

**ORIGINAL**

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21  
BUIRO STAIRÉ MILEATA 1913-21  
No. W.S. 530

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 530

**Witness**

P.V. Hoey,  
Courthouse,  
Carrickmacross,  
Co. Monaghan.

**Identity.**

Member of Irish Volunteers, South Monaghan,  
1914 - ;  
Company Captain.

**Subject.**

Activities of Irish Volunteers,  
South Monaghan, 1914-1921.

**Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.**

Nil

File No. S.177

Form B.S.M. 2

# ORIGINAL

the undersigned officers, have been consulted by Mr. P.V. Hoey in the compilation of his book "Farney in the Fight for Freedom 1914-1921", before its publication, and we have each read the published version. We have no hesitation in certifying that "Farney in the Fight for Freedom, 1914-1921" is an accurate story of the struggle for independence in Farney for the period which it covers.

Batt. Comdt.

SIGNED: P. J. O'Daly DATE: 22 May 1951

Company Captains  
Lisdoonvar Company

SIGNED: Patrick Longman DATE: 22 May 1951

Batt. Adjutant

SIGNED: Peter Quinlan DATE: 22 May 1951

Company Captains  
Kilbenny Company

SIGNED: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

Company Captains  
all other companies

SIGNED: P. V. Hoey DATE: 22 May 1951

SIGNED: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNED: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNED: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

WITNESS: John Mc Coy  
22/5/51

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21  
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INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK

"FARNEY IN THE FIGHT FOR FREEDOM 1914-1921"  
BY  
MR. P.V. HOEY, THE COURTHOUSE, CARRICKMACROSS,  
CO. MONAGHAN.

In 1922, when the Civil War broke out, in which I took no part, I conceived the idea of making notes of my own experiences in the War of Independence. In those notes made by me in 1922, I also included incidents in which I did not participate, but of which I had most reliable information of what had taken place from actual participants.

In 1934, when a Military Service Pensions Act was passed by Dáil Éireann. I became associated with the Brigade Committee which undertook the verification of claims for Military Service Certificates. This work necessitated a full knowledge of the various items of military actions or operations which were carried out in South Monaghan and the records of the men participating.

All this mass of information from my own experiences and collected by me in 1922, completely checked and added to in 1934, and passed as accurate by the officers of the ~~Carrickmacross~~ <sup>5<sup>th</sup></sup> ~~Battalion~~ Battalion in 1934, has been used by me in my book - "Farney in the fight for Freedom 1914-1921". This matter was again checked over by a number of former battalion officers when the manuscript notes were ready for the printer, and where it was pointed out to me that slight errors had appeared, I made the necessary corrections. The factual story, as set out in the printed version of my booklet, is as accurate as it was humanly possible for me to do it.

*Book*

(Signed) P.V. Hoey

(Date) 21/5/51

WITNESS: John Hoey  
21/5/51

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21  
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FARNEY IN THE FIGHT  
FOR FREEDOM

1914 \_\_\_\_\_ 1921.

BY P. V. HOEY

Dedicated to the men of '98.

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"They rose in dark and evil days to right their  
native land."

The Barony of Farney, situate in the extreme southern end of County Monaghan, comprises the five parishes of Magheross, Magheracloone, Donaghmoyne, Inniskeen, and portion of Killanny. In the events related in this book that portion of Killanny parish situated in County Louth and the district of Bawn in Aughnamullen West, County Monaghan, are included.

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PUBLISHED 1949.

*P.V. Hoey  
25.5.51*

*William John McDonogh  
25/5/51*

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21  
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ORIGINAL

The Early Years 1914-1918

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21

NO. W.S. 530

The old national flame in Farney, burning brightly from the days when Feeling's history of '98 was written in Dunoge Cottage, Carrickmacross, down through the Fenian times, when John Daly of Limerick reviewed the local Fenians under Rockdaniel Hill, carried on under the banners of the Land League, the Gaelic League and the G.A.A., culminating in our day by the formation of a company of Irish Volunteers in Carrickmacross in May 1914, at a meeting addressed by Sir Roger Casement and Eoin McNeill.

The Asquith recruiting meeting in Dublin in the Autumn of 1914 provided an opportunity locally to demonstrate the national hostility to British recruiting. A train carrying local supporters to Asquith's meeting was travelling from Carrickmacross to Dublin, and as a counter-blast to the local recruiting campaign, a party of Volunteers from Farney cut the telegraph wires in the vicinity of Carrickmacross.

About September, 1915, a British recruiting meeting attended by the local pillars of British rule was in session in Carrickmacross. Determined action was taken by the Volunteers to bring an end to this attempt to enlist Farney's sons under England's banner. A brick was sent flying through the window where His Majesty's councillors were in conclave, and the recruiting meeting had a sudden end. On the same evening the Volunteers paraded through the town. Three of their number, Donnelly, Ross and Quin, were arrested by the British-controlled police, the R.I.C., tried by the British Court at Carrickmacross and sentenced to two months'

imprisonment in Armagh Jail.

Patrick Pearse delivered an inspiring address at a Manchester Martyrs' Commemoration in the Catholic Hall, Carrickmacross in November 1915. Pearse reminded his audience that Allen, Larkin and O'Brien and their Fenian Comrades, "formed a ring around the van and with drawn revolvers kept the howling English mob at bay".

The release of the three imprisoned men, Donnelly, Ross and Quin, in February 1916, was the occasion of a big Volunteer demonstration in Carrickmacross. The Crown Forces tried to prevent the three men from reaching Carrickmacross on the evening of the demonstration by interfering with the railway at Inniskeen but this was circumvented through the timely action of Mr. Bernard O'Rourke, who drove the three men to Carrick in his motor car. That valiant Irishman, The O'Rahilly, spoke at the demonstration on that evening and referred to the rising surge of militant national enthusiasm, and the dawning day when British authority in Ireland would be challenged in arms.

The local Volunteer companies paraded in Carrickmacross on St. Patrick's Day 1916.

The red glow of Easter Week 1916 was now at hand. On Easter Saturday night the Farney members of the I.R.B. held a meeting in the Foresters' Hall, Carrickmacross. Arms were distributed and arrangements made to meet on the following day, Easter Sunday, in Mr. P.J. O'Daly's house at Tiragarven. The R.I.C. were very active in sleuthing the movements of Volunteer Officers, but notwithstanding the activities of the enemy, the meeting was held in Mr. O'Daly's house on Easter Sunday as arranged. Orders were issued to the four Volunteer companies in the district, Carrickmacross,

Corduff, Myle River, Magheracloone Lower, and a detachment at Lisdoonan to stand to with arms and rations for three days, but owing to the confusion at the time arising from the countermanding order issued by Eoin McNeill, Chief of Staff of the Volunteers, no further action was taken.

On the 5th May, 1916, eight members of the Irish Volunteers in Farney were arrested by British Forces, viz.: P. De Burca, Willie Loughran, P.J. O'Daly, James O'Brien, Tommie Nolan, Tom Martin, Paddy Reilly and Tom Ward. These men were interned in Frongoch until July 1916, when O'Daly, O'Brien, Nolan, Martin, Reilly and Ward were released. De Burca and Loughran were released in the following December. Bernard O'Rourke of Inniskeen was also arrested and interned for a short period.

The home-coming of these men was the signal for the national revival in Farney. The year 1917 heralded the rapid uprise of the powerful national organisation of Sinn Féin. Sinn Féin clubs were established in every parish in the district, and the people rallied to the national call.

In March 1917, a contingent of Volunteers from the district were on duty in the North Roscommon bye-election, which was won by Sinn Féin, the victorious Longford election in June of that year, and the South Armagh election in February 1918.

March 1918 saw the formation of a number of additional Volunteer companies in the district. The threat of Conscription by the British Government in April 1918 found Farney's sons ready to resist the British threat by armed force should the necessity arise.

The ingenious discovery by the British Government of the so-called "German Plot" in April 1918 led to the arrest of most of the prominent leaders in the National Movement,

including Comdt. Willie Loughran of Carrickmacross.

The East Cavan election of June 1918 was attended by many Volunteers from the district, and one of their number, Denis Smyth of Carrickmacross, was arrested by British Forces and sentenced to six months' imprisonment for possession of arms. Smyth served this sentence in Belfast Jail.

At the general election of December 1918 the Volunteers were on duty at all the polling stations in the district and their presence in military formation had a deadening effect on the anti-national activities of the followers of the Irish Party. The Sinn Fein candidate, Sean McEntee, was returned for South Monaghan by an overwhelming majority.

#### 1919-1920.

After the meeting of the first Dail in January 1919, the Irish Volunteers came under the control of the Dail Minister for Defence, the first Army of the elected Government of the Irish people, and subsequent to that time they were referred to as the Irish Republican Army.

The hostile British police force, the R.I.C., attempted to throttle the machinery of Government set up by the Irish people. The I.R.A. countered these activities by taking over all police duties.

Throughout Farney numerous I.R.A. tribunals were held to deal with criminal offences. The settlement of civil disputes by Arbitration Courts was fostered and encouraged by the political wing of the National Movement, the Sinn Fein organisation.

The Declaration of Independence formulated by the Dail was exhibited in the window of Mr. Bernard Martin, printer,

O'Neill Street, Carrickmacross, and for this perfectly legitimate act Mr. Martin was arrested by the British police and sentenced to a month's imprisonment.

Throughout the Summer and Autumn of 1919, the I.R.A. in Farney devoted considerable attention to stamping out the "poteen" traffic in the district, and so successful were they in this work, that this degrading traffic was practically eliminated. In one house a lead pipe weighing five stone, used in making the "poteen", was captured and subsequently converted into buckshot for use against the enemy.

By the end of 1919 the British civil authority was fast crumbling to its inevitable destruction. A well organised Battalion of the I.R.A. was now functioning all over the district, and on the formation of the Monaghan Brigade, consisting of five battalions, Farney became the 5th Batt.

In February 1920 forces drawn from the Brigade area under Comdt. Eoin O'Duffy attacked and captured Ballytrain R.I.C. Barracks. Detachments of the 5th Batt. from Corduff, Carrickmacross, Myle River, Magheracloone Lower and Killanny took part in this engagement.

The R.I.C. had now withdrawn from their barracks at Inniskeen and Corrinshigo. Detachments of I.R.A. men from the Battalion area set fire to both buildings in May 1920.

About that period of 1920 Officers of the Brigade were undergoing a hunger-strike in Belfast Jail, and as a protest against the treatment meted out to these men by the British authorities, the I.R.A. closed down local British institutions and institutions friendly to the occupation forces for a short period.

The Belfast boycott was now in full force, and the Battalion set up a local committee to enforce the boycott all over Farney. If our Northern fellow-countrymen were to sustain their rights as Irishmen, they should have stood in with the National cause.

In June 1920 the mail car was held up by a party of armed I.R.A. men on the Dundalk-Carrickmacross road and the enemy mails captured. During the Summer of 1920 the I.R.A. in the Battalion area carried out numerous raids for arms on houses hostile to the Republic and a considerable supply of arms was captured, mainly shotguns. The R.I.C. mails were again captured on the Dundalk road in August 1920.

The Courts of the Republic were established in South Monaghan in August 1920, consisting of a District Court, replacing the British Quarter Sessions, and having jurisdiction, civil and criminal, over the then parliamentary constituency of South Monaghan. Parish Courts, equivalent in jurisdiction to the British Petty Sessions, were established in each parish.

The Courts functioned under a "Provisional Constitution" issued by the Dail Ministry of Home Affairs entitled "The Courts of Justice of the Irish Republic", a copy of which is still in the writer's possession. In a short time the British legal machinery broke down, and the people brought their disputes to the Republican Courts.

In September 1920, three sittings of the South Monaghan District Court were held: 3rd September in Ballybay, 6th in Carrickmacross, and 13th in Castleblayney. The Bench consisted of B. O'Rourke (chairman), Tom Martin (Magheracloone), Pat Conlon (Latton), Mick Duffy (Ballybay) and Thomas Rooney (Oram). The sittings were held in the Courthouse in each town. The enemy forces did not interfere,

except in Carrickmacross, where Sergeant McGolderick and some other R.I.C. men held a "watching brief" for the Crown. Subsequent to that time, the Courts were subjected to much vigilance by the enemy, but they continued to function in schools, lofts, private houses, and, in one instance, in a cow byre. The records are still in my possession, and over the two years from September 1920 to August 1922, District and Parish Courts dealt with over 600 cases. I regret that I am unable to compile a list of the Parish Justices, but three Justices acted in each parish. A word of praise is due to Mr. P. Marron, solicitor, Carrickmacross, whose office was always at our disposal in connection with the Court work, and to his clerk, Mr. Eugene Magee.

The Dail had set up a Ministry of Local Government. The Carrickmacross Urban Council voted recognition to this Ministry and refused to deal with the corresponding British Department.

Action was taken by the I.R.A. to clear out of the district a particularly offensive School Inspector who never seemed to tire of pouring ridicule on the National movement. A sum of £5,700 was subscribed in South Monaghan to the Dail Loan and transmitted to Headquarters through the constituency treasurer, Mr. Bernard O'Rourke. A raid on Mr. O'Rourke's house by enemy forces resulted in the capture of papers connected with the loan. The enemy arrested Mr. O'Rourke and interned him in Belfast Jail.

By the end of August 1920, the national resistance in Farney, with the I.R.A. as its spearhead, backed by the Cumann na mBan, supported by the Republican Courts, the local Councils and the Sinn Fein organisation, held the upperhand. The enemy had withdrawn from their rural posts to their last stronghold in the Battalion area, their fortified barracks in

Carrickmacross.

The 5th Battalion was now organised in 11 companies varying in strength from 60 to 20 men, spread over the Battalion area in the following units: Carrickmacross, Magheracloone Lower, Magheracloone Upper, Killanny, Inniskeen, Donaghmoyne, Broomfield, Lisdoonan, Myle River, Corduff and Bawn, making a total of 330 men, commanded by the Battalion Staff, Commandant, Vice-Commandant, Adjutant and Quartermaster. For the purposes of organisation, each company was allotted the status of a company, even though - in some cases - below a company strength, commanded by a Company Staff, Captain, 1st and 2nd Lieutenant, Adjutant and Q.M. The Battalion Council, which governed the entire Battalion area, was made up of the Battalion Staff and the Captain of each Company.

The raiding for arms was having a detrimental effect on the national movement abroad, and G.H.Q. issued orders that it was to cease. The Brigade Commandant applied for special permission to collect the arms in hostile houses in County Monaghan. The necessary permission was given by Headquarters, to operate for one night only. On the night of the 31st August, 1920, the five Battalions in the Brigade area went into action to collect the arms all over County Monaghan. A considerable quantity of arms and ammunition were captured, but the Brigade lost five men - shot dead - in this engagement, including Barney Marron of Corduff Company. A few men were also wounded.

About 200 tins of petrol were commandeered by the I.R.A. in Carrickmacross in October 1920 and stored for future use.

A contingent of the specially recruited British police force, the Black and Tans, arrived in Carrickmacross

in the Autumn of 1920, and the time had now come for the Battalion to get to grips with the armed forces of the enemy in the district.

A Flying Column, drawn from South Monaghan (4th and 5th Batt. areas) and commanded by the O.C. of the 4th Battalion, Comdt. Terry McGee, was formed in November 1920, but owing to the activities of enemy spies this column was disbanded after about six weeks and a different method of column organisation adopted later, in 1921.

The 11 companies in the Battalion area were inspected by Brigade Comdt. O'Duffy in November and December 1920. Comdt. O'Duffy spent two nights in each company area, and in view of the fantastic stories one hears occasionally concerning compulsion on the I.R.A. to undertake certain activities, it is well to state that Comdt. O'Duffy pointed to the dangerous work that lay ahead and gave each man the option to leave the I.R.A. if he so wished. Not a single man in the Battalion area availed of this offer.

At the end of 1920 the enemy garrison at Carrickmacross was made up of 30 Black and Tans and 6 R.I.C. men. They were well equipped with arms. The enemy force in numbers was not a stiff proposition, but the I.R.A. were handicapped for want of arms and ammunition. The entire store of arms in the Battalion consisted of 12 rifles, a fair supply of revolvers and an ample supply of shotguns. There was only a small quantity of ammunition for the rifles.

January 1921 to March 1921.

The Brigade O.C. ordered the five battalions in County Monaghan to attack the enemy forces in each Battalion area on the night of the 1st January, 1921. Two detachments of the Farney I.R.A. men marched to Carrickmacross on that

night armed with rifles and shotguns to attack the enemy town patrol. One section was posted on the Gallows Hill and the second section at Magheross. The attack was timed for 9 p.m., but the enemy got 'wind' that something was afoot, and the patrol was withdrawn off the streets at 8 p.m. and did not appear again on that night. The two I.R.A. detachments left the town at about 10 p.m.

A spy was arrested in the Battalion area in January 1921. He was tried by I.R.A. Courtmartial, convicted of espionage on the Irish Army, and executed.

On the night of the 11th February, 1921, two sections of I.R.A. men drawn from the Battalion area entered Carrickmacross to attack the enemy patrol. One section was posted, as on the previous occasion, on the Gallows Hill, and the second party on the Church Hill. The enemy patrol was on the town and came down the Church Hill shortly after 9 p.m. The I.R.A. men posted on the Hill opened fire and the enemy replied with heavy rifle fire. The I.R.A. party at the Hill was armed with shotguns only, and a very poor type of buckshot. The enemy garrison at the barracks sent up Verey lights, which enabled the patrol at the Hill to make effective use of their rifles. Some of the I.R.A. men posted on the Gallows Hill advanced up McMahon Street and opened fire on the barracks from the corner of Bridewell Lane. The engagement lasted about 15 minutes and the I.R.A. on the Church Hill then withdrew across the river at Magheross to the Ardee Road. The I.R.A. suffered no casualties, but one of their men, Larry Crawley, of Lower Magheracloone Company, was severely injured while crossing the river at Magheross. Two of the enemy were wounded. On the day following this attack, Adjutant Tom McConnon of Lower Magheracloone, who participated in the attack, was arrested

by enemy forces and sentenced to 12 years' imprisonment, portion of which he served in Dartmoor Prison.

At this stage of the fight, the Battalion Council met every fortnight. The meetings were usually held in an old house in the townland of Greagnarog, in Myle River Company area. A full discussion, usually lasting from around 11 p.m. to about 5 a.m. on the following morning, took place at these meetings, as to I.R.A. activities all over the Battalion area. Past events were reviewed and orders issued for the coming fortnight. Contact was maintained with Brigade headquarters in the vicinity of Clones or Newbliss, but owing to the difficulty of maintaining communications, each Battalion had practically to act on its own initiative. The I.R.A. was not an army in the modern sense, it was a guerrilla force of patriotic men banded together in a life and death struggle for the nation's freedom, carrying on under most difficult circumstances, and pitted against the might of an empire.

An ambush arranged for the night of the 15th February, 1921, at Kednaminsha, in the Inniskeen district, was called off owing to the unsuitability of the position.

On the night of the 18th March, 1921, a party of twenty I.R.A. men from the Battalion area, armed with rifles and shotguns, occupied the Gallows Hill, Carrickmacross, overlooking the Courthouse square, to attack the enemy town patrol. The attack was timed for 8 p.m. The patrol on that night was out the Shercock Road, at McCartney's Cross. Two of the I.R.A. men on their way to the Gallows Hill passed the patrol at the cross shortly before 8 p.m. It was dark at that hour. The enemy patrol made an effort to halt these men, but both of them got through safely and reached the Hill, where they reported the occurrence to the officer in charge of the

I.R.A. party, Batt. Adjutant McMahon. Whether the enemy sensed danger or not, I cannot say, but immediately after the two I.R.A. men passed the cross, the patrol marched rapidly back the road to Carrickmacross and into their barracks. The I.R.A. party left the town around 10 p.m.

April, 1921.

The enemy forces were very active throughout the Battalion area, raiding for wanted I.R.A. men. The Battalion delayed the enemy raiding parties by blocking practically all the roads leading from the town. The active intelligence arm of the Battalion kept a watchful eye on enemy activities and an in and out record of their movements. Every stranger passing through the Battalion area was subject to I.R.A. intelligence, and no risks were taken when enemy intelligence agents were found out. Another enemy espionage agent was captured during this month and shot. This man was riddled with bullets, but it subsequently transpired that he was alive. From nightfall to dawn armed I.R.A. scouts were on duty in each Company area on the look-out for enemy raiding parties. The blocking of the roads hampered the enemy, and the ruthless cutting down of informers broke his grip on outcasts inclined to give information to obtain sops or privileges for themselves.

On the 6th April, 1921, the mail car, Shercock to Carrickmacross, was held up by the I.R.A. This was reported to the enemy at Carrickmacross, and in anticipation of a patrol coming from Carrick, 40 I.R.A. men under Batt. Comdt. O'Daly took up an ambush position in the townland of Greaghdrumit. The party was armed with 10 rifles, grenades and shotguns, and remained in position from dawn until nightfall, when they dispersed. On the following morning at 8 a.m. an enemy Crossley tender passed the ambush point.

### The Khyber Pass

Enemy patrols travelled from Carrickmacross to Castleblayney frequently. Batt. Comdt. O'Daly ordered 35 men from the Battalion to mobilise at the Khyber Pass (called after the famous Khyber Pass in India) on the Castleblayney Road. Back in the fifties of the last century, three Ribbonmen lay in ambush at the same place to shoot a local landlord's bailiff. Two of the Ribbonmen were subsequently hanged outside the County Jail in Monaghan, where the County Hospital now stands.

The I.R.A. party at the Khyber Pass was armed with 11 rifles, 15 shotguns, revolvers and hand grenades. They were divided into three sections, one section of riflemen was posted on the rock commanding the road at the Castleblayney end, a second section, armed with rifles and grenades, on a limekiln on the Carrick end, and a third section armed with shotguns took up a position midway between the first and second sections. In order to draw out the enemy forces, certain action in the nature of a decoy was taken by the I.R.A. The I.R.A. party was in position about 5.30 a.m. A long weary wait ensued in a drenching downpour. The difficulty of obtaining food on occasions like this was not easy to solve, but a few loaves were brought from Mr. Fealy's shop, and tea made in Byrne's of Corleck. The I.R.A. party remained in position until 5 p.m., when the O.C. decided to disperse. Two amusing incidents possibly deserving notice are recorded. The men were hungry, wet and cold, and one of the party put up a loaf for auction. The bidding was keen. Just before the party dispersed, one man leaning across his rifle sorrowfully remarked, "I guess the Republic is assured". The party separated and proceeded across country towards their company areas. They had travelled about three-quarters of a mile when an enemy car went by the ambush point at the Khyber Pass.

A few shots were fired at the enemy by a small party under Captain Paddy Corrigan, but the range was too far to be effective.

Attack on Carrick Barracks.

The failure to contact the enemy in the open country as described on the 6th and 15th April left only one alternative, namely, to attack their barracks in Carrickmacross. The Battalion was badly equipped to face a garrison fully armed with rifles, a machine gun and grenades and protected behind a well fortified barracks. Nevertheless, a determined effort was made to wrench from them their last post in Farney.

The Brigade Commandant ordered an attack on the barracks for the night of the 30th April, 1921. Sixty men from the Battalion area were mobilised on that night at a place known as the "Bottle Lane" on the Castleblayney Road. The remainder of the Battalion blocked all the roads leading to Carrickmacross. The Nos. 1, 3 and 4 Battalions blocked the roads leading from Clones, Monaghan, Ballybay and Castleblayney. Short attacks were made on the enemy garrison stationed at Castleblayney and Ballybay to keep them from coming to the assistance of the Carrickmacross garrison. The Dundalk men posted snipers on the Dundalk-Carrickmacross road to prevent the British military stationed at Dundalk from rushing through.

The enemy barracks was the building now occupied by the Garda Siochana.

The I.R.A. party at the "Bottle Lane" was in charge of the Brigade O.C. Comdt. Dan Hogan and Batt. Comdt. P.J. O'Daly. Comdt. Hogan was accompanied by the O.C.s of the Nos. 3 and 4 Battalions, Comdts. Marron and McGee, and the Engineer of the 4th Battalion, J.J. Connolly, C.E. There

were 12 rifle men in the I.R.A. party and the remainder were armed with shotguns with about 20 rounds of ammunition to each man. The party was divided into six sections, and the following was the plan of attack:- No. 1 section to enter the premises of Messrs. Daly Bros. adjoining the barracks via O'Neill Street, set a mine to the barrack wall, retire to O'Neill Street to await the explosion, and then fight their way into the barracks through the breach in the wall, drive the garrison out, front or rear, where they were covered by I.R.A. sections on both sides. No. 2 section was posted to the rooms over Higgins's shop in McMahon Street, facing the barracks; No. 3 section to the rooms over O'Hagan's shop (now Brennan's) in McMahon Street; both sections to enter these houses via Ivy Lane. No. 4 section to the room over Hanna's (now Farnan's), facing up McMahon Street; No. 5 section to the rear of the barracks, and a few men were detailed to cover off the house in Farney Street occupied by the District Inspector of the R.I.C. The town Company under Captain Denis Smyth had taken over the premises of Messrs. Daly's, Higgins's, O'Hagan's and Hanna's at about 10 p.m. on that night. Around 1.45 a.m. on the morning of the 1st May, 1921, the six sections of I.R.A. men moved from the "Bottle Lane" on the town. No.1 section entered Daly's, set the mine to the barrack wall, and retired to O'Neill Street to await the explosion. At that hour, about 2 a.m., the other five sections had occupied their respective positions.

The sections posted to the premises of Higgins's and O'Hagan's smashed the glass in the front windows in accordance with orders to prevent injury from the flying glass when the mine would explode. The noise of the falling glass on the street below attracted the attention of the enemy night guards. They came out to investigate. It was still dark at that hour. Shots were fired across the street by the

I.R.A. section in Higgins's. The mine should now have exploded, but owing to the fuse becoming extinguished before it reached the mine, the mine failed to explode.

The entire enemy garrison, 35 strong, was now in action and opened a vigorous fire across the street, mainly concentrated on Higgins's. The I.R.A. section in O'Hagan's had orders to hold their fire until the garrison was driven out on the street, and for a full hour the section in Higgins's bore the brunt of the enemy fire. After an hour's fighting, the O.C. in charge in Higgins's, Vice-Comdt. Byrne, sent word to O'Hagan's to relieve them. Both sections now joined in, and for two hours longer the battle continued. The enemy made elaborate use of Verey lights, and brought their machine gun into action. A hail of lead swept the street on both sides.

The explosions of the enemy hand grenades, the rattle of their machine gun, the rapid fire of the rifles on both sides of the illuminated street, together with the singing of cockney songs by the enemy, lasting for over three hours, was the highlight in Farney's effort in the War of Independence.

At 5.20 a.m. the I.R.A. sections in Higgins's and O'Hagan's were ordered to withdraw. At that hour the block of houses fronting the barracks was covered with bullet marks. The rooms in Higgins's and O'Hagan's occupied by the I.R.A. were choked with dust, and, worst of all, their ammunition was practically exhausted. The two sections withdrew by Ivy Lane. As they marched out, some members of the enemy garrison came out on the street, apparently with the intention of burning Mr. John Hand's shop. The I.R.A. section over Hanna's (Farnan's) was still in position. A few shots were fired up the street and the enemy took cover.

The entire I.R.A. party then withdrew. They had

suffered one casualty, Lieut. James McConnon of Lisdoonan, who sustained a severe bullet wound. McConnon was taken to the I.R.A. medical officer, Dr. Byrne at Corduff, on that morning where his wound was dressed and he is still happily with us. One of the enemy garrison was wounded.

After the I.R.A. had withdrawn, the enemy burned down Mr. John Hand's shop in McMahon Street. Mr. Hand's shop was not used by any of the I.R.A. men in the attack on the barracks, and the only reason that can be assigned for this act of vandalism was the fact that Hand was prominently identified with enforcing the Belfast boycott.

May 1921.

After the attack on the barracks, enemy raiding parties were very active in the district. From the Summer of 1920 up to the Truce, the enemy arrested approximately 25 I.R.A. men in the Battalion area. These men were imprisoned in British Jails, or interned in Ballykinlar internment camp. Suffering the fate of an Irish felon, they were as truly in the fighting line as the men on the hills.

Spread over the Battalion area there were about 14 I.R.A. men "on the run". These men were the back-bone of the resistance movement. Armed by day and night, they kept moving from one friendly house to another, always prepared to meet the enemy with a trusty weapon. To fall into enemy hands meant torture, or death, or both. The men "on the run" kept in constant touch with their companies. No words of praise can ever convey the gratitude of the old soldiers of the Republic to those people who harboured the men "on the run". Risking the ever watchful vigilance of the enemy, these people sustained the more active spirits of the I.R.A. throughout the British reign of terror. This is a happy memory that the Old I.R.A. will ever cherish. To the brave

girls of the Cumann na mBan who stood firm throughout the British terror, and were practically in the front line, let more competent pens pay tribute, but the Old I.R.A. men in Farney stand in salute before these heroic women.

On the 10th May, 1921, a party of 12 I.R.A. men armed with rifles and shotguns lay in ambush at Derrylavin on the Kingscourt Road for an enemy patrol which occasionally patrolled the Lough Fea Demesne as far as the gate house on the Losset Road and returned by the Kingscourt Road. The I.R.A. party remained in position until 5 a.m. on the following morning, but the enemy did not appear on that night.

#### The Fight At Tullyvaragh.

A Flying Column had now been formed in the Battalion area composed of 25 men drawn from the 11 companies and commanded by Captain Owen Meegan of Inniskeen.

This column was mobilised at 5 a.m. on the morning of the 30th May, 1921, at Tullyvaragh on the Carrickmacross-Castleblayney Road to attack an enemy patrol expected from Carrickmacross. The column was armed with 12 rifles and a number of shotguns with about 20 rounds of ammunition to each man. The ambush position was in McArdle's plantation, about 600 yards from the main road. The shotguns were of little avail at the long range, but would be useful at close quarters. The rifle men were posted along the plantation ditch with about 5 to 10 yards between each man. A few men under Captain Corrigan were posted on an eminence on the opposite side of the road. The hours passed on without any sign of the enemy, and it looked as if the column's mission was in vain - but not this time. At about 3 p.m., while the column were having tea, Batt. Q.M. Finegan reported that an enemy patrol was approaching from Carrickmacross direction. The

riflemen lined the ditch, the enemy came on, cycling in pairs, and were allowed to reach the end of the column's line when fire was opened.

The following description of this ambush appeared in the Irish Independent of the 1st June, 1921: "Const. Perkins was killed in an ambush in the Broomfield district between Carrickmacross and Castleblayney on Monday. The story told by District Inspector Maunsell and nine other police who formed a cycle patrol is that they left Carrickmacross at 2.30 p.m., and owing to a heavy downpour of rain were obliged to dismount at Cornmucklagh, a short distance from the scene of the ambush.

A small plantation overlooks the road, and just after the R.I.C. had remounted, a big volley of rifle shots rang from a distance of 600 yards. Constable Perkins, cycling immediately in front of the District Inspector, fell and the remainder of the party jumped from their bicycles and began firing from a prostrate position on the road which afforded no cover.

A hail of bullets swept the road and the escape of the remainder of the party is described as marvellous. The police declare the place was infested with rifle nests and the attackers were evidently having tea, a large can of steaming beverage with bread, marmalade and other food being found.

Empty cartridges were strewn around, some of very large calibre, including German, American and Italian, as well as British make."

The O.C. of the column had to keep in mind the danger of the Auxiliaries, who were only a few miles away in Castleblayney, coming on the scene, and he ordered the column

to withdraw after about fifteen minutes. The column withdrew to the fields at the rear of the plantation, marched rapidly across the country separating at different points to return to their company areas. The enemy kept blarging away for about an hour after the column had withdrawn.

A short time before the ambush at Tullyvaragh the enemy had posted up a "proclamation" in Carrickmacross challenging the I.R.A. to meet them. Ammunition and rifles were in short supply, but the "hail of bullets" that "swept the road" at Tullyvaragh was the I.R.A. answer.

#### The Truce.

In the early part of June 1921 a big round-up was carried out by a British column, 2,000 strong, through County Monaghan. Entering at the northern end of the county, they swept on through mid-Monaghan to Farney. Warning of the enemy approach reached the I.R.A. in Farney, and the Battalion spread out to the neighbouring counties of Cavan and Meath until the enemy column had moved on towards Dublin.

In June, four members of the flying column were staying in Meathill district adjoining Upper Magheracloone. Information reached them that an enemy motor car travelled regularly from Nobber to Drumconrath on Sunday evenings. Permission was obtained from the Brigade Commandant (Meath being outside the Monaghan brigade area) to attack this car. A position - an unoccupied house - on the Nobber-Drumconrath Road was selected on the night of the 8th June, 1921, but the enemy were evidently aware of the presence of I.R.A. men in the district. On the morning of the 10th June two enemy columns of Auxiliaries drawn from Castleblayney and Kells swept down on Meathill and Drumconrath districts. The enemy carried out an elaborate search of the countryside from Ballyhoe to Drumconrath and surrounded a house where two

members of the column had slept the night before. Every effort was made to trace the source of the enemy's information, but without success. The ambush was abandoned in view of what had occurred, but it subsequently transpired that the enemy car ceased the Sunday evening journeys.

At a meeting of the Battalion Council about the middle of June, 1921, four members of the column were detailed to enter Carrickmacross on the following Thursday to attack enemy forces in a publichouse.

At that stage of the War of Independence, and indeed long before that time, the British had abandoned all pretence of legality. Murder, hangings, torture, burnings were their weapons now. There could be only one answer to this, and the mission of the four column members was to shoot down any of the enemy forces found in the publichouse.

The column men were to enter the town by the Kingscourt Road at 12 o'clock mid-day. A scout from the town company was to signal the presence of the enemy in the publichouse; the I.R.A. men to march down to the publichouse, attack the enemy, and leave in a motor car to be held in readiness outside the publichouse door. The four men had assembled at Magheracloone on the Wednesday night, when word was received from the Battalion Commandant cancelling the operation. Thursday being the market day in Carrickmacross, the Battalion O.C. feared reprisals on the people in the market. At the time the operation was cancelled two motor cars had been commandeered and were held in readiness for the following day.

The last meeting of the Battalion Council before the Truce was held in the old house at Greagnarog on Friday, 8th July, 1921. The following constituted the Battalion Council at that date:-

Battalion Commandant: P.J. O'DALY  
Battalion Vice-Commandant: F. BYRNE  
Battalion Adjutant: BRIAN McMAHON  
Battalion Q.M.: PATRICK FINEGAN.

Company Captains:

Carrickmacross:	D. SMYTH.	Lisdoonan:	P. CORRIGAN.
Donaghmoyne:	J. COONEY.	Killanny:	P. MOHAN.
Magheracloone Lower:	T. MURRAY.	Myle River:	J. KEENAN.
Broomfield:	P. McBRIDE.	Inniskeen:	O. MEEGAN.
Magheracloone Upper:	P.V. HOEY.	Corduff:	P. MARRON.
		Bawn:	P. McCABE.

Former Battalion Adjutant, Peter Finegan, was released from prison a few days prior to the Truce. Captain Tom Martin was serving a sentence of twelve months in British prisons. Captains Luke Cassidy, Barney McBride and P. Donnellan were interned in Ballykinlar.

Convenient to the Battalion H.Q. at Greaghmarog was the Battalion prison, where persons charged with criminal offences from all over the district were tried, and, if convicted, fined or imprisoned.

The Truce came into operation on the following Monday, the 11th July, 1921.

LIST OF BATTALION ON 11th JULY, 1921.

Lisdoonan Company - Patk. Ward, 1st Lieutenant; James McConnon, 2nd Lieutenant; James Gartlan, Adjutant.

Volunteers Frank Keenan, John McEnaney, Michael Murtagh, Peter Corrigan, Peter Burns, Frank Murphy, John Gartlan, Thomas Martin, Peter Fitzpatrick, Patk. Kirley, Brian Brennan, Michael Brennan.

Corduff Company - Richard Keelan, 1st Lieut.; Frank Marron, 2nd Lieutenant.

Volunteers - Michael J. Ward, Martin Finegan, Owen Finegan, Michael Marron, Patrick Marron, Owen Garvey, Michael Fox, Frank McGinn, Owen Mohan, Frank Mohan, James Clinton, Patrick Reilly, Frank Reilly, Brian Finegan, Eugene Hanratty, Patrick Ward, Barney McKeown, Peter Marron, Joe McEneaney, Bernd. McEneaney, Patk. Clarke, John Lynch, Patk. J. Finnegan, Matthew Keelan, Bernd. Byrne, Fras. Marron, Alphonsus Marron, Fras. Daly, Martin Carragher, James Ward, James Ward, Bernd. O'Connor, Edward Cassidy, John Callan, Patk. Crosby, Thos. Marron, Patk. Callan, James Marron, Michael Garvey, Thomas Ward, James Marron, Patrick Connor, Barney Walsh, Dan Keelan, Michael Carragher, Barney Ward, John Connor, Philip McKeown, Patrick Keenan.

Broomfield Company - James Cunningham, 1st Lieutenant; John Hamill, 2nd Lieutenant; Hughie Hanway, Adjutant.

Volunteers - John Duffy, Bernard Carragher, Mick McBride, Thomas Finnegan, Thomas Finnegan, James Hamill, John Hamill, Thomas McBride, Patk. McGroder, Owen Kirk, Thomas Fitzpatrick, Patrick Callan, Simon McQuillan, Thomas Duffy, Patrick Byrne, Michael Carragher, Thomas Culleton, Francis McGuigan.

Maghera Cloone Upper Company - Patrick Smyth, 1st Lieutenant; John Doogan, 2nd Lieutenant; Joseph McCabe, Adjutant; Thomas Murray, Q.M.

Volunteers - John Kirk, Michael Kirk, Frank McKenna, Bernard Halpin, Patrick Murray, James Carey, John Martin, James Donovan, Thomas Carolan, Joseph Clarke, Bernard Hoey, Bernard Garland, Jerry Boden, Thomas Gardiner, Owen Donnelly, Patrick Donnelly, John McKenna, Frank Connolly, Patk. McDaniel, John Corcoran, John Hoey, James Hoey, Owen Dunbar, Dan Lynch, Tom Mason, James Boyle.

Killanny Company - Thomas Barnes, 1st Lieutenant;

Peter Mohan, 2nd Lieutenant; Peter Finn, Adjutant; Vincent Kerley, Q.M.

Volunteers - John Finnegan, John Duffy, Thomas Duffy, Michael Kerley, Francis Mohan, Bernard McKenna, John Finn, Gerald Kerr, James Finnegan, Patrick Martin, Thomas Hand, Edward Hand.

Donaghmoyne Company - Thomas Carragher, 1st Lieutenant; Thomas Duffy, 2nd Lieutenant.

Volunteers - Michael Markey, Barney Farrelly, James Brady, Tommie Watters, Owen Watters, Jim Coleman, Bob Hamill, Harry McMahon, Patrick Markey, Tommie Ward, Patrick McCaul, B. McCaul, Joe Doyle, Tommie Gartland, Tommie Murray, Peter Campbell, Paddy Campbell, Michael McMahon, Patrick McKenna, Patrick McKenna, Frank Carragher, Barney Connolly, Peter Coleman, Willie Costelloe, Frank Clarke, Tommie Meegan, Owen Campbell, Mick Kirk, Pat Connolly.

Bawn Company - Thomas Greenan, 1st Lieutenant; Owen Duffy, 2nd Lieutenant; Owen Gillan, Adjutant; John James Molloy, Q.M.

Volunteers - Michael McCaul, Patrick Larkin, James McCabe, Owen Kieran, James Duffy, Joe Larkin, James Coyle, John Marron, Bernard Coyle, Francis McKenna, Patrick Duffy, James McElroy, Thomas Finnegan, James Larkin, Peter Larkin, James Dunnigan, P.J. O'Reilly, Thomas Darcy, Michael McKeown.

Inniskeen Company - Henry McKeown, who was O.C. of this company until wounded; Sylvester Duffy, 1st Lieutenant; Bernard Murphy, 2nd Lieutenant; Michael Meegan, Q.M.; James Fitzsimmons, Adjutant.

Volunteers - Patrick Kieran, Peter Finnegan, Peter Clarke, John Clarke, Patrick Deery, James McLoughlin, Charles

Duffy, Peter Woods, Henry Meegan, James Kirk, James Kelly, Patrick Fitzsimmons, Patrick Agnew, Bernard Agnew, Thomas Meegan, Charles Cassidy, Patk. Cassidy, John Lennon, Patrick Breen, Owen McHugh, John Gartlan, Peter Ward, William Quinn, James O'Rourke, Patrick O'Rourke, Patrick Rooney, John Murphy, Thomas Malone, Michael Fitzsimmons, Patrick Kearney.

Myle River - Thomas Finegan, 1st Lieutenant; Thomas Gilsenan, 2nd Lieutenant; James Goodman, Adjutant.

Volunteers - John Gilsenan, Peter Gilsenan, Thos. Murtagh, James Farmer, Michael Farmer, Jas. Murtagh, James McKeown, Patrick Boyle, James Boyle, Pat Ward, James J. Marron, Francis Marron, James Murphy, Patk. Brennan, James McVeigh, William Loughran, Thomas McKeown, Peter Marron, James Boyle.

Carrickmacross Company - Paddy Courteney, 1st Lieutenant; Arthur Kane, 2nd Lieutenant; Harry Martin, Adjutant; Jack Farrelly, Q.M.

Volunteers - John Reilly, Peter Reilly, Paddy Reilly, Paddy Kelly, John Slevin, Frank Slevin, Paddy Smyth, Tommie Ross, Andy Cunningham, Peter Connolly, Mick Reilly, Paddy O'Connor, Edward Conlon, W. O'Connor, James Downey, Paddy O'Brien, Paddy Lynch, Patrick Mulholland, James Mulholland, Jack Quinn, Paddy McCartney, Henry Casey.

Magheracloone Lower Company - John Hand (John), 1st Lieutenant; Peter McKitterick, 2nd Lieut.; Thomas Callan, Adjutant.

Volunteers - Bernard Carolan, John Murray, Peter Murray, Hugh Hanratty (Patk.), Thomas Hanratty, (Patk.), Peter Marron, John McKitterick, Bernard Finnegan, John Hand (Pat), Hugh Byrne, Laurence Crawley, Francis White, Michael

Boyle, James Devlin, James Hughes, John Hanratty (Hugh), James Reilly, Thomas Reilly, James Byrne, Joseph McCabe (Edward), Edward McCabe (Edward), Terence Clarke, Francis Martin, Patrick McMahon, Bernard McMahon, Frederick McMahon, Bernard Connor, Peter Connor, Nicholas McKeown, Patrick Lennon, Edward Kelly, James Farrelly, Samuel Malcolmson, George Malcolmson, James Corbally, Patrick Murray, George Murray, Patrick McDaniel, Patrick Courteney, James McMahon, Thomas McConnon, Peter Hanratty (Frank), Michael Hanratty (Bernard), James Hanratty (Frank), Francis Ward, Pat McEntee, Matthew Donagh, James Gogarty, Andrew McEntee, Thomas J. White, Edward Durnan, James Hartigan, Thomas Hegarty, James Hand (John), George Gartlan, Thomas Clerkin, Francis Donagh, John Fitzgerald.

Mrs. Agnew (Miss R. Callan), Corrybracken, Carrickmacross, was in charge of the Cumann Na mBan in the district.

Copy of Black and Tan "Proclamation"  
posted up in Carrickmacross about May, 1921.

SOLEMN WARNING

To The Inhabitants of Carrickmacross And District.

Owing to the letters received at the police barracks from the I.R.A. declaring threats on women and children, the 20 Black and Tans of Carrickmacross HEREBY CHALLENGE THE WHOLE STRENGTH of the Carrickmacross Brigade and their invisible officer commanding to name a day, place, and time to meet them.

All Sinn Féin members and persons having Sinn Féin sympathies in this district are WELL KNOWN to the Black and Tans, who have respected them and their property,

but upon the I.R.A. threat being carried out, or even attempted, we, the said Black and Tans, are determined to carry out the just punishment that will be due for such outrages.

Signed.

Black and Tans, R.I.C.,  
Carrickmacross.

No doubt, the lively imagination of the Black and Tans invented the myth of the letters referred to. - The Author.

The following is a copy of a further "Proclamation" issued by the Crown Forces in Carrickmacross in 1921.

WARNING.

WHEREAS

Cowardly assassins of the Sinn Féin Organisation are continually murdering loyal servants of the Crown, and owing to a Military Sergeant being assaulted in Carrickmacross last Sunday night, we, the Black and Tans of this area, warn the inhabitants of Carrickmacross not to appear in the streets with their

Hands in their pockets  
or in numbers exceeding two.

If found in gateways they will be instantly shot.

BY ORDER.

*G. W. H. H. H.  
25.5.51.*

*W. H. H. H. H.  
John Mc Coy  
25/5/51*

5 Bath. (Llanaghan Bds.)

# Farney in the Fight for Freedom

✱

1914 ————— 1921

✱

BY P. V. HOEY

✱

*Dedicated to the men of '98*

✱

PRICE . . . . . 2/6

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1949.

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*“ They rose in dark and evil days to right their  
native land.”*

The Barony of Farney, situate in the extreme southern-end of County Monaghan, comprises the five parishes of Magheross, Magheraclone, Donaghmoynne, Inniskeen, and portion of Killanny. In the events related in this book that portion of Killanny parish situated in County Louth and the district of Bawn in Aughnamullen West, County Monaghan, are included.

PUBLISHED 1949

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## FARNEY IN THE FIGHT FOR FREEDOM

### THE EARLY YEARS 1914—1918

The old national flame in Farney, burning brightly from the days when Teeling's history of '98 was written in Dunoge Cottage, Carrickmacross, down through the Fenian times, when John Daly of Limerick reviewed the local Fenians under Rockdaniel Hill, carried on under the banners of the Land League, the Gaelic League and the G.A.A., culminating in our day by the formation of a company of Irish Volunteers in Carrickmacross in May 1914, at a meeting addressed by Sir Roger Casement and Eoin McNeill.

The Asquith recruiting meeting in Dublin in the Autumn of 1914 provided an opportunity locally to demonstrate the national hostility to British recruiting. A train carrying local supporters to Asquith's meeting was travelling from Carrickmacross to Dublin, and as a counter-blast to the local recruiting campaign, a party of Volunteers from Farney cut the telegraph wires in the vicinity of Carrickmacross.

About September, 1915, a British recruiting meeting attended by the local pillars of British rule was in session in Carrickmacross. Determined action was taken, by the Volunteers to bring an end to this attempt to enlist Farney's sons under England's banner. A brick was sent flying through the window where His Majesty's councillors were in conclave, and the recruiting meeting had a sudden end. On the same evening the Volunteers paraded through the town. Three of their number, Donnelly, Ross and Quin, were arrested by the British-controlled police, the R.I.C., tried by the British Court at Carrickmacross, and sentenced to two months' imprisonment in Armagh Jail.

Patrick Pearse delivered an inspiring address at a Manchester Martyrs' Commemoration in the Catholic Hall, Carrickmacross, in November 1915. Pearse reminded his audience that Allen, Larkin and O'Brien,

and their Fenian Comrades, "formed a ring around the  
 umbrap qum puv umm revolvers kept the howling English  
 mob at bay."

*"For Freedom comes from God's right hand,  
 And needs a godly train;  
 And righteous men must make our land  
 A Nation once again!"*

The release of the three imprisoned men, Donnelly, Ross and Quin, in February 1916, was the occasion of a big Volunteer demonstration in Carrickmacross. The Crown Forces tried to prevent the three men from reaching Carrickmacross on the evening of the demonstration by interfering with the railway at Inniskeen, but this was circumvented through the timely action of Mr. Bernard O'Rourke, who drove the three men to Carrick in his motor car. That valiant Irishman, The O'Rahilly, spoke at the demonstration on that evening and referred to the rising surge of militant national enthusiasm, and the dawning day when British authority in Ireland would be challenged in arms.

The local Volunteer companies paraded in Carrickmacross on St. Patrick's Day 1916.

The red glow of Easter Week 1916 was now at hand. On Easter Saturday night the Farney members of the I.R.B. held a meeting in the Foresters' Hall, Carrickmacross. Arms were distributed and arrangements made to meet on the following day, Easter Sunday, in Mr. P. J. O'Daly's house at Tiragarven. The R.I.C. were very active in sleuthing the movements of Volunteer Officers; but notwithstanding the activities of the enemy, the meeting was held in Mr. O'Daly's house on Easter Sunday as arranged. Orders were issued to the four Volunteer companies in the district, Carrickmacross, Corduff, Myle River, Magheracloone Lower, and a detachment at Lisdoonan to stand to with arms and rations for three days, but owing to the confusion at the time arising from the countermanding order issued by Eoin McNeill, Chief of Staff of the Volunteers, no further action was taken.

On the 5th May, 1916, eight members of the Irish Volunteers in Farney were arrested by British Forces, viz.: P. De Burca, Willie Loughran, P. J. O'Daly, James O'Brien, Tommie Nolan, Tom Martin, Paddy Reilly and Tom Ward. These men were interned in Frongoch until July 1916, when O'Daly, O'Brien, Nolan, Martin, Reilly and Ward were released. De Burca and Loughran were released in the following December. Bernard O'Rourke of Inniskeen was also arrested and interned for a short period.

The home-coming of these men was the signal for the national revival in Farney. The year 1917 heralded the rapid uprise of the powerful national organisation of Sinn Fein. Sinn Fein clubs were established in every parish in the district, and the people rallied to the national call.

In March 1917, a contingent of Volunteers from the district were on duty in the North Roscommon bye-election, which was won by Sinn Fein, the victorious Longford election in June of that year, and the South Armagh election in February 1918.

March 1918 saw the formation of a number of additional Volunteer companies in the district. The threat of Conscription by the British Government in April 1918 found Farney's sons ready to resist the British threat by armed force should the necessity arise.

The ingenious discovery by the British Government of the so-called "German Plot" in April 1918 led to the arrest of most of the prominent leaders in the National Movement, including Comdt. Willie Loughran of Carrickmacross.

The East Cavan election of June 1918 was attended by many Volunteers from the district, and one of their number, Denis Smyth, of Carrickmacross, was arrested by British Forces and sentenced to six months' imprisonment for possession of arms. Smyth served this sentence in Belfast Jail.

At the general election of December 1918 the Volunteers were on duty at all the polling stations in the district and their presence in military formation had a deadening effect on the anti-national activities of

the followers of the Irish Party. The Sinn Fein candidate, Sean McBunté, was returned for South Monaghan by an overwhelming majority.

## HARP OR LION

(Air: "Tow Row Row.")

Neighbours! list and hear from me  
The wondrous news I've read to-day—  
Ireland's love of liberty,

'Tis said, is dead and passed away!  
Irish men have all grown wiser!  
Now they'll heed no bad adviser.  
They despise their country's story,  
All they love is England's glory;  
Ha—ha—ha! Ha—ha—ha!  
All they love is England's glory!  
Ha—ha—ha!

Now we all must grieve to know  
The deep offence our fathers gave,  
Meeting men with thrust and blow  
Who came to rob them and enslave!  
We should blush for their illdoing,  
Give their errors no renewing,  
And, unlike those old transgressors,  
Never hurt our isle's oppressors!  
Ha—ha—ha! Ha—ha—ha!  
Never hurt our isle's oppressors!  
Ha—ha—ha!

Only think of Hugh O'Neill  
Thundering down in furious style,  
To assail, with lead and steel  
The reavers from our SISTER isle!  
Chiefs and clans from all directions,  
With their far and near connections,  
Warriors bold and swift uprisers,  
Rushing on their "civilisers"  
Ha—ha—ha! Ha—ha—ha!  
On their gracious "civilisers"  
Ha—ha—ha!

Surely, friends, the chance is great  
To cast a cloud on Emmet's fame,  
Scoff at Tone and 'Ninety-Eight,  
And scorn Lord Edward's honoured name.  
Then in quite a loyal manner,  
Clip and dye our own green banner,  
And where shines the harp of Bruin  
Place the mangy British Lion!  
Ha—ha—ha! Ha—ha—ha!  
Place the mangy British Lion!  
Ha—ha—ha!

Truly, friends, it seems to me  
England's self ere now should know  
These are things she'll never see,  
Let Ireland's star be high or low.  
That's the truth; who'er denies it,  
Scouts it, flouts it, or decries it,  
Aids to spread a vile invention,  
Drawn from where I will not mention!  
Ha—ha—ha! Ha—ha—ha!  
From the place 'tis wrong to mention!  
Ha—ha—ha!

T. D. SULLIVAN.

1919—1920

After the meeting of the first Dail in January 1919, the Irish Volunteers came under the control of the Dail Minister for Defence, the first Army of the elected Government of the Irish people, and subsequent to that time they were referred to as the Irish Republican Army.

The hostile British police force, the R.I.C., attempted to throttle the machinery of Government set up by the Irish people. The I.R.A. countered these activities by taking over all police duties.

Throughout Farney numerous I.R.A. tribunals were held to deal with criminal offences. The settlement of civil disputes by Arbitration Courts was fostered and encouraged by the political wing of the National Movement, the Sinn Fein organisation.

The Declaration of Independence formulated by the Dail was exhibited in the window of Mr. Bernard Martin, printer, O'Neill Street, Carrickmacross, and for this perfectly legitimate act Mr. Martin was arrested by the British police and sentenced to a month's imprisonment.

Throughout the Summer and Autumn of 1919, the I.R.A. in Farney devoted considerable attention to stamping out the "poteen" traffic in the district, and so successful were they in this work, that this degrading traffic was practically eliminated. In one house a lead pipe weighing five stone, used in making the "poteen," was captured and subsequently converted into buckshot for use against the enemy.

By the end of 1919 the British civil authority was fast crumbling to its inevitable destruction. A well organised Battalion of the I.R.A. was now functioning all over the district, and on the formation of the Monaghan Brigade, consisting of five battalions, Farney became the 5th Batt.

In February 1920 forces drawn from the Brigade area under Comdt. Eoin O'Duffy attacked and captured Ballytrain R.I.C. Barracks. Detachments of the 5th Batt from Corduff, Carrickmacross, Myle River, Magheracloné Lower and Killanny took part in this engagement.

The R.I.C. had now withdrawn from their barracks at Inniskeen and Corrinshigo. Detachments of I.R.A. men from the Battalion area set fire to both buildings in May 1920.

About that period of 1920 Officers of the Brigade were undergoing a hunger-strike in Belfast Jail, and as a protest against the treatment meted out to these men by the British authorities, the I.R.A. closed down local British institutions and institutions friendly to the occupation forces for a short period.

The Belfast boycott was now in full force, and the Battalion set up a local committee to enforce the boycott all over Farney. If our Northern fellow-countrymen were to sustain their rights as Irishmen, they should have stood in with the National cause.

*"Eve'n thus be; in our country's cause,  
Our party feelings blended;  
Till lasting peace, from equal laws,  
On both shall have descended.  
Till then the Orange lily be  
Thy badge, my patriot brother;  
The everlasting Green for me;  
And we for one another."*

In June 1920 the mail car was held up by a party of armed I.R.A. men on the Dundalk-Carrickmacross road and the enemy mails captured. During the Summer of 1920 the I.R.A. in the Battalion area carried out numerous raids for arms on houses hostile to the Republic and a considerable supply of arms was captured, mainly shotguns. The R.I.C. mails were again captured on the Dundalk road in August 1920.

The Courts of the Republic were established in South Monaghan in August 1920, consisting of a District Court, replacing the British Quarter Sessions, and having jurisdiction, civil and criminal, over the then parliamentary constituency of South Monaghan. Parish Courts, equivalent in jurisdiction to the British Petty Sessions were established in each parish.

The Courts functioned under a "Provisional Constitution" issued by the Dail Ministry of Home Affairs entitled "The Courts of Justice of the Irish Republic," a copy of which is still in the writer's possession. In a short time the British legal machinery broke down, and the people brought their disputes to the Republican Courts.

In September 1920, three sittings of the South Monaghan District Court were held: 3rd September in Ballybay, 6th in Carrickmacross, and 13th in Castleblaney. The Bench consisted of B. O'Rourke (chairman), Tom Martin (Magheracloné), Pat Conlon (Latton), Mick Duffy (Ballybay) and Thomas Rooney (Oram). The sittings were held in the Courthouse in each town. The enemy forces did not interfere, except in Carrickmacross, where Sergeant McGolderick and some other R.I.C. men held a "watching brief" for the Crown. Subsequent to

## 10 FARNEY IN THE FIGHT FOR FREEDOM

that time, the Courts were subjected to much vigilance by the enemy, but they continued to function in schools, lofts, private houses, and, in one instance, in a cow byre. The records are still in my possession, and over the two years from September 1920 to August 1922, District and Parish Courts dealt with over 600 cases. I regret that I am unable to compile a list of the Parish Justices, but three Justices acted in each parish. A word of praise is due to Mr. P. Marron, solicitor, Carrickmacross, whose office was always at our disposal in connection with the Court work, and to his clerk, Mr. Eugene Magee.

The Dail had set up a Ministry of Local Government. The Carrickmacross Urban Council voted recognition to this Ministry and refused to deal with the corresponding British Department.

Action was taken by the I.R.A. to clear out of the district a particularly offensive School Inspector who never seemed to tire of pouring ridicule on the National movement. A sum of £5,700 was subscribed in South Monaghan to the Dail Loan and transmitted to Headquarters through the constituency treasurer, Mr. Bernard O'Rourke. A raid on Mr. O'Rourke's house by enemy forces resulted in the capture of papers connected with the loan. The enemy arrested Mr. O'Rourke and interned him in Belfast Jail.

By the end of August 1920, the national resistance in Farney, with the I.R.A. as its spearhead, backed by the Cumann na mBan, supported by the Republican Courts, the local Councils, and the Sinn Fein organisation, held the upperhand. The enemy had withdrawn from their rural posts to their last stronghold in the Battalion area, their fortified barracks in Carrickmacross.

The 5th Battalion was now organised in 11 companies varying in strength from 60 to 20 men, spread over the Battalion area in the following units: Carrickmacross, Magheraclonoe Lower, Magheraclonoe Upper, Killanny, Inniskeen, Donaghmoynne, Broomfield, Lisdoonan, Myle River, Corduff and Bawn, making a total of 330 men, commanded by the Battalion Staff, Commandant, Vice-Commandant, Adjutant and Quartermaster. For the

## FARNEY IN THE FIGHT FOR FREEDOM 11

purposes of organisation, each company was allotted the status of a company, even though — in some cases — below a company strength, commanded by a Company Staff, Captain, 1st and 2nd Lieutenant, Adjutant and Q.M. The Battalion Council, which governed the entire Battalion area, was made up of the Battalion Staff and the Captain of each Company.

The raiding for arms was having a detrimental effect on the national movement abroad, and G.H.Q. issued orders that it was to cease. The Brigade Commandant applied for special permission to collect the arms in hostile houses in County Monaghan. The necessary permission was given by Headquarters, to operate for one night only. On the night of the 31st August 1920, the five Battalions in the Brigade area went into action to collect the arms all over County Monaghan. A considerable quantity of arms and ammunition were captured, but the Brigade lost five men — shot dead — in this engagement, including Barney Marron of Corduff Company. A few men were also wounded.

### THE SOUTH DOWN MILITIA

(An old song that has had dozens of verses added to it from time to time. Only a few are given here).

*O boys, it was fine, when in battle we did join  
Along with good King Billy at the Battle of the Boyne.  
Says James: "I'll take the first truin home: it's more  
than I can stand,  
For the South Down Militia is the terror of the land!"*

#### CHORUS

*You may talk about your Queen's Guards, Scots  
Greys and all;  
You may rave about your Kilties and your gallant  
Forty-two,  
Or any other regiment under the King's command,  
But the South Down Militia is the terror of the  
land!*

## 12 FARNEY IN THE FIGHT FOR FREEDOM

*When we went up to London, in September, '62,  
The King and Queen and Dukes were there, parading  
for review.*

*"Oh blood an' thunder!" says the Queen, as she waved  
her lily-white hand,  
"Sure, the South Down Militia is the terror of the  
land!"*

CHORUS.

*When Kruger heard the regiment was landed at Cape  
Town*

*"De Wet," says he, "we're bet," says he, "they've  
sent out the South Down;*

*And De' Wet, my boyo, that is true, we'll have to leave  
the Rand,*

*For the South Down Militia is the terror of the land!"*

CHORUS.

*When we went out to Flanders to fight the awful Hun,  
The Kaiser said to old Von Kluck "The war is nearly  
done!*

*I never thought the Orange Drum would beat the German  
Band—*

*Ohq the South Down Militia is the terror of the land!"*

CHORUS.

*When the Sultan heard the regiment was at the  
Dardanelles,*

*He rushed out of his harem and he gave three awful  
yells—*

*"Allah! Allah save us, save us or be damned!*

*For the South Down Militia is the terror of the land!"*

CHORUS.

About 200 tins of petrol were commandeered by the I.R.A. in Carrickmacross in October 1920 and stored for future use.

A contingent of the specially recruited British police force, the Black and Tans, arrived in Carrickmacross in the Autumn of 1920, and the time had now come for the

## FARNEY IN THE FIGHT FOR FREEDOM 13

Battalion to get to grips with the armed forces of the enemy in the district.

A Flying Column, drawn from South Monaghan (4th and 5th Batt. areas) and commanded by the O.C. of the 4th Battalion, Comdt. Terry McGee, was formed in November 1920, but owing to the activities of enemy spies this column was disbanded after about six weeks, and a different method of column organisation adopted later, in 1921.

The 11 companies in the Battalion area were inspected by Brigade Comdt. O'Duffy in November and December 1920. Comdt. O'Duffy spent two nights in each company area, and in view of the fantastic stories one hears occasionally concerning compulsion on the I.R.A. to undertake certain activities, it is well to state that Comdt. O'Duffy pointed to the dangerous work that lay ahead and gave each man the option to leave the I.R.A. if he so wished. Not a single man in the Battalion area availed of this offer.

At the end of 1920 the enemy garrison at Carrickmacross was made up of 30 Black and Tans and 6 R.I.C. men. They were well equipped with arms. The enemy force in numbers was not a stiff proposition, but the I.R.A. were handicapped for want of arms and ammunition. The entire store of arms in the Battalion consisted of 12 rifles, a fair supply of revolvers and an ample supply of shotguns. There was only a small quantity of ammunition for the rifles.

### JANUARY 1921 TO MARCH 1921

The Brigade O.C. ordered the five battalions in County Monaghan to attack the enemy forces in each Battalion area on the night of the 1st January, 1921. Two detachments of the Farney I.R.A. men marched to Carrickmacross on that night armed with rifles and shotguns to attack the enemy town patrol. One section was posted on the Gallows Hill and the second section at Magheross. The attack was timed for 9 p.m., but the enemy got 'wind' that something was afoot, and the patrol was withdrawn off the streets at 8 p.m. and did not

appear again on that night. The two I.R.A. detachments left the town at about 10 p.m.

A spy was arrested in the Battalion area in January 1921. He was tried by I.R.A. Courtmartial, convicted of espionage on the Irish Army, and executed.

On the night of the 11th February, 1921, two sections of I.R.A. men drawn from the Battalion area entered Carrickmacross to attack the enemy patrol. One section was posted, as on the previous occasion, on the Gallows Hill, and the second party on the Church Hill. The enemy patrol was on the town and came down the Church Hill shortly after 9 p.m. The I.R.A. men posted on the Hill opened fire and the enemy replied with heavy rifle fire. The I.R.A. party at the Hill was armed with shotguns only, and a very poor type of buckshot. The enemy garrison at the barracks sent up Verey lights, which enabled the patrol at the Hill to make effective use of their rifles. Some of the I.R.A. men posted on the Gallows Hill advanced up McMahon Street and opened fire on the barracks from the corner of Bridewell Lane. The engagement lasted about 15 minutes and the I.R.A. on the Church Hill then withdrew across the river at Magheross to the Ardee Road. The I.R.A. suffered no casualties, but one of their men, Larry Crawley, of Lower Magheraclone Company, was severely injured while crossing the river at Magheross. Two of the enemy were wounded. On the day following this attack, Adjutant Tom McConnon, of Lower Magheraclone, who participated in the attack, was arrested by enemy forces and sentenced to 12 years' imprisonment, portion of which he Dartmoor Prison.

*But yet, as long as time shall roll,  
In characters of flame,  
Upon a Nation's grateful soul  
Is writ the 'Felon's' name."*

At this stage of the fight, the Battalion Council met every fortnight. The meetings were usually held in an old house in the townland of Greagnarog, in Myle River Company area. A full discussion, usually lasting from around 11 p.m. to about 5 a.m. on the following morning,

took place at these meetings, as to I.R.A. activities all over the Battalion area. Past events were reviewed and orders issued for the coming fortnight. Contact was maintained with Brigade headquarters in the vicinity of Clones or Newbliss, but owing to the difficulty of maintaining communications, each Battalion had practically to act on its own initiative. The I.R.A. was not an army in the modern sense, it was a guerrilla force of patriotic men banded together in a life and death struggle for the nation's freedom, carrying on under most difficult circumstances, and pitted against the might of an empire.

An ambush arranged for the night of the 15th February, 1921, at Kednaminsha, in the Inniskeen district, was called off owing to the unsuitability of the position.

On the night of the 18th March, 1921, a party of twenty I.R.A. men from the Battalion area, armed with rifles and shotguns, occupied the Gallows Hill, Carrickmacross, overlooking the Courthouse square, to attack the enemy town patrol. The attack was timed for 8 p.m. The patrol on that night was out the Sherecock Road, at McCartney's Cross. Two of the I.R.A. men on their way to the Gallows Hill passed the patrol at the cross shortly before 8 p.m. It was dark at that hour. The enemy patrol made an effort to halt these men; but both of them got through safely and reached the Hill, where they reported the occurrence to the officer in charge of the I.R.A. party, Batt. Adjutant McMahon. Whether the enemy sensed danger or not, I cannot say, but immediately after the two I.R.A. men passed the cross, the patrol marched rapidly back the road to Carrickmacross and into their barracks. The I.R.A. party left the town around 10 p.m.

APRIL 1921

The enemy forces were very active throughout the Battalion area, raiding for wanted I.R.A. men. The Battalion delayed the enemy raiding parties by blocking practically all the roads leading from the town. The active intelligence arm of the Battalion kept a watchful eye on enemy activities and an in and out record of their movements. Every stranger passing through the Battalion

area was subject to I.R.A. intelligence, and no risks were taken when enemy intelligence agents were found out. Another enemy espionage agent was captured during this month and shot. This man was riddled with bullets, but it subsequently transpired that he was alive. From nightfall to dawn armed I.R.A. scouts were on duty in each Company area on the look-out for enemy raiding parties. The blocking of the roads hampered the enemy, and the ruthless cutting down of informers broke his grip on outcasts inclined to give information to obtain sops or privileges for themselves.

On the 6th April, 1921, the mail car, Shercock to Carrickmacross, was held up by the I.R.A. This was reported to the enemy at Carrickmacross, and in anticipation of a patrol coming from Carrick, 40 I.R.A. men under Batt. Comdt. O'Daly took up an ambush position in the townland of Greaghdrumit. The party was armed with 10 rifles, grenades and shotguns, and remained in position from dawn until nightfall, when they dispersed. On the following morning at 8 a.m. an enemy Crossley tender passed the ambush point.

#### THE KHYBER PASS

Enemy patrols travelled from Carrickmacross to Castleblayney frequently. Batt. Comdt. O'Daly ordered 35 men from the Battalion to mobilise at the Khyber Pass (called after the famous Khyber Pass in India) on the Castleblayney Road. Back in the fifties of the last century, three Ribbon-men lay in ambush at the same place to shoot a local landlord's bailiff. Two of the Ribbonmen were subsequently hanged outside the County Jail in Monaghan, where the County Hospital now stands.

The I.R.A. party at the Khyber Pass was armed with 11 rifles, 15 shotguns, revolvers and hand grenades. They were divided into three sections, one section of riflemen was posted on the rock commanding the road at the Castleblayney end, a second section, armed with rifles and grenades, on a limckiln on the Carrick end, and a third section armed with shotguns took up a position midway between the first and second sections. In order to

draw out the enemy forces, certain action in the nature of a decoy was taken by the I.R.A. The I.R.A. party was in position about 5.30 a.m. A long weary wait ensued in a drenching downpour. The difficulty of obtaining food on occasions like this was not easy to solve, but a few loaves were brought from Mr. Fealy's shop, and tea made in Byrac's of Corleck. The I.R.A. party remained in position until 5 p.m., when the O.C. decided to disperse. Two amusing incidents possibly deserving notice are recorded. The men were hungry, wet and cold, and one of the party put up a loaf for auction. The bidding was keen. Just before the party dispersed, one man leaning across his rifle sorrowfully remarked, "I guess the Republic is assured." The party separated and proceeded across country towards their company areas. They had travelled about three-quarters of a mile when an enemy car went by the ambush point at the Khyber Pass. A few shots were fired at the enemy by a small party under Capt. Paddy Corrigan, but the range was too far to be effective.

#### ATTACK ON CARRICK BARRACKS

The failure to contact the enemy in the open country as described on the 6th and 15th April left only one alternative, namely, to attack their barracks in Carrickmacross. The Battalion was badly equipped to face a garrison fully armed with rifles, a machine gun and grenades and protected behind a well fortified barracks. Nevertheless, a determined effort was made to wrench from them their last post in Farney.

The Brigade Commandant ordered an attack on the barracks for the night of the 30th April, 1921. Sixty men from the Battalion area were mobilised on that night at a place known as the "Bottle Lane" on the Castleblayney Road. The remainder of the Battalion blocked all the roads leading to Carrickmacross. The Nos. 1, 3 and 4 Battalions blocked the roads leading from Clones, Monaghan, Ballybay and Castleblayney. Short attacks were made on the enemy garrisons stationed at Castleblayney and Ballybay to keep them from coming to the assistance of the Carrickmacross garrison. The Dundalk men posted snipers on the Dundalk-Carrickmacross

road to prevent the British military stationed at Dundalk from rushing through.

The enemy barracks was the building now occupied by the Garda Síochána.

The I.R.A. party at the "Bottle Lane" was in charge of the Brigade O.C. Comdt. Dán Hogan and Batt. Comdt. P. J. O'Daly. Comdt. Hogan was accompanied by the O.C.s of the Nos. 3 and 4 Battalions, Comdts. Marron and McGee and the Engineer of the 4th Battalion, J. J. Connolly, C.E. There were 12 rifle men in the I.R.A. party and the remainder were armed with shotguns with about 20 rounds of ammunition to each man. The party was divided into six sections, and the following was the plan of attack:—No. 1 section to enter the premises of Messrs. Daly Bros. adjoining the barracks via O'Neill Street, set a mine to the barrack wall, retire to O'Neill Street to await the explosion, and then fight their way into the barracks through the breach in the wall, drive the garrison out, front or rear, where they were covered by I.R.A. sections on both sides. No. 2 section was posted to the rooms over Higgins's shop in McMahon Street, facing the barracks; No. 3 section to the rooms over O'Hagan's shop (now Brennan's) in McMahon Street; both sections to enter these houses via Ivy Lane. No. 4 section to the room over Hanna's (now Farnan's); facing up McMahon Street; No. 5 section to the rear of the barracks, and a few men were detailed to cover off the house in Farney Street occupied by the District Inspector of the R.I.C. The town Company under Captain Denis Smyth had taken over the premises of Messrs. Daly's, Higgins's, O'Hagan's and Hanna's at about 10 p.m. on that night. Around 1.45 a.m. on the morning of the 1st May, 1921, the six sections of I.R.A. men moved from the "Bottle Lane" on the town. No. 1 section entered Daly's, set the mine to the barrack wall, and retired to O'Neill Street to await the explosion. At that hour, about 2 a.m., the other five sections had occupied their respective positions.

The sections posted to the premises of Higgins's and O'Hagan's smashed the glass in the front windows in accordance with orders to prevent injury from the flying

glass when the mine would explode. The noise of the falling glass on the street below attracted the attention of the enemy night guards. They came out to investigate. It was still dark at that hour. Shots were fired across the street by the I.R.A. section in Higgins's. The mine should now have exploded, but owing to the fuse becoming extinguished before it reached the mine, the mine failed to explode.

The entire enemy garrison, 35 strong, was now in action and opened a vigorous fire across the street, mainly concentrated on Higgins's. The I.R.A. section in O'Hagan's had orders to hold their fire until the garrison was driven out on the street, and for a full hour the section in Higgins's bore the brunt of the enemy fire. After an hour's fighting, the O.C. in charge in Higgins's, Vice-Comdt. Byrne, sent word to O'Hagan's to relieve them. Both sections now joined in, and for two hours longer the battle continued. The enemy made elaborate use of Verey lights, and brought their machine gun into action. A hail of lead swept the street on both sides.

The explosions of the enemy hand grenades, the rattle of their machine gun, the rapid fire of the rifles on both sides of the illuminated street, together with the singing of cockney songs by the enemy, lasting for over three hours, was the highlight in Farney's effort in the War of Independence.

At 5.20 a.m. the I.R.A. sections in Higgins's and O'Hagan's were ordered to withdraw. At that hour the block of houses fronting the barracks was covered with bullet marks. The rooms in Higgins's and O'Hagan's occupied by the I.R.A. were choked with dust, and, worst of all, their ammunition was practically exhausted. The two sections withdrew by Ivy Lane. As they marched out, some members of the enemy garrison came out on the street, apparently with the intention of burning Mr. John Hand's shop. The I.R.A. section over Hanna's (Farnan's) was still in position. A few shots were fired up the street and the enemy took cover.

The entire I.R.A. party then withdrew. They had suffered one casualty, Lieut. James McConnon, of Lisdoonan, who sustained a severe bullet wound. McCon-

non was taken to the I.R.A. medical officer, Dr. Byrne, at Corduff, on that morning where his wound was dressed and he is still happily with us. One of the enemy garrison was wounded.

After the I.R.A. had withdrawn, the enemy burned down Mr. John Hand's shop in McMahon Street. Mr. Hand's shop was not used by any of the I.R.A. men in the attack on the barracks, and the only reason that can be assigned for this act of vandalism was the fact that Hand was prominently identified with enforcing the Belfast boycott.

### THE HEROINE OF ROSS

(AN INCIDENT OF THE INSURRECTION OF 1798)

*Up from fitful sleep we wakened at the first kiss of the day;*

*There was silence by our watchfires, for we knew the task that lay*

*To be wrought to joy or ruin ere the stars should look again*

*On the places of our childhood — hill and river, rath and glen.*

*We were thinking of the dear ones that we left to face the foe,*

*And we prayed for all the brave ones that were lying cold and low,*

*And we looked upon the meadows staring blank against the sun,*

*Then we thought upon the future and the work that must be done.*

*Fear! we knew it not, for Vengeance burned fierce in every heart;*

*Doubt! why doubt, when we but hungered each to do a true man's part?*

*"On to Ross!" our pulses quickened as the word from man to man*

*Passed along, and brave John Kelly forward stepped to lead the van.*

*Through the misty summer morn by the hedgerows bright we sped,*

*While the lark with joyous music filled the spreading dome o'erhead.*

*And the sun rode up the circle, and the earth began to smile,*

*But our hearts knew nought of pleasure, they were cold as ice the while.*

*Silent all, with stony gaze, and lips as tightly locked as death,*

*On we went by flowering thorns through the balmy summer's breath,*

*On, till Ross was close upon us, then a shout resounding rose,*

*And like ocean's waves in winter in we leaped upon our foes!*

*For a brief, brief spell they quavered, then their muskets rang reply,*

*And our boys in hundreds falling looked their last upon the sky.*

*But, the empty places filling, still we rallied to the fray, Till the misty summer morning wore into the dusty day.*

*Then a figure rose above us, 'twas a girl's fragile frame, And among the fallen soldiers there she walked with eyes aflame,*

*And her voice rang o'er the clamour like a trumpet o'er the sea:*

*"Who so dares to die for Ireland, let him come and follow me."*

*Then against the line of soldiers with a gleaming scythe on high,*

*Lo! she strode, and though their bullets whistled round, they passed her by,*

*And a thousand bosoms throbbing, one wild surging shout we gave,*

*And we swept them from our pathway like the sand before the wave.*

MAY 1921.

After the attack on the barracks, enemy raiding parties were very active in the district. From the Summer, of 1920 up to the Truce, the enemy arrested approximately 25 I.R.A. men in the Battalion area. These men were imprisoned in British Jails, or interned in Ballykinlar internment camp. Suffering the fate of an Irish felon, they were as truly in the fighting line as the men on the hills.

*" We love them yet,  
We can't forget,  
The felons of our land."*

Spread over the Battalion area there were about 14 I.R.A. men "on the run." These men were the backbone of the resistance movement. Armed by day and night, they kept moving from one friendly house to another, always prepared to meet the enemy with a trusty weapon. To fall into enemy hands meant torture, or death, or both. The men "on the run" kept in constant touch with their companies. No words of praise can ever convey the gratitude of the old soldiers of the Republic to those people who harboured the men "on the run." Risking the ever watchful vigilance of the enemy, these people sustained the more active spirits of the I.R.A. throughout the British reign of terror. This is a happy memory that the Old I.R.A. will ever cherish. To the brave girls of the Cumann na mBan who stood firm throughout the British terror, and were practically in the front line, let more competent pens pay tribute, but the Old I.R.A. men in Farney stand in salute before these heroic women.

*" I've run the outlaw's bold career  
And borne his load of ill,  
His troubled rest, his ceaseless fear,  
With fixed sustaining will;  
And should the last dark chance befall,  
E'en that shall welcome be;  
In death I'll love thee most, of all—  
A chuiste geal mo chroidhe!"*

On the 10th May, 1921, a party of 12 I.R.A. men armed with rifles and shotguns lay in ambush at Derrylavin on the Kingscourt Road for an enemy patrol which occasionally patrolled the Lough Fea Demesne as far as the gate house on the Losset Road and returned by the Kingscourt Road. The I.R.A. party remained in position until 5 a.m. on the following morning, but the enemy did not appear on that night.

*" Fling your banner to the wind,  
Studded o'er with names of glory;  
Worth and wit, and might and mind,  
Poet young and patriot hoary  
Long shall make it shine in story.*

*Close your ranks! The moment's come—  
NOW, ye men of Ireland, follow!  
Friends of Freedom, charge them home  
Foes of Freedom, fag a bealach!"*

#### THE FIGHT AT TULLYVARAGH

A Flying Column had now been formed in the Battalion area composed of 25 men drawn from the 11 companies and commanded by Captain Owen Meegan of Inniskeen.

This column was mobilised at 5 a.m. on the morning of the 30th May, 1921, at Tullyvaragh on the Carrickmacross-Castleblayney Road to attack an enemy patrol expected from Carrickmacross. The column was armed with 12 rifles and a number of shotguns with about 20 rounds of ammunition to each man. The ambush position was in McArdle's plantation, about 600 yards from the main road. The shotguns were of little avail at the long range, but would be useful at close quarters. The rifle men were posted along the plantation ditch with about 5 to 10 yards between each man. A few men under Captain Corrigan were posted on an eminence on the opposite side of the road. The hours passed on without any sign of the enemy, and it looked as if the column's mission was in vain—but not this time. At about 3 p.m., while the column were having tea, Batt. Q.M. Finegan

reported that an enemy patrol was approaching from Carrickmacross direction. The riflemen lined the ditch, the enemy came on, cycling in pairs, and were allowed to reach the end of the column's line when fire was opened.

The following description of this ambush appeared in the *Irish Independent* of the 1st June, 1921: "Const. Perkins was killed in an ambush in the Broomfield district between Carrickmacross and Castleblayney on Monday. The story told by District Inspector Maunsell and nine other police who formed a cycle patrol is that they left Carrickmacross at 2.30 p.m., and owing to a heavy downpour of rain were obliged to dismount at Cornmucklagh, a short distance from the scene of the ambush.

A small plantation overlooks the road, and just after the R.I.C. had remounted, a big volley of rifle shots rang from a distance of 600 yards. Constable Perkins, cycling immediately in front of the District Inspector, fell and the remainder of the party jumped from their bicycles and began firing from a prostrate position on the road which afforded no cover.

A hail of bullets swept the road and the escape of the remainder of the party is described as marvellous. The police declare the place was infested with rifle nests and the attackers were evidently having tea, a large can of steaming beverage with bread, marmalade and other food being found.

Empty cartridges were strewn around, some of very large calibre, including German, American and Italian, as well as British make."

The O.C. of the column had to keep in mind the danger of the Auxiliaries, who were only a few miles away in Castleblayney, coming on the scene, and he ordered the column to withdraw after about fifteen minutes. The column withdrew to the fields at the rear of the plantation, marched rapidly across country, separating at different points to return to their company areas. The enemy kept blarging away for about an hour after the column had withdrawn.

A short time before the ambush at Tullyvaragh the enemy had posted up a "proclamation" in Carrick-

macross challenging the I.R.A. to meet them. Ammunition and rifles were in short supply, but the "hail of bullets" that "swept the road" at Tullyvaragh was the I.R.A. answer.

### THE TRUCE

In the early part of June 1921 a big round-up was carried out by a British column, 2,000 strong, through County Monaghan. Entering at the northern end of the county, they swept on through mid-Monaghan to Farney. Warning of the enemy approach reached the I.R.A. in Farney, and the Battalion spread out to the neighbouring counties of Cavan and Meath until the enemy column had moved on towards Dublin.

In June, four members of the flying column were staying in Meathill district adjoining Upper Magheracloone. Information reached them that an enemy motor car travelled regularly from Nobber to Drumconrath on Sunday evenings. Permission was obtained from the Brigade Commandant (Meath being outside the Monaghan brigade area) to attack this car. A position—an unoccupied house—on the Nobber-Drumconrath Road was selected on the night of the 8th June, 1921, but the enemy were evidently aware of the presence of I.R.A. men in the district. On the morning of the 10th June two enemy columns of Auxiliaries drawn from Castleblayney and Kells swept down on Meathill and Drumconrath districts. The enemy carried out an elaborate search of the countryside from Ballyhoe to Drumconrath and surrounded a house where two members of the column had slept the night before. Every effort was made to trace the source of the enemy's information, but without success. The ambush was abandoned in view of what had occurred, but it subsequently transpired that the enemy car ceased the Sunday evening journeys.

At a meeting of the Battalion Council about the middle of June, 1921, four members of the column were detailed to enter Carrickmacross on the following Thursday to attack enemy forces in a publichouse.

At that stage of the War of Independence, and

indeed long before that time, the British had abandoned all pretence of legality. Murder, hangings, torture, burnings were their weapons now. There could be only one answer to this, and the mission of the four column members was to shoot down any of the enemy forces found in the publichouse.

The column men were to enter the town by the Kingscourt Road at 12 o'clock mid-day. A scout from the town company was to signal the presence of the enemy in the publichouse; the I.R.A. men to march down to the publichouse, attack the enemy, and leave in a motor car to be held in readiness outside the publichouse door. The four men had assembled at Magheracloone on the Wednesday night, when word was received from the Battalion Commandant cancelling the operation. Thursday being the market day in Carrickmacross, the Battalion O.C. feared reprisals on the people in the market. At the time the operation was cancelled two motor cars had been commandeered and were held in readiness for the following day.

The last meeting of the Battalion Council before the Truce was held in the old house at Greagnarog on Friday, 8th July, 1921. The following constituted the Battalion Council at that date:—

BATTALION COMMANDANT: P. J. O'DALY.  
 BATTALION VICE-COMMANDANT: F. BYRNE.  
 BATTALION ADJUTANT: BRIAN McMAHON.  
 BATTALION Q.M.: PATRICK FINEGAN.

COMPANY CAPTAINS:

Carrickmacross: D. SMYTH. Donaghmoynce: J. COONEY.  
 Magheracloone Lower: T. MURRAY.  
 Broomfield: P. McBRIDE.  
 Magheracloone Upper: P. V. HOEY.  
 Lisdoonan: P. CORRIGAN. Killanny: P. MOHAN.  
 Myle River: J. KEENAN. Inniskeen: O. MEEGAN.  
 Corduff: P. MARRON. Bawn: P. McCABE.

Former Battalion Adjutant, Peter Finegan, was released from prison a few days prior to the Truce. Captain Tom Martin was serving a sentence of twelve months in British prisons. Captains Luke Cassidy,

Barnéy McBride and P. Donnellan were interned in Ballykinlar.

Convenient to the Battalion H.Q. at Greagnarog was the Battalion prison, where persons charged with criminal offences from all over the district were tried, and, if convicted, fined or imprisoned.

The Truce came into operation on the following Monday, the 11th July, 1921.

THE NIGHT WE RODE WITH SARFIELD

(On August 10, 1690, Patrick Sarsfield and 500 picked men, guided by the Rapparee chief, Galloping O'Hogan, rode out from the besieged city of Limerick to a place called Ballyneety, captured a siege train sent for to Dublin by King William, blew it to the skies, and rode safely back to Limerick again).

*The night we rode with Sarsfield out from Limerick to meet*

*The waggon-train that William hoped would help in our defeat.*

*How clearly I remember it, though now my hair is white  
 That clustered black and curly 'neath my trooper's cap  
 that night.*

*For I was one of Sarfield's men, in years tho' still a lad;  
 And to be one of Sarsfield's men what boy would not  
 be glad?*

*For Sarfield chose of all his troops the best and bravest  
 ones*

*To ride, and raid the convoy's camp that brought the  
 English guns.*

*'Twas silently we left the town, and silently we rode,  
 While o'er our heads the silent stars in silver beauty  
 glowed.*

*And silently and stealthily, well led by one who knew,  
 We crossed the shining Shannon at the ford of Killaloe.*

*The Galloping O'Hogan, Ireland's fiery-hearted son,  
 'Twas he by many a byway led us confidently on,  
 Till when the night was nearly spent we saw the distant  
 glow—*

*The English convoy's camp-fire in the quiet vale below.*

Still silently and stealthily, at Sarsfield's stern command.  
 We close and closer drew the lines of our devoted band.  
 "We must not fail, my comrades!"—it was Sarsfield's  
 voice that spoke,  
 "For Limerick and Ireland's fate depend upon this  
 stroke.

The pass-word of the Williamites is 'Sarsfield'—strange  
 but true;  
 And with that word upon our lips we'll pass the sentries  
 through.  
 Then when you hear my voice upraised charge boldly one  
 and all—  
 No cannon from this convoy e'er must bark at Limerick's  
 wall!"

The sleepy sentry on his rounds perhaps was musing o'er  
 His happy days of childhood on the pleasant English  
 shore;  
 Perhaps was thinking of his home and wishing he was  
 there  
 When springtime makes the English land so wonderfully  
 fair.  
 At last our horses' hoof-beats and our jingling arms he  
 heard.  
 "Halt!" Who goes there?" the sentry cried, "Advance  
 and give the word!"  
 "The word is 'Sarsfield,' cried our Chief, "and stop us  
 he who can,  
 For Sarsfield is the word to-night and Sarsfield is the  
 man!"

One bursting cheer, one headlong charge, and sabres  
 bright and keen  
 Are hacking at the foemen's heads where'er a head is  
 seen.  
 The Colonel leaves his wig behind, bestrides a horse and  
 flies  
 To tell of Sarsfield's daring and the convoy camp's  
 surprise.  
 We make a pile of captured guns and powder bags and  
 stores,

Then skyward in one flaming blast the great explosion  
 roars.  
 And then we sang as back we rode, with Sarsfield in the  
 van,  
 "Ho, Sarsfield is the word to-night and Sarsfield is the  
 man!"

The night we rode with Sarsfield, I shall always hold it  
 dear,  
 Though he is dead on Landen Plain, this many and many  
 a year;  
 Though he is dead, and I am old, my hair all silver white  
 That clustered black and curly 'neath my trooper's cap  
 that night.  
 For I was one of Sarsfield's men, while yet a boy in  
 years  
 I rode as one of Sarsfield's men, and men were my  
 compeers,  
 They're dead the most of them, afar, yet they were  
 Ireland's sons  
 Who saved the walls of Limerick from the might of  
 English guns!

DENIS A. MCCARTHY.

## LIST OF BATTALION ON 11th JULY, 1921

LISDOONAN COMPANY—Patk. Ward, 1st Lieutenant;  
 James McConnon, 2nd Lieutenant; James Gartlan,  
 Adjutant.

Volunteers Frank Keenan, John McEaney,  
 Michael Murtagh, Peter Corrigan, Patrick Burns, Frank  
 Murphy, John Gartlan, Thomas Martin, Peter Fitz-  
 pattrick, Patk. Kirley, Brian Brennan, Michael Brennan.

CORDUFF COMPANY—Richard Keelan, 1st Lieut. ;  
 Frank Marron, 2nd Lieutenant.

Volunteers—Michael J. Ward, Martin Finegan,  
 Owen Finegan, Michael Marron, Patrick Marron, Owen  
 Garvey, Michael Fox, Frank McGinn, Owen Mohan,  
 Frank Mohan, James Clinton, Patrick Reilly, Frank  
 Reilly, Brian Finegan, Eugene Hanratty, Patrick Ward,  
 Barney McKeown, Peter Marron, Joe McEaney,  
 Bernd. McEaney, Patk. Clarke, John Lynch, Patk. J.

30 FARNEY IN THE FIGHT FOR FREEDOM

Finnegan, Matthew Keelan, Bernd. Byrne, Fras. Marron, Alphonsus Marron, Fras. Daly, Martin Carragher, James Ward, James Ward, Bernd. O'Connor, Edward Cassidy, John Callan, Patk. Crosby, Thos. Marron, Patk. Callan, James Marron, Michael Garvey, Thomas Ward, James Marron, Patrick Connor, Barney Walsh, Dan Keelan, Michael Carragher, Barney Ward, John Connor, Philip McKeown, Patrick Keenan.

BROOMFIELD COMPANY—James Cunningham, 1st Lieutenant; John Hamill, 2nd Lieutenant; Hughie Hanway, Adjutant.

*Volunteers*—John Duffy, Bernard Carragher, Mick McBride, Thomas Finnegan, Thomas Finnegan, James Hamill, John Hamill, Thomas McBride, Patk. McGroder, Owen Kirk, Thomas Fitzpatrick, Patrick Callan, Simon McQuillan, Thomas Duffy, Patrick Byrne, Michael Carragher, Thomas Culleton, Francis McGuigan.

MAGHERACLOONE UPPER COMPANY—Patrick Smyth, 1st Lieutenant; John Doogan, 2nd Lieutenant; Joseph McCabe, Adjutant; Thomas Murray, Q.M.

*Volunteers*—John Kirk, Michael Kirk, Frank McKenna, Bernard Halpin, Patrick Murray, James Carey, John Martin, James Donovan, Thomas Carolan, Joseph Clarke, Bernard Hoey, Bernard Garland, Jerry Boden, Thomas Gardiner, Owen Donnelly, Patrick Donnelly, John McKenna, Frank Connolly, Patk. McDaniel, John Corcoran, John Hoey, James Hoey, Owen Dunbar, Dan Lynch, Tom Mason, James Boyle.

KILLANNY COMPANY—Thomas Barnes, 1st Lieutenant; Peter Mohan, 2nd Lieutenant; Peter Finn, Adjutant; Vincent Kerley, Q.M.

*Volunteers*—John Finnegan, John Duffy, Thomas Duffy, Michael Kerley, Francis Mohan, Bernard McKenna, John Finn, Gerald Kerr, James Finnegan, Patrick Martin, Thomas Hand, Edward Hand.

DONAGHMOYNE COMPANY—Thomas Carragher, 1st Lieutenant; Thomas Duffy, 2nd Lieutenant.

*Volunteers*—Michael Markey, Barney Farrelly, James Brady, Tommie Watters, Owen Watters, Jim

FARNEY IN THE FIGHT FOR FREEDOM 31

Coleman, Bob Hamill, Harry McMahon, Patrick Markey, Tommie Ward, Patrick McCaul, B. McCaul, Joe Doyle, Tommie Gartland, Tommie Murray, Peter Campbell, Paddy Campbell, Michael McMahon, Patrick McKenna, Patrick McKenna, Frank Carragher, Barney Connolly, Peter Coleman, Willie Costelloe, Frank Clarke, Tommie Meegan, Owen Campbell, Mick Kirk, Pat Connolly.

BAWN COMPANY—Thomas Greenan, 1st Lieutenant; Owen Duffy, 2nd Lieutenant; Owen Gillan, Adjutant; John James Molloy, Q.M.

*Volunteers*—Michael McCaul, Patrick Larkin, James McCabe, Owen Kieran, James Duffy, Joe Larkin, James Coyle, John Marron, Bernard Coyle, Francis McKenna, Patrick Duffy, James McElroy, Thomas Finnegan, James Larkin, Peter Larkin, James Dunnigan, P. J. O'Reilly, Thomas Darcy, Michael McKeown.

INNISKEEN COMPANY—Henry McKeown, who was O.C. of this company until wounded; Sylvester Duffy, 1st Lieutenant; Bernard Murphy, 2nd Lieutenant; Michael Meegan, Q.M.; James Fitzsimmons, Adjutant.

*Volunteers*—Patrick Kieran, Peter Finnegan, Peter Clarke, John Clarke, Patrick Deery, James McLoughlin, Charles Duffy, Peter Woods, Henry Meegan, James Kirk, James Kelly, Patrick Fitzsimmons, Patrick Agnew, Bernard Agnew, Thomas Meegan, Charles Cassidy, Patk. Cassidy, John Lennon, Patrick Breen, Owen McHugh, John Gartlan, Peter Ward, William Quinn, James O'Rourke, Patrick O'Rourke, Patrick Rooney, John Murphy, Thomas Malone, Michael Fitzsimmons, Patrick Kearney.

MYLE RIVER—Thomas Finegan, 1st Lieutenant; Thomas Gilscenan, 2nd Lieutenant; James Goodman, Adjutant.

*Volunteers*—John Gilscenan, Peter Gilscenan, Thos. Murtagh, James Farmer, Michael Farmer, Jas. Murtagh, James McKeown, Patrick Boyle, James Boyle, Pat Ward, James J. Marron, Francis Marron, James Murphy, Patk. Brennan, James McVeigh, William Loughran, Thomas McKeown, Peter Marron, James Boyle.

CARRICKMACROSS COMPANY—Paddy Courteney, 1st Lieutenant; Arthur Kane, 2nd Lieutenant; Harry Martin, Adjutant; Jack Farrelly, Q.M.

*Volunteers*—John Reilly, Peter Reilly, Paddy Reilly, Paddy Kelly, John Slevin, Frank Slevin, Paddy Smyth, Tommie Ross, Andy Cunningham, Peter Connolly, Mick Reilly, Paddy O'Connor, Edward Conlon, W. O'Connor, James Downey, Paddy O'Brien, Paddy Lynch, Patrick Mulholland, James Mulholland, Jack Quinn, Paddy McCartney, Henry Casey.

MAGHERACLOONE LOWER COMPANY—John Hand (John), 1st Lieutenant; Peter McKitterick, 2nd Lieut.; Thomas Callan, Adjutant.

*Volunteers*—Bernard Carolan, John Murray, Peter Murray, Hugh Hanratty (Patk.), Thomas Hanratty (Patk.), Peter Marron, John McKitterick, Bernard Finnegan, John Hand (Pat), Hugh Byrne, Laurence Crawley, Francis White, Michael Boyle, James Devlin, James Hughes, John Hanratty (Hugh), James Reilly, Thomas Reilly, James Byrne, Joseph McCabe (Edward), Edward McCabe (Edward), Terence Clarke, Francis Martin, Patrick McMahon, Bernard McMahon, Frederick McMahon, Bernard Connor, Peter Connor, Nicholas McKown, Patrick Lennon, Edward Kelly, James Farrelly, Samuel Malcolmson, George Malcolmson, James Corbally, Patrick Murray, George Murray, Patrick McDaniel, Patrick Courteney, James McMahon, Thomas McConnon, Peter Hanratty (Frank), Michael Hanratty (Bernard), James Hanratty (Frank), Francis Ward, Pat McEntee, Matthew Donagh, James Gogarty, Andrew McEntee, Thomas J. White, Edward Durnan, James Hartigan, Thomas Hegarty, James Hand (John), George Gartlan, Thomas Clerkin, Francis Donagh, John Fitzgerald.

Mrs. Agnew (Miss R. Callan), Corrybracken, Carrickmacross, was in charge of the Cumann Na mBan in the district.

*Copy of Black and Tan, "Proclamation" posted up in Carrickmacross about May, 1921.*

## SOLEMN WARNING

TO THE INHABITANTS OF CARRICKMACROSS AND DISTRICT

Owing to the letters received at the police barracks from the I.R.A. declaring threats on women and children, the 20 Black and Tans of Carrickmacross HEREBY CHALLENGE THE WHOLE STRENGTH of the Carrickmacross Brigade and their invisible officer commanding to name a day, place, and time to meet them.

All Sinn Fein members and persons having Sinn Fein sympathies in this district are WELL KNOWN to the Black and Tans, who have respected them and their property, but upon the I.R.A. threat being carried out, or even attempted, we, the said Black and Tans, are determined to carry out the just punishment that will be due for such outrages.

Signed.

*Black and Tans, R.I.C.,  
Carrickmacross.*

No doubt, the lively imagination of the Black and Tans invented the myth of the letters referred to.—*The Author.*

*The following is a copy of a further "Proclamation" issued by the Crown Forces in Carrickmacross in 1921.*

WARNING

WHEREAS

Cowardly assassins of the Sinn Fein Organisation are continually murdering loyal servants of the Crown, and owing to a Military Sergeant being assaulted in Carrickmacross last Sunday night, we, the Black and Tans of this area, warn the inhabitants of Carrickmacross not to appear in the streets with their

Hands in their pockets  
or in numbers exceeding two.

If found in gateways they will be instantly shot.

BY ORDER.

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*"The night of thy grief is closing, and the sky in the  
East is red:*

*Thy children watch from the mountain tops for the  
sun to kiss thy head.*

*O, Mother of men who are fit to be free, for their test  
for freedom borne,*

*Thy vacant place in the Nation's race awaits but the  
coming morn!"*

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