in arms and it was a fair divide all round.

Full-time Squad formed.

Up to the year 1919, the Detective Branch of the D.M.P. known as the G-Division, had full sway in Dublin, and could arrest anyone who was active in the national movement and have them flung into jail; also, their spies and informers were giving information ad lib. without fear of punishment. It was obvious that it was little use having a Volunteer army if this state of affairs was allowed to go on, as any officer or Volunteer did not know, from hour to hour, when he might be arrested. So the "big fella" Michael Collins, set up an Intelligence department to find out who were the men selected by the British administration to do this work. It was well-known that certain G-men were on this work, which was called political work, and three individuals, Smith, Hoey and Bruton, made themselves very prominent. I believe these men were requested to cease their activities, but events proved that they became more zealous than ever.

Instructions were received from the Director of Intelligence through his deputy, Liam Tobin, that these same men were a menace to the movement and would have to be got out of the way.

With this end in view, a selected number of men were

picked and mobilised to attend a meeting, the majority of the men being members of the 2nd Battalion. When all had assembled, the object of the meeting was explained to them. There was no compulsion whatsoever on any man. He could volunteer or decline such work. In fact, one or two men conscientiously objected, one stating that he would have no hesitation in going out to face the enemy in open battle.

The first operation carried out by this party was the shooting of Smith at Millmount Avenue, Drumcondra. He was not killed outright, but died of wounds later. The next operation was the shooting of Hoey in Townsend St. as he was about to enter the police station in Brunswick St. (now known as Pearse St.), which had an entrance in Townsend St. Another G-man shot was named Kells in Pleasants St. There was also a G-man shot at Stephen's Green, near the corner of Cuffe St. In this latter case, I cannot say who exactly did the job.

I believe that from this time onwards until the formation of the full-time squad, all operations of this nature were carried out by what was known as the "unofficial" squad, which consisted of from six to eight men. As far as my memory serves me, I would say that, up to the time of the shooting of Barton, all operations were carried out by the unofficial squad. It was some time in the month of March 1920, that the wholetime squad was formed. The reason I make this statement is as follows:- I left my employment, together with Jimmy Slattery, and have in my possession a document which shows that I left my employment on 9th March 1920, and the reason for leaving my employment, with Slattery, was the formation of the first wholetime squad, which consisted of twelve men who were known as the twelve apostles.

When this squad was formed, it came directly under the control of the Director of Intelligence or his deputy, and

under no other authority. It was commanded by Mick McDonnell. The members more or less ceased their ordinary activities with their companies and battalions, but, on occasions, members would help the companies and battalions unknown to the Intelligence Department. Sometimes the squad was strengthened by members of the Intelligence staff, the Active Service Unit, munition workers and members of the Brigade, as occasion demanded; and last but not least, the Tipperary Flying Column men, Dan Breen, Robinson and Treacy; also Mick Brennan of Clare. I should like to mention two particular men who were very active with the squad - Jackie Dunne of the Quartermaster General's staff, and Jimmy Brennan of C/Company of the 2nd Battalion.

All operations carried out by the unofficial squad took place under cover of the dark evenings and, naturally, the British authorities knew this. Therefore, their agents and officials made sure that they would not be caught out after the fall of evening but would carry on with their dirty work during the daylight. This applied especially where extreme action had to be taken. Another factor to be taken into consideration was that as the majority of the Volunteers were working men, it was very hard to expect them to be able to leave their employment at any hour of the day. Also, it is pointed out that not every Volunteer would undertake this duty, as it entailed readiness at every minute of the day or night. There was no alternative but to form a fulltime squad. As already stated, we were all just working for our living. Therefore, the fulltime men would have to be paid. The wages paid were in keeping with the amount they would receive if they were working for their ordinary employers, for it is a fact that the majority of the squad gave up their employment. I would say that during the month of March 1920, the official paid squad came into being.

Squad Personnel.

First part-time squad. Mick McDonnell, Tom Keogh, Jimmy Slattery, Paddy Daly, Joe Leonard, Ben Barrett, Vincent Byrne.

First fulltime paid squad. Mick McDonnell, Tom Keogh, Jimmy Slattery, Paddy Daly, Joe Leonard, Ben Barrett, Vincent Byrne, Sean Doyle, Paddy Griffin, Eddie Byrne, Mick Reilly, Jimmy Conroy.

After some time the squad was strengthened by the following members:

Ben Byrne, Frank Bolster, Mick Keogh, Mick Kennedy, Bill Stapleton, Sam Robinson.

Owen Cullen (member of 2nd Battalion) was driver for a short time, and Paddy Kelly of Clare for a short time.

Intelligence Staff.

Director of Intelligence:	Michael Collins
Deputy do. do.	Liam Tobin.
2nd Deputy do. do.	Tom Cullen
3rd do. do. do.	Frank Thornton

Members: Joe Dolan, Frank Saurin, Ned Kelleher, Joe Guilfoyle, Paddy Cadwell, Paddy Kennedy, Charlie Dalton, Dan McDonnell, Charlie Byrne.

Munitions Staff: As far as I can remember, the following were members:-

Mat Furlong, Sean Sullivan, Gay McGrath, Martin Kelly, Tom Younge, Chris. Reilly.

Other men who were out on occasions with the squad.

Dan Breen	}	Members of the Tipperary Flying Column.
Seamus Robinson		
Sean Treacy		
Sean Hogan		

Mick Brennan of Clare.

Squad Dumps.

The first squad dump was in Mountjoy Court, off Great Charles St., near Mountjoy Square. It had been a stable and was converted to a lockup garage. This garage originally belonged to Mick McDonnell, and he kept his motor cycle combination there. When the unofficial squad started operations, we used it as a dump, and, later, it became the official one. It lasted a long time.

In this same Court, B/Coy. of the 2nd Battalion also had their dump. One morning, some members of the squad got a great shock on hearing that the British military had thrown a cordon around Charles St., Rutland St. and Summer Place; so we were without guns. Barbed wire stretchers were placed across the streets leading into this area. We stood outside the barriers, wondering would our dump escape. The military party on this operation, I would estimate, numbered about 100 men with two whippet armoured cars and a three-ton lorry, which had a searchlight mounted on it. It moved from place to place after dark, with searchlights playing on the houses and along the streets. Everyone was searched, entering or leaving. They held this position for two days and nights. Early on the third morning, about 6 a.m., they withdrew; so we were informed by some of the residents. Tom Keogh, Jimmy Slattery and myself took a chance on the morning the military left and, at about 10 a.m. went up to Mountjoy Court to see how the land lay. Seeing no one knocking around, we entered the dump and found everything as we had left it. We removed all our stuff, as we were afraid to leave it there any longer. Our fears were justified, for, in a day or so, the military raided this area again and found our dump. I believe that, in the first raid, they got B/Company's dump, so it would appear that they got some information regarding the second one. While we had this dump we always met and awaited instructions in St. Laurence O'Toole's Hall in Seville Place.

We were not very long without a new home, for, in a few days, we moved to a new dump at headquarters which was situated in Middle Abbey St., facing Stafford St. This was known as Moreland's, Cabinet-making and Upholstering, the name being painted in very large letters on the gates. The entrance to the premises was enclosed by two large gates, one with a wicket opening. The area of the premises was about 75' long by about 12' wide, flanked on each side by a high wall. The ground

floor was used as a cabinet-making shop, which was only a blind, of course. The second floor consisted of two large stores, one of which had a glass roof, with an opening window, which was very useful in case of a raid; in the other store, facing the entrance and commanding the passage, was a very large window, which opened on hinges, the bottom portion being sheeted with timber. Behind this, we built a concrete wall, 4'6" high by 9" thick. This was to act as a barricade. It was also intended to mine the passage, but the laying of the mines was never carried out. Some pretence/<sup>at</sup>cabinet-making had to be shown, and for that purpose we needed tools. I was detailed to go to Messrs. Booth, Stephen Street, and get a kit. On receiving the tools from the assistant, I handed him a note - "Taken in the name of the I.R.A.". The first job done was the making of a bench. The next thing was to have plenty of shavings around to give the impression that work was being done. I was the decoy - wearing overalls and looking like a workman.

However, this dump was never raided. The actual place where our guns were kept was in an old lavatory. There were two lavatories on the premises, one being in the yard adjoining the main front wall, and the other one on the second floor and built right over the one in the yard. A Volunteer bricklayer was brought in and instructed to remove the door and door-frame of the lavatory in the yard and the opening to be bricked up with old brick. The floor of the lavatory on the second floor was made moveable and into one of the joists we fixed a six-inch nail. We had a small registered mail bag to which was attached a light rope. Into this bag we used to put our guns and lower it down into the lavatory underneath. The other end of the rope we fixed to the nail. It was a perfect job.

It should be put on record that, while we were in

Moreland's, the "big fella", Mick Collins, visited us at least twice a week. Notwithstanding the enormous amount of work he undertook, he found time to visit his squad. The moral effect of his visits was wonderful. He would come in and say: "Well, lads, how are ye getting on?", and pass a joke or two with us. He was loved and honoured by each and every one of us, and his death was felt very keenly by the squad. I am proud to say that Mick stood by us in our hard time, and that every single member of the squad stood by him in his hard times, without exception.

There is another story worth relating, which also concerns Moreland's. One evening, early in 1920, all the boys, including myself, were playing cards. This was our usual pastime while awaiting instructions. Suddenly we heard the burst of grenades and revolver fire. It sounded as if it was outside our very gate. In fact, we thought the gates were being blown in. The lads made for the window in the glass roof. After a little while, Tom Keogh said: "You had better go down, Vincie, and find out what all the row is about". I threw off my jacket, tucked up my shirt sleeves and, with my overalls on me, I looked the real hard-working fellow. I proceeded to the gate and opened the wicket. Standing outside was a British Tommy. I popped my head out and asked him what was all the shooting. He replied: "Those bloody Shinnars ambushed us". I said to him: "That's terrible" and then I remarked: "I had better be getting back to my job, in case the boss is looking for me". Closing the wicket, I went back to the lads and told them what had happened. Later, we learned that the A.S.U. had attacked this lorry at the corner of Swift's Row and Ormond Quay.

Shooting of Jameson at Ballymun,  
2nd March, 1920.

Jameson came to Dublin and posed as a Traveller in

jewellery. He stayed at the Hammam Hotel in Up. O'Connell St. He was a C.I.D. man from Scotland Yard, and our Intelligence had this information. Jameson was got in touch with. He was very anxious to meet Michael Collins and stated he could supply him with all the arms he wanted.

One evening, Jameson was met by one of the squad who was to escort him to see the "big fella". They boarded the Glasnevin tram. Needless to remark, other squad-men boarded the same tram. They arrived at the terminus and proceeded to walk along the Ballymun road for some distance, when he was shot dead. As I was not on this operation, I cannot give further details.

Shooting of Molloy, a sergeant in the British  
Army - 24th March, 1920.

This sergeant was in touch with our Intelligence and was very anxious to meet Liam Tobin. On the evening of 23rd March 1920, he met Frank Saurin, one of our Intelligence officers, who took him into the Café Cairo in Grafton St. for tea. I was detailed to follow them after a few minutes, for the purpose of being able to identify Molloy. I took a chair at the next table. Frank Saurin turned towards me and said: "Hello, so-and-so." Then, turning to Molloy, he had a few words with him and he invited me to join them, which I did. I was introduced to Molloy. After a little while, Frank said: "Our friend is very anxious to meet Liam Tobin and I am sure you could arrange it". I said: "I will see", and then agreed. Molloy mentioned something about the great help he would be to the movement. After having tea, I made arrangements to meet him the following evening at 5.30 p.m. at the corner of South King St. and Grafton St. and that we would each wear a flower on our coats, so that we would know one another. On the evening that I was to meet Molloy, the squad and myself proceeded to the appointed place and there

saw our man waiting. He waited about three-quarters of an hour, and then moved off down Grafton St. We made several attempts to get him, but, owing to the large number of people in the street, it was very difficult. He turned into Wicklow St. and proceeded as far as the corner of South William St. Here we opened fire and he fell dead. At that time, the Central Hotel in Exchequer St. was occupied by British military, so that we could not have let him go any farther, knowing that he could identify at least one squad man and an Intelligence officer.

About this time, Tomas MacCurtain had been shot in Cork. The reason I mention this is that, immediately after the shooting of Molloy, a number of civilians started shouting: "Stop them" and tried to stop us. This was the first time anything like that had happened. When we met next morning, we discussed the attitude of the civilians and we all came to the conclusion that people thought we were Auxies or British military, dressed in civilian clothes, after what had happened in Cork. I had run down towards St. Andrew St. The majority of the squad made for College Green, but I had to go a different way, as I had to report to Liam Tobin and Tom Cullen whether the operation was successful or not. As I was running by St. Andrew's Church - the path is very narrow here; also there was a lamp standard at this narrow part - a civilian on a bicycle blocked my way. I did not want to pull my gun and fire at him. Instead, I used a little bit of strategy. I shouted at him, at the same time pointing towards Suffolk St., "Stop them, stop them", and, as he looked round, I darted by and made my escape to Liam and Tom.

The tracking and shooting of Alan Bell,  
26th March 1920.

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This man came from England. His job was to examine the banking accounts in order to find out where the Volunteer

money was. As this was a danger to the movement, orders were given to the squad that he was to be got out of the way.

Information was received from Intelligence that, on a particular afternoon, he would be going to the Four Courts. Mick McDonnell and myself were detailed for the job that evening. We posted ourselves at the corner of Chancery St. and Ormond Quay, and an Intelligence officer was posted on Grattan Bridge, his job being to give the signal by waving his handkerchief and to point to the car as it passed him. The handkerchief was raised and we got ready. Now, we expected that the car would turn into Chancery St. but, instead, it went straight up the quay. The plan of operation was to throw a specially made grenade. It was much the same as a No. 9, only twice the size. In fact, it was so big that it could not be put into an overcoat pocket. Mick McDonnell carried it, wrapped in brown paper, with the pin very handy to pull. As the car did not turn, as surmised, the job was called off.

On the following day, Jimmy Slattery and myself took up position outside the Empire Theatre, now known as the Olympia, to watch for Bell. We were waiting there a long time, when I remarked to Jimmy: "There's a fellow after coming out of the Castle, and he's after giving us a very hard look". This individual went along Dame St. towards College Green, turned into George's St. and the next time I saw of him he was going into the Castle again. Having turned into George's St., he had turned into the laneway leading from George's St. down to the Castle. But, smart as he was, we were just as smart! After a lapse of a few minutes, he appeared again, with another man, and, as they were coming through the gate, the two of us moved off up Dame St. on the left-hand side. The two men from the Castle followed, on the right-hand side. We turned into Crow St. and crossed the Metal Bridge, still followed by the two men. Having crossed the Metal Bridge,

we had a glance back, and still these two men were following us. After going into Liffey St. we decided that we would have a go at them on the North Lotts, if they came along. However, they only came as far as the middle of the Metal Bridge, when they turned back. So all went quiet for that day. Of course, we reported the whole matter to our senior officer, Liam Tobin.

Our next move to get Bell took us out of the city on the following day. Information was received that Bell was living out at Monkstown. Our box Ford van was brought into action again when six squad men went to Monkstown to see if there was anything doing there. When they arrived, they saw that there was another motor car outside his house, and standing around were five or six G-men. So, if we were to have a go, it would mean a bit of a scrap; but that job was called off.

The next thing we heard about Bell was that he was coming into town by tram and usually got off at the corner of Grafton St. We scouted this position for a few mornings, but could not contact Bell; but what we did notice was that there was always the same man standing at the corner of Yeates' each morning. This man was one of the G-men who had followed Slattery and myself. If Bell did not get off the tram, this man moved off to the Castle; so the scent was getting hot! Another plan was devised.

Tom Keogh was sent out on his bicycle to Monkstown. The squad, along with some Intelligence officers, proceeded to Ailesbury Road and awaited developments. Tom's job was to watch and see what tram Bell would board; he was to follow it and give the signal to the men at Ailesbury Road that Bell was aboard. Bell boarded the tram at Monkstown and Tom, keeping pace along with it, gave the signal that he was in this particular tram. The squad boarded the tram, the majority going inside. I was detailed to go on top. My job was to cut the trolley rope when I heard any commotion going on below.

When we got as far as Simmonscourt Road, Bell was pulled off the tram. The conductor rushed up the stairs, shouting: "There's going to be a man shot!" I said to him: "Oh, let me down off this tram" - at the same time cutting the trolley rope.

After the shooting, the squad cleared up Simmonscourt Road. As we were going along, a cyclist, with a motor bike and sidecar, passed us. He had just gone by us, when Tom Cullen remarked: "Do you know, lads, we should have stopped that fellow on the bike." The squad carried on to Donnybrook. As they were running for the Donnybrook tram, the conductor remarked: "Here come the harriers!" Some of the squad went up towards Clonskea to get a tram there. The men on the Donnybrook tram observed, as they were passing the D.M.P. station, that there was a motor bike and sidecar outside, which looked as if the cyclist was reporting the plugging. Unfortunately, no one got the number of the bike.

The actual place where Bell was shot was the corner of Simmonscourt Road - at the corner of the Show Grounds.

Shooting of Detective Officer Dalton,  
20th April, 1920.

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Information was received that a certain G-man, named Dalton, was doing political work. Accordingly, the squad received orders that he would have to be "bumped off". Instructions were given for the squad to proceed to the Black Church at St. Mary's Place, off Dorset St. There were a few Intelligence officers on this job also. We took up our positions each side of the Black Church and had not very long to wait when Dalton and his escort were observed coming from the Broadstone station. He crossed Mountjoy St. and, as he stepped on to the pathway at the Black Church, the men detailed let go at him. He was killed outright. How his

escort escaped being plugged is a miracle. However, it was just as well, as he was not wanted.

#### The tracking of Detective Officer Coffey

This G-man was doing political work, and the squad, accordingly, received orders that he was to be got out of the way. He lived at Kenmare Parade, which is off the N.C.Road. On a particular morning, the squad took up a position on the N.C.Road and Kenmare Parade. The two men detailed to carry out the operation were stationed at the corner. We had not very long to wait when Coffey and his escort appeared, coming down Kenmare Parade. As the men on the corner were about to open fire, two women came over, stood very close to them and asked them something about the Salvation Army. In the meantime, Coffey and his escort got away up the N.C.Road. It was a very near thing for him.

On the following day, the squad received information that Coffey was patrolling around the town. The squad set out and tried to make contact with him. We were walking around for awhile. At about 5.30 p.m. we made contact in St. Andrew St. We let him go into Trinity St., intending to finish him off there, but something happened, the details of which I cannot now remember, and we lost him. Coffey was never got.

#### Shooting of Detective Sergeant Revelle, 8th May, 1920.

Information was received that this man was a danger to the movement. The squad received its usual instructions. This G-man lived in one of the streets off Phibsboro' Road - the first one on the left-hand side coming from the city. It was the habit of this man to sleep at home. I suppose he did not think we could find out anything about him. He worked

in the Castle. As we did not know exactly his movements, as to how he went to the Castle, I was detailed to track him and report.

On the morning before he was shot, I arrived at Phibsboro' Road at 9 a.m., unarmed, and took up a position about fifty yards from Connaught St. on the right hand side coming from the city. I was standing there, I would say, about half an hour, when he came out of Connaught St. I tried to look as innocent as I could. He walked down Phibsboro Road towards the city on the right-hand side. As he came right opposite to me, he stopped and stared very hard over at me. Whether I showed any signs of watching him, I do not know. He moved off at a smart pace. I let him have a few yards' start of me and then I commenced to follow him. He disappeared in a flash; and then I saw him standing behind a tramway standard and looking towards me. I halted and pretended to look at my watch. Looking up and down the road he moved off again. I made no further attempt to follow him, as I could see that he had me under cover. The next thing, he went over to the policeman, who was on point duty at Phibsboro, and had a conversation with him. I said to myself: "It's about time I made myself scarce". I boarded a tram going towards Glasnevin, got off it at Lindsay Road and proceeded to Mick McDonnell's house to make my report. With Mick McDonnell was Liam Tobin who, I believe, had stopped with him that night. I told them all that had happened. One of them said: "We had better have a go in the morning - meaning the next day. The squad was notified that evening to be ready for the following morning, telling them what the job was.

The squad duly took up their position on Phibsboro Rd. They had not very long to wait when Revelle appeared, cycling out of Connaught St. The two men detailed for the

actual job were standing about twenty-five yards from Connaught St. on the left hand side coming from the city. As he came within a few feet of them they stepped out on the roadway and let him have it. He was beaten across the street with gunfire. When the job was finished, they made off towards the Cross Guns Bridge. In the meantime, the peeler, who was on point-duty at Phibsboro', started to run up the Phibsboro' Road to where the shooting took place, and kept on running with a revolver in his hand - an old Bulldog type. He had not a hope in hell of catching them. However, the story is told that he followed them as far as the bridge, where the flour mill is situated. There was a crowd of men standing outside the mill, who were employed there. The peeler said to them: "Why didn't you stop them?" One of them replied: "Not bloody likely! Do you want us to get the same as the fellow got down there?". Revelle was not killed, as it transpired afterwards; he was wearing a steel jacket. That evening, the newspaper gave an account of what had happened. One of the newspaper men had an interview with Revelle during the day, and Revelle was reported as saying: "I would know one of them very well, as I had seen him the previous morning". Needless to say, we were disappointed that he was not finished off completely, but I suppose his time had not come. It left me in the position that I could never be arrested after this, as Revelle was in the Castle and would identify me at any time.

Perhaps the method used in carrying out these operations should be explained. First of all, the men selected for squad work were brought on a few jobs and shown how they were carried out; secondly, each man had to prove his mettle, and was detailed to do an actual job; thirdly, there were always two men detailed, and fourthly, the remainder of the squad would take up positions to act as a guard around them.

The near capture of two Squad men.

One morning at about 11 a.m., in the middle of 1920, Tom Keogh, Jimmy Slattery, Bill Stapleton and myself were to report to Headquarters Intelligence in Crow St. Tom remarked, as we were going into Fownes St.: "There's no use in the whole lot of us going in", and we agreed. Tom and Jimmy went along to find out what was the nature of our next operation. Bill and myself waited in Fownes St., strolling up and down. We looked into Lawler's window for a good while. We moved off again down Fownes St., feeling quite happy with ourselves. We were walking on the left-hand side of the street. Just as we came to the corner of Cope St., out walked a military foot-patrol. It was the last place in the world we expected to see a patrol. We were in a spot of bother now, as we would have no chance of fighting our way out. Bill Stapleton turned round to me and said: "I wonder is this the right number?, looking towards the hall door. I remarked: "Let's try". At this time the officer was looking very hard at us. However, the two of us entered the hall and walked up the first flight of stairs. We waited a few minutes and came down again. Bill had a peep out and, to our great relief, the patrol had moved on down Fownes St. towards Temple Bar. So our hearts went back to normal. Were it not for the quick action of Stapleton in thinking of entering the house, we would have been captured with our arms, or, alternatively, we would have to use them against overwhelming numbers.

The shooting of Frank Brooke, P.C.,  
Westland Row - 30th July 1920.

Information was received from Headquarters Intelligence, that Brooke was on the Black List, so far as the movement was concerned. So the squad got orders to look after him. There was a great deal of tracking him around and about the Castle, but the squad could never see Brooke. I believe the "big fella"

Michael Collins - was getting very uneasy on account of same. So a big drive was made to get him, no matter where.

Brooke lived in a big demesne in Co. Wicklow, called "Coolattin", Shillelagh. Three of us were ordered to go down to "Coolattin" to see if it was at all possible to get him there. We cycled to Co. Wicklow to Tom Keogh's house, where we stopped. It was in the summer time. The weather was glorious and we were in no hurry to end a grand chance of spending a few days in the country. However, the job had to be scouted and an attempt made, if possible. The first day we went to "Coolattin" we went unarmed so that, if we were challenged, we were just having a spin. There was a kind of a public road running through the demesne and we cycled through it. As we went along, you would not know where an R.I.C. man would appear out of the bushes. There was nothing doing here. We treated ourselves to a few more days. We received a letter from Mick McDonnell, stating that, if we did not return at once, we would be fired. So back to Dublin we had to go and leave the glorious countryside.

We were only back a day or two when information was received that Brooke would be at a certain office in Westland Row, belonging to the railway. So over we went to Westland Row, the four of us. Three members of the squad entered the hallway beside the station and went upstairs; one man was left in the hallway as a guard. In a minute or two, a train arrived in the station and, a while later, the three squad men appeared, after finishing off Brooke. No one heard the shooting with the noise of the train, except those in the office; so ended another enemy of Ireland.

Newspaperman Hardy - August 1920.

This individual's name was "Derby" Hardy - at least that is how he styled himself - and he was an ex-convict.

He was in touch with our Intelligence staff and told them all the nice things he could do for Ireland if they would only take him into their confidence. It was arranged that he was to meet the heads of the I.R.A. and, instead, he was taken before a group of Irish and English journalists. Arthur Griffith was present. When Hardy had his say, Arthur Griffith produced his criminal record and exposed him before the journalists.

I was detailed to watch Hardy for a day. I picked up one of our Intelligence officers who pointed him out to me. My orders were just to watch him and follow him, to find out with whom he made contact and also the places he visited. I can tell you I was footsore and weary walking around the city after him. I remember he walked to Westland Row station turned back, waited outside the Queen's Theatre for a considerable time, then up to Grafton St., dilly-dallying all the way, and back across town. He went into the Hammam Hotel in O'Connell St. and, as I was about to enter the hotel, he came out again and started walking aimlessly about the town. I was not sorry when I was relieved early that evening.

He was not shot, but was ordered to leave the country that evening after his interview with the so-called Council of the I.R.A. This was the type of man whom England employed for her dirty work!

Attempt to get G-men on Sunday mornings.

After the shooting of a few G-men, the remainder of the group, especially the political men, withdrew into the Castle and very seldom came out. Information was received that they used to go to Sts. Michael's and John's Church, in a group, to eight or nine o'clock Mass. - I am not sure which.

The squad, with the Tipperary men - Breen, Treacy, Hogan and Robinson - some members of Intelligence and Jim Brennan and Hugo MacNeill, proceeded on a Sunday morning early in October 1920, and took up positions in Essex St. and outside the church at the back entrance. We saw the group approaching from the direction of the Castle and coming down Exchange St. I would say there were between ten and twelve men in the group. As we were getting ready to open fire on them, someone - I can't remember his name - rushed over to Mick McDonnell, and the job was called off. The reason, I later learned, was that Terence MacSwiney was dying in Brixton Prison and that there was a hope that he would be released. Word was sent by the "big fella" not to proceed with the operation. During the week MacSwiney died.

On the following Sunday morning, we took up the same position again. This time they did not come. Then information was received that they had changed their church to St. Teresa's Church in Clarendon St.

On the third Sunday we proceeded to Clarendon St. and took up positions throughout the street. However, we waited in vain, and they did not show up. I think this was the first time, on each occasion, that we had used a car in case any of our men would be hit.

The shooting of Sergeant Roche in Capel St.  
17th October 1920.

This R.I.C. Sergeant came from Tipperary. He was the one who identified Sean Treacy after being killed in Talbot St. He left the Castle along with one of the "big fella's" men - Dave Neligan - who was a G-man, and proceeded as far as Capel St. Bridge. The G-man made some pretence to go into a shop at the corner of Ormond Quay and Capel St. and that was the signal for the squad to carry on. Roche sauntered down Capel St. and, just at the corner of Strand St., the squad opened

fire. The G-man came out of the shop and fired a few shots over the heads of the attackers. There is no doubt that there must have been some other reason for the shooting besides the above-mentioned, as it in itself would not warrant such action; but that was no concern of the squad's; they got their orders and asked no questions.

The first Thompson machine guns.

When the first Thompson machine guns arrived at Moreland's dump, the squad considered them to be great weapons. We gave them a thorough inspection and were itching to fire them. Tom Keogh started to load the drum, according to the instructions pamphlet, and when he had it fully loaded, he slipped it on to the gun. As we did not know what was going to happen, we all stood behind him in case of danger. He started to fidget around with it, when all of a sudden there was a burst of fire. In fact, he nearly drilled a hole through the brick wall. In my opinion, that was the first time the Thompson gun had been fired by one of our men.

After a few days, we were given a demonstration in the temple or casino in the grounds of the O'Brien Institute on the Malahide Road. The following were present:- Michael Collins, Dick Mulcahy, Ginger O'Connell, two Americans named Cronin and Dinneen, Tom Keogh, Jimmy Slattery, Pat McCrae and myself. As far as I can remember, it was Cronin who gave the demonstration. Standing back a few yards, he fired at a tin-can. The first shot lifted it into the air and he kept hitting it in mid-air. The "big fella" and Mulcahy were delighted at the results, and our only wish was that we had plenty of them.

These guns were not used by members of the squad later. I believe, however, that they were used by members of the A.S.U. at Ballyfermot

Attempted attack on troop trains, Killester Station.

Later in the autumn of 1920, there was a special celebration to take place in Belfast on the occasion, I believe, of the visit of the King and Queen. Our 5th Battn. Engineers were to mine the railway line. I believe they had done so. I would estimate the number of Volunteers on this job as between sixty and seventy men, including the squad, the A.S.U. and members of different battalions. I was given a special job that morning. How I came to be selected, who gave me the order, I can't remember, or the circumstances in which it started. I was ordered to take a pony and trap, which belonged to Frank Holland; I do not remember where I took over the trap. The bottom of the trap was full of revolvers, hand grenades, two Thompson guns. I was instructed to drive out to Killester Lane. When I arrived there, a large body of Volunteers were present. I handed out the stuff to them, as instructed, and off they went to take up their positions to ambush the train. In a short space of time, I could hear the approach of a train and, as I was sitting alone in the trap expecting the bang to go off any minute, the suspense was terrible. The noise of the train passed. Then I heard the approach of another train, coming from the city. I held my breath again. I should explain that the first noise I heard was that of the pilot engine. As the second train passed, I heard no fireworks and could not understand it. The next thing was the ambushing party appeared and started throwing their guns and hand grenades back into the trap.

I was told to bring the stuff in the pony and trap to a stable off Dorset St. known as Dorset Row. I threw a rug over the stuff and across my knees and drove away down Killester Lane, on to the Malahide Road, turned up Puckstown road (now known as Collins Avenue). I got as far as Gracepark

Road, turned to the left down Gracepark Road to Richmond Road turned right and drove on to the Drumcondra Road. As I proceeded towards Dorset St. and as I approached the canal bridge, I spotted a military foot patrol holding up all cars. I immediately turned up the Whitworth Road, drove up to the Cross Guns Bridge, and, to my dismay, there was another military patrol there. I was in a bit of a pickle now. I could not go any further along the canal, so I turned to the right and pulled in to an opening in front of the Brian Boru licensed premises. I got out, covered the stuff in the trap and went into the bar. I ordered myself a bottle of minerals.

At this time, I had made up my mind that, if the patrol found the stuff in the trap, I had nothing to do with it. I was just drinking my glass of minerals, when who should walk into the bar but Emmet Dalton. He said: "Hello, Vinny, what are you doing in here?" I asked him another question - did he notice a pony and trap outside. He said "yes". I mentioned the foot patrol. He informed me that it had gone on. I said: "Thank God"!

I got into the trap again and drove to the Dorset St. dump to deposit the stuff. I suddenly remembered I had no key to open the stable, and did not know what to do. But I must have been told something about calling to 6 Gardiner Row, the headquarters of the Dublin Brigade, for, when I found I had no key, I drove there. I pulled up the pony outside Barry's Hotel and the next thing I saw was a tender load of Auxiliaries behind me. Without exaggerating, the nose of the tender was right on the back of the trap. I do not know how I kept so cool. I turned my head around towards the driver and asked him: "Am I in the way?. Will I move up?" I did not catch the reply he made. The Auxiliaries raided Barry's and, while they were doing so, I started to move slowly along, then pulled out and up Frederick St. towards

Blessington St., turned into Hardwicke St., into Temple St. and back into Gardiner Row again. The Auxiliaries had gone. I went into No. 6, got a key, and drove the pony and stuff to Dorset Row. The reason for the failure of this ambush was that the mine had failed to explode.

Some time later, a battalion ambush was arranged to take place at Killester Railway. Those taking part were some members of the squad and members of the 2nd Battalion. On this occasion, the train was coming into Dublin. We all took up our positions along by the embankment. Somehow, there was a mix-up with the trains. The first one came from Howth, and did not come from the north. A Volunteer opened fire on the train, without orders, and nearly shot one of the brigade staff who was travelling on it at the time. The job was called off immediately, in case, I suppose, the firing might be reported at Amiens St.

#### General hit-up in Dublin.

Late in 1920, it was decided that some big show should be carried out in Dublin, and the following operation was agreed upon; on a particular evening, all likely places frequented by Auxiliaries, Tans or British military officers, were to be raided; these included such places as Kidd's Buffet in Grafton St., Fuller's, the Moira Hotel, Jury's, &c. also, any such individuals in Grafton st.

I was detailed to take charge of a group of men for the operation at the Moira Hotel. It was well known that, between 5.30 and 6 p.m. nearly every evening, these places were full of these gentlemen. As far as I can recall, the operation was to be carried out at a specified minute; however, the operation was called off at the very last minute by, I believe, de Valera, who had just returned from America. For what reason, I do not know, but your guess is

as good as mine. The lateness of the calling off of the operation can be gauged from the fact that each group was waiting outside its allotted post, ready for the zero hour. In fact, one operation was put into practice in Grafton St. by the A.S.U. under Paddy Rigney. One Auxiliary was shot dead and another wounded. So, what would have been a great clearance of Auxiliaries and other members of the Crown Forces did not materialise.

Bloody Sunday, 21st November 1920.

The intelligence department had been collecting the addresses of British Intelligence officers living in private houses. When they believed that they had completed the list it was decided to take action. This operation, which took place at 9 a.m. on the 21st November 1920, was a Brigade one, members of the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th Battalions, the A.S. Unit, Intelligence staff, and squad taking part.

The members of the 2nd Battalion were mobilised to meet on Saturday, the 20th November, between 9p.m. and 10 p.m. at Tara Hall in Gloucester St. (now known as Sean McDermott St.) One of the senior Intelligence officers was present and explained to us the nature of the operation about to be put into action. The number present, I would say, were 20-30 men. The details as to how the groups were selected for each operation, I cannot remember, but I do know that Tom Keogh was to take charge at 22, Lr. Mount St. and I was to go along with him. However, as another address came in, I was detailed to take charge of the operation at 28, Up. Mount St. I had about ten men under me, which included a first-aid man. I did not like the idea of taking charge, as Tom Ennis was in my group, and I thought that he, being a senior officer of the 2nd Battalion, should be in charge. I made known my thoughts. I said to Tom Ennis: "You take charge of the men and I will carry out the operation. He would not hear tell of such a

thing. I said: "Very good, Tom".

Our place of mobilisation for Sunday morning was outside St. Andrew's Church, Westland Row, at 8 a.m. Herbie Conroy was detailed to bring an axe along with him, in case we might have to break into the rooms where the enemy were. Every man paraded at the appointed hour. We were early on our appointment, and had to take our time in going to Mount St. All operations were to be put into action at 9 a.m.

As we proceeded up Westland Row, I called my first-aid man and asked him had he got plenty of bandages, etc. He replied: "I have nothing". I said to him: "Did you not hear the instructions I gave you last night?" He said he did, but when he got home he found he had no first aid outfits. "Well!" I said: "I may be able to get some in Jackie Dunne's dump in Denzille Lane". I went into the dump, met Jackie there and asked him had he any first-aid outfits. He searched around, but found none. He produced a .38 revolver and asked: "Would this be any use to you?" I replied: "Give it to me. It might come in handy". When I returned to my group, I handed the .38 to the first-aid man, telling him he might find use for it.

We proceeded into Holles St., into Merrion Square, and turned into Up. Mount St. When we came to No. 28, I detailed four or five men to keep guard outside. I then went to the hall door, along with Tom Ennis, and rang the bell. A servant girl opened the door. I asked her could I see Lieutenant Bennett or Lieutenant Aimes, at the same time jamming the door with my foot. As I entered the hall, I beckoned to the remainder of my men to follow. When inside, I asked the girl where did the two officers sleep. She replied: "Lieutenant so-and-so sleeps in there", pointing to the front parlour, "and the other officer sleeps in the back room down there". I detailed Tom Ennis to take the back room and said I would

look after the other one.

I gently tried the handle to open the door, and found that it was locked. The servant then said to me: "You can get in by the back parlour. The folding doors are open". I said: "Thank you". I went into the back parlour, with Sean Doyle and Herbie Conroy each side of me. As I opened the folding-doors, the officer, who was in bed, was in the act of going for his gun under his pillow. Doyle and myself dashed into the room, at the same time ordering him to put up his hands, which he did. Doyle dashed around by the side of the bed, and pulled a Colt.45 from beneath the pillow. Right behind us came Frank Saurin and he started collecting from papers, etc. which was his job. I remember looking into a drawer and seeing a Sinn Fein tie there and, if I am not mistaken, photographs of the 1916 leaders. I ordered the British officer to get out of the bed. He asked me what was going to happen and I replied: "Ah, nothing". I then ordered him to march in front of me.

As we were entering the back of the hall, I heard the hell of a row going on somewhere outside - very heavy revolver fire. My next surprise was hearing a ring on the door. The man covering the door looked at me, but did not speak a word. I said to him: "Open the door", and in walked a British Tommy, a dispatch rider. Ordering him to put up his hands, which he did, I left him under guard in the hall. I marched my officer down to the back room where the other officer was. He was standing up in the bed, facing the wall. I ordered mine to do likewise. When the two of them were together, I said to myself "The Lord have mercy on your souls!". I then opened fire with my Peter. They both fell dead.

All this time, the racket was still going on outside. As I came into the hall, the servant girl was crying. I tried to comfort her and tell her that everything would be all right.

Then I looked at the soldier. I did not know whether to finish him off or not. Then I thought: "Well, he is only a soldier". So I told him not to stir for fifteen minutes.

As we came out of the house, fire was opened on us from a house across on the other side of the street. We retreated down Mount St., at the same time keeping the house, from where the firing came, under fire. We crossed Mount St., turned down the first turn on the right - I think it is called Verschoyle Place - and continued on until we came to Lower Mount St. As we came near the corner, the firing was very heavy. I saw Tom Keogh dashing across Mount St. and, as he was running across the road, he dropped one of his guns. He quietly turned back and picked it up again. At this time, the firing had eased somewhat. He went down Grattan St.

My party and myself went down the lane behind Holles St. hospital. Here I came upon my first-aid man again. I had not noticed him before. He was terribly excited and, taking out the .38, said: "Oh, Vinnie, what will I do with this?". I was sorry for him, for he was getting on in years. I said to him: "Give it to me and you make yourself scarce and away from us", which he did. The remainder of us carried on until we came to the quays on the South Wall, where we expected a boat to carry us across the river, but, when we arrived there, there was no boat, it being on the other side. However, it crossed back for us, and we all safely boarded it.

I proceeded to No. 17 Richmond St., known as "Byrne's", and made my report to Sean Russell.

The British soldier, whom I allowed to go free, swore later at a courtmartial that one of the men present at 28, Up. Mount St. on that morning, was Paddy Moran, who was afterwards hanged in Mountjoy. When I thought of it afterwards and what he had done, he was an enemy and I am sorry I did not treat

him as such.

The following British Intelligence officers were shot that morning:-

Captain D.L. McClean	}	117 Morehampton Road.
Mr. J. Calder		
Captain Newbury	}	92 Baggot Street
Captain Baggally		
Captain Fitzgerald	)	28 Earlsfort Terrace.
Captain McCormack	}	Gresham Hotel
Mr. W.A. Wilde		
Lieutenant Bennett	}	28 Up. Mount St.
Lieutenant Ames		
Lieutenant McMahon	)	22 Lr. Mount St.
Major Dowling	}	28 Up. Pembroke St.
Colonel Woodcock (wounded)		
Captain Kerlside ( do. )		
Colonel Montgomery (wounded & died later)		
Cadet Gamin	}	In Up. Mount St.
Cadet Morris		
(I think these two were killed in the battle at Lower Mount St.).		
Mr. T.A. Smith	)	147 Morehampton Road.

#### Igoe.

Igoe was an R.I.C. man who hailed from the west of Ireland. Around him, the Castle authorities formed a group of R.I.C. men who were selected from different parts of the country - especially those who had a good knowledge of the active officers of the I.R.A., wanted by the British. Their routine was to visit different railway termini as trains were arriving or departing, and to see if any wanted men were travelling. If they happened to capture any such men, well, it was a gamble whether they ever lived to tell what had happened to them. The usual report would appear - "shot while trying to escape".

This gang adopted the same procedure as we did in the squad. They moved along in pairs, on each side of the street or road, with a distance of a yard or two between each pair. So you will understand that it was going to be a very heavy operation to get the lot of them.

Igoe and his gang had been moving around for a little while, when one day they picked up a Volunteer, named Newell, who was from the west, and who, before being picked up, was in touch with the Intelligence staff and hoped to be able to point out Igoe. Up to this time, we had no description of what he looked like.

Our first attempt to get this gang was when Tom Keogh, Jimmy Slattery and myself were going over to Headquarters Intelligence, as Tom had got word to call there as there might be some operation on. We were unarmed. When we went in, we met Liam Tobin, who asked us had we our guns with us. We replied "No". He said: "For God's sake, get them quick. Igoe is on his way to Harcourt St. railway station". Tom turned to me and said: "Vincie, go and get the guns" and we will meet you in Stephen's Green". I made a dash down the stairs and away over to the dump at Moreland's. I collected the guns - Jimmy's long Webley, Tom's Peter and short Webley, and my own Peter. Tom Keogh always carried a Webley, in case his Peter would jam. I buckled on my belt beneath my light dust-coat, and slung the guns, which were all in holsters. Leaving the dump, I proceeded to Liffey St. and crossed the Metal Bridge. I decided I would go through the Bodega, cross Dame St. and up Dame Court into Exchequer St, Drury St., across to South King St. and on to Stephen's Green. As I was crossing Dame St. I noticed a group of men standing along the wall and, speaking to two of them, was Charlie Dalton, one of our Intelligence officers. I did not know any of the other men, and I thought to myself that the

group was probably the south side A.S.U. I carried on up Dame St. and, as I was passing Charlie, I gave just a slight nod of my head towards him. He did not recognise me. I thought it was strange.

When I arrived at Stephen's Green, I met the remainder of the squad and Intelligence. I told Tom Keogh that I had seen Charlie in Dame St. with a gang of fellows, but that I did not know any of them. As far as I can remember, we proceeded to Harcourt St. station, but there was no sign of Igoe or his gang, or anybody looking like his party. Later on in the day, we were informed by Charlie Dalton himself of what had happened. He relates the whole story in his book "With the Dublin Brigade". Oh, what a lucky escape I had! I had somebody's good prayers that day, for the group of men I had seen with him was none other than Igoe and his gang. Volunteer Newell was riddled with bullets in Greek St. that same day, but did not die.

Our next brush with Igoe occurred a few days later. Information was received that Igoe and his gang were stopping in the Depot, Phoenix Park, and would be leaving there about ten o'clock on this particular morning. The squad and A.S.U. were given orders to ambush the party. It was believed that he would walk down the north quays on his way to the Castle. The Intelligence officer to give the signal on this occasion was Charlie Byrne. Our plan of action was as follows:- One party to go into the licensed premises on the left-hand corner of Queen St., another party into the one at the right-hand corner, and the remainder of our men to take up positions in each doorway and shop entrance, right down along the quay to Arran St., West, that is, the street leading to Smithfield. Everything was set, and every man at his post. Charlie Byrne was standing somewhere near the picture-house, and when he would see Igoe coming along, he was to inform the boys. Our

orders were: no one was to open fire until Igoe and his gang had passed the two licensed houses and, as they passed these positions, the men therein were to come out and open up the attack, and as Igoe and his gang came opposite each doorway, the men were then to open fire. The natural thing, I believe, that they would do, as soon as the attack opened, would be to make for cover, and their only cover would be the doorways, from which they would get a hot reception. However, Igoe did not come down the quays that morning.

Charlie Byrne was a bit excited when he came to report that Igoe and his gang had gone up Steeven's Lane. By what means he got this information I do not know. Our next move was to rush across the quay and up Bridgefoot St. We placed ourselves in the same position along Thomas St. from Bridgefoot St. up as far as the licensed house known as Lord Edward House. We waited a fairly long time and still there was no sign of Igoe. As we were waiting, we noticed a military foot patrol approaching us from the city. As we had no argument with them we left our position and proceeded along Thomas St., James's St. and, turning down Steeven's Lane and on to Victoria Quay, known as Guinness's Jetty, we spread ourselves out each side. As we were coming just to the end of the jetty, what should come along but a tender of Auxies. Ben Byrne, who was along with me, remarked: "We are going to have a splash here". The whole party got ready. The tender slowed down slightly, then gave a spurt and passed on. There is no doubt the Auxies funk'd it that morning. So we proceeded along to our dump.

We still did not give up hope of getting Igoe, for, a few days later, we were positioned for him again. This time, the operation was a little more successful. Information was received to the effect that Igoe and his gang went for dinner to the Ormond Hotel between 12.30 p.m. and 1.30 p.m. The

position taken up this time was at the corner of Parliament St. and Essex St. at about 1 p.m. The signal was given that the three individuals coming down the street were members of Igoe's gang. As they came to the corner where our men were posted, fire was opened on them. Two were shot dead. The third man was wounded and ran across Essex St. with one of our men after him. He ran into a shop between Essex St. and Wellington Quay. He tried to jump the counter of the shop, but our man was in after him and finished him off. Igoe, himself, or the remainder of the gang, were never got.

The shooting of Doran at the Wicklow Hotel,  
Wicklow St. - 28th January 1921.

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This individual worked in the Wicklow Hotel as a porter. Intelligence had received information that he was a police tout and had given information about the movements of various men stopping in the hotel, or people who frequented the place, especially if they looked like men who were wanted. He was warned to give up this practice, but refused. So the squad got orders to look after him.

On this particular morning we proceeded to Wicklow St. and waited for him. We had been told beforehand that he was in the habit of dusting the mats outside the hotel between 8.30 and 9 a.m. When he came out to do his ordinary routine work, the men detailed for the operation opened fire on him, and that was another informer out of the way.

Invitation to Auxiliaries to attack - 7th Febr. 1921.

The squad was ordered to be ready for a big job which was to take place at Seville Place between 5 p.m. and 6.30 p.m. on 7th February 1921. Also mobilised were the A.S.U. and all available men of the 2nd Battalion. Tom Cullen, who was the Deputy Chief of Intelligence, had the number of a tout who used to give information to the Castle. Cullen sent in a letter

stating that a meeting of the Irish Republican Brotherhood was to take place at 100 Seville Place between 5 p.m. and 6.30 p.m. on this particular evening. The positions taken up by the Volunteers were as follow:- No. 100 Seville Place was taken over and the house barricaded, all windows being manned; the railway bridge, which crosses the street, was also manned. The men crouching on the bridge, shoulder to shoulder, had, in fact, hardly room to move.

I should like to mention that a special hand grenade was made in the Dublin Dockyards by Fitzharris, a member of the 2nd Battalion, and the man who made it maintained that he would use it. I don't think any one of us present were inclined to take the job out of his hands. This grenade was made out of a piece of rain-water pipe, 6" x about 4½" in diameter, with a plate bolted to each end, and at one end there was a piece of round iron bar, 6" long x ¾" diameter. It was what you would call the handle. To me, it was a very deadly-looking weapon and, to be truthful, I got as far away as I could from it. You can picture for yourself when you hear that the man who made it also made a shield for his face out of some sort of sheet-metal, with two holes cut in it for his eyes and one for his nose. He would put you in mind of the Kelly Gang.

Also taken over were the rooms over Gilbey's, the wine merchants, which was on the corner of Amiens St. and Portland Row, facing Seville Place. The men in this post were armed with Lee Enfield rifles.

So, all was set, and the only thing to do was to wait for the enemy which we expected to arrive as a result of the letter sent to the Castle by Tom Cullen. The number of men on the job I have estimated to be between fifty and sixty. We were waiting for about half an hour when we noticed from the railway bridge an armoured car passing the top of Seville

Place and going towards Fairview. Next came three or four military lorries, then three or four auxiliary tenders, and another armoured car. They all speeded by and did not turn down Seville Place. We were all disappointed. Someone said that they might not have known where to go, and perhaps they would turn back and raid No. 100. We waited a very long time, but there was no sign of the enemy returning, and the job was called off. We learned afterwards that they went as far as Clontarf Bridge and mounted the railway, set up searchlights there and played them along the lines; so, what would have been the greatest scrap in Dublin did not come to any head. Our orders were that no one was to fire until the enemy dismounted from the cars and were in the act of raiding the house, and, as they advanced up the steps to the hall-door the men in the house were to open fire; then the men on the bridge were to release all they had; at the same time, the men in Gilbey's would blaze from their post into Seville Place.

Attempted rescue of Sean MacEoin at Lucan.

Sean, who had been wounded and captured, was being conveyed to Mountjoy Prison on the 3rd March 1921. The squad were instructed to meet the convoy on its way to the city and rescue him. We left Moreland's and got the tram as far as Lucan. We proceeded along the road towards the Spa Hotel. A few yards beyond the hotel the road takes a sharp turn, with a high bank on the left-hand side. We had a conference and decided that here we would make our attempt. We took up our position behind the hedge. This position commanded a good and clear view of the road on which we expected the convoy to pass.

We lay in ambush for four or five hours, but there was no sign of any cars of a military nature appearing. The length of time we waited gave ample opportunity for the car to come from Mullingar, the town from which Sean was being taken. As we were drawing a great deal of attention from cars, vans and

pedestrians, we decided it was time to call off the operation. When we vacated our post, we observed a small car coming along the road, going towards the city, and we held it up. We ordered the driver to take us to town. He refused point-blank, stating he was an ex-British army officer. I must admit he was a brave man. "However" he said, "if any of you can drive, you can have the car and I will travel along with you. I promise on my word of honour I will not draw attention to anyone, or give any trouble whatsoever". We decided that this was our best way out, so we put him into the back of the car, one of our men on each side of him. Our next difficulty was who would drive the car. Ben Byrne said he had a slight knowledge. On hearing this, Tom Keogh said: "I am not going to risk my neck. I am going to walk home". We took his guns and he walked across the fields. We later learned from himself that he walked along the canal into town. The remainder of us started for town in the car. We drove as far as Islandbridge, where we ordered the British army officer to get out, telling him we would leave his car at the Park gate, in Parkgate St. which we did.

The burning of the Custom House, 25th May 1921.

This operation was decided upon after a great deal of consideration. It was one of many under review. An alternative operation, I believe, was to attack Beggars Bush Barracks.

The Custom House operation took place in the 2nd Battalion area, and 75% of the men on the operation were 2nd Battalion men, under the command of Tom Ennis. The squad was under the command of Paddy Daly and Tom Keogh, and the A.S.U. was under Paddy Flanagan. As far as I recollect, the A.S.U. and also members of the 1st, 3rd and 4th Battalions were assigned to positions outside the building, to stop the approach of the enemy. A few of the squad men knew of this operation some time beforehand. Each group, under a section leader, was

detailed to certain parts of the building, for the purpose of ensuring that no place would escape. The squad had a sort of roving commission.

The orders, as far as I can remember, were that after the civil servants had vacated their offices, the whole building was to be saturated with petrol and, when Tom Ennis had given the signal by blowing a whistle, the men were to set alight their respective offices. The following is my experience:- I entered the building along with Tom Keogh and Jimmy Slattery. It would be about 12.30 p.m. As we entered the hall, we met Tom Ennis who said he was short of a couple of men. He asked Tom Keogh would he mind if he took Vincent to burn some of the offices on the second floor. Tom replied: "Not at all". Tom Ennis asked me would I do the job and I replied: "Right, Tom". I got a tin of petrol and proceeded to the second floor. I opened the office door and, sitting inside were a lady and gentleman, civil servants, having tea. I requested them to leave, stating that I was going to set fire to the office. The gentleman stood up and said: "Oh, you can't do that!" I showed him my gun and told him I was serious. He got very worried about the whole thing. I said to him: "You had better get out at once, unless you want to be burned alive" The lady then asked me could she get her coat, and I replied: "Miss, you'll be lucky if you get out with your life". They then left.

I opened a safe and removed all the ledgers, which I placed on a table which was in the centre of the office. I collected all other papers and files I could find and placed them on the table. I then proceeded to pour the petrol all over the office and on the papers. On hearing the signal - the whistle - I stepped outside. I lit a ball of paper and, slightly opening the door, I flung it into the office. In a flick the whole office was ablaze.

As I was coming down the stairs, I heard a burst of revolver and rifle fire from inside and outside the building. When I came to the hall, everyone was dashing from place to place. I ran along the corridor towards the docks and, as I came to the end, I could see the Auxies on the quay, firing. I retreated back to the hall. There was not a soul to be seen. I made up my mind to dash out when an Auxie appeared at the door. I opened up and he ducked back. At the same time, I retraced my steps to the hall. It should be explained that, in the hall facing the entrance, was a glass partition, the bottom portion being timber, and behind it there was a barricade of sandbags which were there since the British military had a guard on the building.

Having got back to the hall, the next thing I saw approaching the entrance was a whippet armoured car. As it came to the entrance, it opened a burst of machine gun fire into the hall. I flung myself down on the floor. It was a blessing the sandbags were there; otherwise, I would not be able to tell now what happened. The car withdrew.

I could see the Auxies standing out on the roadway, but yet I had an idea that the Auxie I fired at was still standing beside the building, outside. At this time, the whole building was a raging inferno. It meant either being burned or shot. I decided to have another "go" to get out. The first time I had fired from my Peter I did not realise that I had emptied it. I had a look to see how many rounds I had left, and I re-loaded the gun. Just then two Auxies appeared a few yards from the doorway. I opened fire on them and missed them. After firing the second time, my gun went silent - no more ammunition. I said to myself: "This is where you finish". I walked out. As I came to the door, I heard a shout, "hands up". I threw up my hands and found myself covered by an Auxie with a rifle. He shouted to me: "Come

over here". As I came close to him he lowered the rifle to the firing position and struck me a blow in the face, at the same time using some choice language. He ordered me to walk in front of him, over the green patch, to Brooks Thomas' premises. Every minute I was expecting a bullet in the back, which never came. He marched me over to Brooks Thomas' wall and, when another Auxiliary joined him, he remarked: "This bastard came out of the building". I got a few more blows on the face and body. He asked me what I was doing in the building and I replied: "I was on a message for my boss, sir". He struck me again, saying: "Don't sir me" and when I did not 'sir' him, he struck me for not 'sirring' him. He then said: "You don't stir from here", at the same time remarking to the other Auxiliary: "Poor old so-and-so got it this time," meaning some other Auxiliary.

The two Auxiliaries left me and turned their attention to the body of a dead man a few feet away from me. He was a civilian. Catching him by the hair of the head, they lifted up his body and felt his pockets, letting him fall back again on to the ground.

Across the road I could see all the squad men and members of the 2nd Battalion, standing under the middle arch. Needless to say, I did not recognise them. At the same time, I noticed a big crowd of civilians standing outside the entrance to Brooks Thomas. A major or some high-ranking officer arrived and held a conversation with a few men in civilian clothes. Then I noticed that the crowd started to file past them and go into Brooks Thomas. On observing this, I started to move up, inch by inch, towards the entrance until I came in front of the officer. As I was moving along, I thought I got a strong smell of petrol from my hands. I took a few cigarettes out of my pocket, wet them and rolled them very well into my hands, giving a smell of tobacco.

Now it came my turn to go before the officer. I humbly asked him: "Could I go home now?" He looked at me and said: "What are you doing here?" I replied: "Sir, I was on my way to Brooks Thomas to buy some timber". He then ran his hands all over me and pulled out a carpenter's rule and a few pieces of paper out of my pocket. The papers showed different sizes of pieces of timber, which I usually carried as a decoy. Handing me back my rule and papers, the officer said: "Get to hell out of this". I said: "Thank you, sir". I was once more clear.

Before the operation, a good few of our members had met in the ~~geographical~~<sup>top</sup>ographical Society's offices in Gardiner St., and I knew that Tom Keogh had left his new bicycle there. Accordingly, that was the first place I made for, in order to get Tom's bike. I then cycled to O'Connell Bridge and saw all the boys being conveyed away in military lorries. It was a standing joke ever after - "Where are you going, Vincie? Is it for your timber?"

Capture of armoured car and attempted rescue of  
Sean MacEoin - 15th May 1921.

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Sean, who commanded a Flying Column in Longford, was wounded and captured one day while carrying out an ambush. The "big fella" Michael Collins, felt his capture very much, and was conceiving all sorts of plans for his rescue.

In the month of May, 1921, Sean was to be removed to Mountjoy prison under escort. Mick Collins learned, through, I believe, Mick Lynch, who was a superintendent in the abattoir, that an armoured car called to the abattoir. The "big fella's" brain started to work on hearing of this, and he said if he could capture the armoured car there might be a good chance of getting MacEoin free. The whole layout of the abattoir, including the place where the armoured car

usually stopped, was explained to him. Having weighed the pros and cons, he decided that the operation was the only chance we had of rescuing Sean. The squad and the majority of the A.S.U. along with some Intelligence officers, were called together in Moran's and the operation was explained to them. The men were told off for their different positions in the abattoir. We waited several mornings in Moran's for orders. So, on this particular morning, we received instructions to carry out the operation.

As far as I can remember, the crew to man the car and the assignments of the entire party were as follow:- The armoured car crew - driver, Pat McCrae; second driver, Billy Stapleton; machine gun, Jack Caffrey and .. Gough of Baldoyle; the two British officers were to be Emmet Dalton and Joe Leonard; the remainder of the party were to cover the British military guard in the slaughter-house, with the exception of Frank Bolster and Jack Walsh, who were detailed to do duty at Mountjoy Gate. Walsh was a member of the Intelligence staff.

We paired off in twos and proceeded to the abattoir, one of our members being dressed up as a Corporation official, supposed to be a water inspector. When we arrived, the armoured car was there under the guard of a British Tommy; the remainder of his party were in the slaughter-house. Our crew strolled towards the car. The remainder of us walked quietly into the slaughter-house and, as we came near the "Tommies", shouted: "Hands up". At the same time a few shots rang out and one of the "Tommies" fell dead. I cannot say what caused some of our men to open fire, for we had already received instructions that, if at all possible, the operation was to be carried out without any shooting; in case operation No. 1 was successful, it might spoil operation No. 2. The car was captured without a hitch. - As we covered the remainder of the party the car moved off and, when it was about to

leave, we made ourselves scarce - except Tom Keogh, who jumped on to the car. Knowing Tom, I would say he wanted to see the end of the operation. The other operation is best told by Pat McCrae, who gives a very vivid description of what happened.

Although the first operation was successful, I am sorry to say that the second failed, but it was not for want of courage or daring. The fact alone of capturing an armoured car was a great moral victory for the I.R.A. and a damaging blow to British prestige.

The shooting of a British Military Intelligence  
Officer in Exchequer Street.

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This officer, who was known to us as the "Frenchman", stopped in St. Andrew's Hotel in Exchequer St. He was not very long in Ireland but, for the while he was here, he had a very bad record. It was believed that he took a hand in the shooting of some Volunteers in the south of Ireland. The squad were given their orders that he was to be got out of the way.

The squad took up position in Exchequer St. on a particular morning. The men detailed to do the actual operation were standing at the corner of Drury St., with the remainder of the squad covering them off. The "Frenchman" left the hotel at about 9.30 a.m. As he came to the corner of Drury St. the men opened fire and he was shot dead.

The burning of two railway wagons at the Goods Yard  
of the Midland & Great Western Railway.

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One day, Jimmy Slattery and myself were standing on Newcomen Bridge, North Strand, and we met a member of E/Coy. of the 2nd Battalion, who worked on the railway. He informed us that there were two wagons of military stores down in the

goods yard and that it would be the gift of a job to burn them, there being no guard. We asked him a few questions about the location, etc., and what kind were the men who worked there. He replied that they were all right, but the only man we might have trouble with was the foreman.

Jimmy and myself held a little conference between us as to whether we would risk doing the job or not. We decided we would have a go. We were unarmed. The next thing was with what were we going to set them alight. We agreed to buy a tin of petrol, which we did. In Kirwan's, the undertakers, on the North Strand, we duly got the tin of petrol, promising the lady in the shop that we would return the tin and stating that our car was on the Ossory Road and we would not be very long.

We proceeded to the Great Southern (Western?) goods yard, which was down near the dock gates. As we entered the shed, I asked a railway porter where the foreman was. He pointed towards a little office on the platform, saying: "He has just gone into it". I approached the office, with my right hand in my pocket, giving the impression I was armed. As I entered I noticed that the key was in the lock on the outside of the door. The foreman was standing at a desk in the office. I told him we were going to burn two wagons of military goods and he had better stay quiet, if he did not, he might get hurt. I then closed the door, locking it on the outside. As we proceeded down the shed to the yard, we met a few railwaymen, but they took no notice of us. In the yard, we met a railway man and inquired of him where the military wagons were. He pointed them out to us. We opened the doors. They were two wagon loads of aeroplane parts. Jimmy saturated the goods. We next struck a match and threw it into one of the wagons, which went up in a blaze. The second one then caught fire. We were very lucky that we were not burned as well. We stood too near the wagon and, as it burst into flames, the flames

nearly got us. In fact, I think Jimmy's coat was singed. We then crossed the lines and came out into Dock St., afterwards returning the tin to its owner.

#### Raid on Gormanston Mails.

One morning, I met Tom Keogh at Cathedral St. at 7.45 a.m., as previously arranged the night before, to hold up the Gormanston mails. The mail van came up out of Thomas Lane and, as it was turning into Cathedral St., we pulled our guns and told the driver to halt. There was only one bag and, of that, we had already been informed. I went to the back of the van to open up and found I could not do so. I shouted to the postman, who was sitting alongside the driver: "How do you open these doors?". He said: "Push up the bar". I replied: "I have already done so, and it won't move". So I had another go at it and this time I was successful. I then asked him where the Gormanston bag was. He said it was such-and-such a bag at the back. I had no trouble in finding it. Perhaps it would be well to explain how the doors were locked as I learned afterwards. There is a flat iron bar crossing both doors, with a hole in one end, which takes a bolt running along inside the van, and is controlled by a lever beside the postman's seat. So you can understand when I attempted to open up the first time, the bolt was through the iron bar, and, when I asked him about opening it, he must have released the bolt. After getting the bag out, Tom Keogh told the driver to go ahead to Amiens St. Station and not to say a word to anybody on the way there; if they did, it would be worse for both of them. We had only one bicycle with us, which belonged to Tom. As he was going home to the country for a few days that morning, it was arranged that I should take the mail-bag to the dump, which was in Upper Abbey St.

This dump was known as Moreland's and it was the

official squad dump. Perhaps I should explain why it was called Moreland's. The entrance was closed by means of two large wooden gates, with a small wicket door, and painted in very large letters was "Moreland's, Cabinet-makers and Upholsterers".

To carry on from where I left off, the mail van moved down Cathedral St. and on towards Amiens St. At this time, Tom was standing beside the bike at the edge of the path. I dragged the bag over to him, mounted the bicycle and Tom said: "Are you right, Vincie?". I said: "All aboard". So he hoisted the bag upon my back, giving me a push off and wishing me good luck. I cycled into O'Connell St. and took a short cut by the Pillar over to Henry St. As I pulled over to the side of the street, I leaned over slightly to one side and down came the bag, nearly bringing me with it. I was in a right jam now, for there, standing with his back to the G.P.O., was a peeler. However, the only thing to do was to act as if I were an auxiliary postman. Leaving the mails where they fell, I stood the bike at the edge of the path and got ready to mount again. Just then, a man turned the corner of the G.P.O. and I asked him would he mind giving me a hand with the bag. He obliged and lifted the bag on to my back. Off I went again down Henry St., Mary St., and was in the act of turning into Stafford St. when down came the bag again. By this time, the bag was getting very heavy. So I had to carry out the same thing again, stand the bike at the kerb, but there was no one around near me to call to my assistance. With a great effort I mounted the bicycle, gripped the bag, pulled it up on my back and off I went. I had not very far to go now, for, if I had, I'm afraid I would never have made it. Moreland's was facing Stafford St. I arrived there all right and opened the wicket gate. I threw in the mails, carried the bike in and left it standing inside the gate. I dragged the mails along down the passage into the house. I carried on dragging

the mails up the stairs to the first floor and dumped them there. I had just finished when the bell rang. We had a bell on our gate. The first thing that struck me was that I had been followed. I did not make any move for a few minutes which seemed like hours to me. The bell rang again and I still did not make any move, or any attempt to go down. I felt in my pocket and got a little comfort when I touched my gun. I said to myself: "If I wait here any longer perhaps whoever is ringing - if it was the enemy - may have sent word for assistance." So I sauntered down the stairs into the passage, walking very cautiously until I reached the gate. I listened for awhile and did not hear a sound. I opened the wicket gate and, to my relief, there was no one there. I whipped out the bicycle, had a good look around, at the same time mounting the bike, and away like hell.

Later on in the morning, I reported to Crow St. headquarters Intelligence. Liam Tobin, who was Chief Intelligence Officer, was present. As I entered the office he said to me: "Why the hell didn't you open the gate when you went into Moreland's?" I replied: "How the hell did I know who was ringing?" "Well", he said, "I sent a man over to get the mails. We had better go over there now". When we arrived at Moreland's, he opened the bag and started to go through the different letters. When he was finished, we left together and he went back to Crow Street.

#### Raid on Guinness's Boat.

One Sunday evening I was knocking around the North Circular Road - the Ballybough end - when I met Oscar Traynor Mick McDonnell and Jimmy Slattery and Pat McCrae. I was unarmed. However, I was told that they were about to raid a boat on the quay, so I went along with them. We proceeded to the Custom House quay where we boarded Guinness's boat. I was left standing on the side of the boat, with my right hand

in my pocket, as if I was armed. The others went along and disappeared from my view. In a few moments they came back with an old type of rifle.

The Tracking of Detective-Sergeant Bruton.

One Saturday evening Mick McDonnell, Tom Keogh, Jimmy Slattery and myself proceeded to the Meath Hospital, where we intended to finish Bruton off, as he lived in one of the side streets behind the hospital. It was between 2.30 p.m. and 3 p.m. We waited for an hour or so, but there was no sign of our man, and the job was called off. The next day, Sunday, Tom Keogh and myself met in town and proceeded to Harrington St. Church. We took up a good position there from 8 a.m. until last Mass, hoping to meet our man, but we did not see him that morning. Bruton was never got.

Raid for mails at Parnell Square.

This raid took place at Parnell Square, West, at about 5.30 p.m. I might mention that this job was done very late in the scrap. In fact, it was a good while after the burning of the Custom House and, as you will understand, practically all the members of the squad and A.S.U. were in jail. Such being the case, I was put in charge of a number of new men, to carry on, by Paddy Daly. I instructed two men to meet me on this particular evening and, when they met me, they had no guns. I sent them over to the dump - Moreland's of Upr. Abbey St. - but they did not get back in time for the hold-up. I took up my position at the corner of a laneway leading to Dominick St. The Ford van, driven by Pat McCrae, then arrived in the lane. He got out of the van and came up to the corner where I was standing. He asked me who was with me. I informed him I had detailed two members for the job and that

they had gone for their guns. I should say that about fifteen minutes elapsed before the mail van turned into the Square. Pat now said: "What are you going to do, seeing you are here by yourself?" I replied: "I will have to do something, no matter what happens". While the van was approaching us, a Volunteer named Paddy Drury appeared from nowhere. He stopped to speak to Pat McCrae. At the same time, I walked out and caught the horse by the head. Pulling my gun, I ordered the driver to back into the laneway. The postman, who was with the driver, was inclined to show fight. I pointed the gun at him and said: "If you do not do what you are told, I will plug you". However, the car was backed into the lane where I kept them covered. The two Paddys unloaded the bags from the mail van into our car. When the loading was finished, I informed the driver and postman not to move for five or ten minutes. Paddy Drury cleared off. McCrae was at the wheel. I got in beside him and away we went down the lane and up Dominick St. We turned to the right into Dorset St., proceeded along Dorset St. and into Temple St. We had only gone a few yards along Temple St. when we observed a military foot patrol coming out of Hardwicke St. The officer in charge was about to put up his hand to halt us, but, at the same time, McCrae gave the car a spurt and flew by the patrol. The thing happened so suddenly, it left the officer bewildered. We drove on and turned into Gardiner Row and out of sight of the patrol. McCrae remarked to me: "You were nearly gone that time!" "Begorra, Pat", said I, "my heart was up in my mouth that time!". We turned into Frederick St., into Hardwicke St. and back again into Temple St., for the dump was in a laneway off it. We could see the patrol down at the corner of Temple Street and Gardiner Row. We safely drove the car into the dump and then cleared off.

Signed:

Vincent Byrne

Date:

13/9/50.

Witness:

William J. J. Condit

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