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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 850

Witness

Major Patrick Colgan,
The Muckross Hotel, Ltd.,
The Lakes of Killarney,
Co. Kerry.

Identity.

Member of Irish Volunteers, Maynooth, 1914 - ;
Volunteer Organiser, North Kildare, 1917 - ;
O/C. North Kildare Battalion.

Subject.

- (a) National activities, Co. Kildare, 1911-1921;
- (b) G.P.O. and Exchange Hotel, Dublin, Easter Week, 1916.
- (c) Biographical note on Sean MacDermott.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil

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STATEMENTBYMAJOR PATRICK COLGAN,THE MUCKROSS HOTEL, LTD.LAKES OF KILLARNEY,COUNTY KERRY.The Maynooth Branch Gaelic League.

In the early years of the present century a branch of the Gaelic League was established at Maynooth. Its founder was Donnall Ua Buacalla. I do not know how long it was established when I became a member. The first teacher we had was Revd. Michael O'Hickey, Professor of Irish at Maynooth College. He continued as our teacher until the time he was dismissed from his Professorship. He was dismissed because of his stand on the question of the Irish Language in the National University of Ireland. Our branch was never more than 12-15 strong. Maynooth was and is a poor little village, mainly was it poor because all the land was held by the few. It was the happy hunting ground for the retired Colonels, Majors and Captains of the British Army. The few non-ex-military landed in the area were graziers who aped "their betters". Outside the Duke of Leinster's estate and St. Patrick's College there was little or no employment. Everything was taken from the Big Houses, except religion. To eke out an existence it was necessary to keep on the right side of the people in the Big Houses. The little I knew of the personnel in charge of Maynooth College at that

time made me feel that their national outlook was no better than that of the Big House crowd.

It was a brave step on the part of Ua Buacalla to give the lead in organising anything which ran contrary to the wishes of the Big Houses.

He had, about the time he organised the Gaelic League, succeeded his father as proprietor of a grocery and hardware business in Maynooth.

Soon after he took over the business he had his name printed in Irish over his shop. He followed by having his name in Irish on his dray, for which offence he was prosecuted and fined. I think he was prosecuted three times. He refused to pay the fines, goods were seized from his shop and auctioned by the R.I.C. Sergeant, a native Irish speaker named Finnegan. At each auction the goods were bought in by a friend for a trifling sum. He had his bill heads made out in Irish too. This caused the Colonels and their friends to make a demand on Ua Buacalla to have his bill heads made out in English. Failure to do so meant withdrawal of the custom from the Big Houses. Domnall refused to obey the "Order"; the custom was withdrawn. Some of the employees followed their employers' lead. The outstanding exception to this anti-Irish movement was Lord Frederick Fitzgerald, Manager for his nephew the Duke of Leinster. P.H. Pearse appeared in Court on behalf of Ua Buacalla when he was prosecuted for having his name on his dray in Irish.

Pearse also attended a Concert held by the branch in Maynooth; amongst the artists was Eamonn Ceannt who played

the Irish War Pipes.

I recall the first election for the Kildare County Council in our district. The Nationalist candidate was a Protestant farmer, William Ronaldson, Barn Hall, Leixlip. The Unionist candidate was Lord Frederick Fitzgerald. Ronaldson came to Maynooth to hold a meeting. He had a brake with a green flag flying and he got a hot reception. He was not allowed to speak. Lord Frederick Fitzgerald was elected and we had bonfires and illuminations to celebrate the victory.

The next important event I recall is the visit of King Edward the Seventh and Queen Alexandra to Maynooth College. It was a great day. We got leave from the Convent School to see them. The village was beflagged and we had mounted R.I.C. men escorting their Majesties, who travelled in an open horse-drawn landau. The biggest memory I have of the visit was hearing people saying the Queen had an enamel face. It puzzled me a good deal. The only thing I knew about enamel was we had at home a couple of enamel basins and bedroom utensils. I wondered if her face was like our utensils.

The coming of King George the Fifth and Queen Mary came at a time when I had made a little National progress, mainly brought about by reading "Irish Freedom" and on learning that the great John Devoy was a Kildare man, and on learning, too, that almost every able bodied man in the parish of Maynooth-Leixlip had turned out and marched to Tallaght in '67, amongst them members of my family.

We had a Brass and Reed Band at Maynooth at the time. I was the Secretary to the Band. A week or two before the visit was to take place I received a letter from Very Revd. Dr. Mannix, the President of St. Patrick's College, inviting the band to meet their Majesties at the entrance to the College, to escort them to the reception room. I had a chat with Ua Buacalla about the letter; we felt the members of the band, who were all employed at the College, the Duke of Leinster's estate or at the Big Houses, might be afraid to reject the invitation. So it was decided to ignore the letter. A few days before the arrival at the College of the visitors a College employee, John Nolan, called to my home, saying Dr. Mannix had asked him to enquire if I had any reply to his letter about the invitation he had given the band. I told Nolan to say I would give a reply next day. I called a meeting of the band members that evening. It was unanimously agreed to refuse the invitation. The following evening a demand was made on me for another meeting. The prime movers were members employed at the College and the Duke of Leinster's estate. The meeting was held and the voting at this meeting was 17 for acceptance, 15 against. The 17 paraded, the 15 resigned. Within a week there was a change-over; the fifteen got control and fired the ring leaders of those who paraded. It is easy to excuse those fellows now; as they saw it, their only means of livelihood was threatened. It is worth mentioning that eight of the fifteen afterwards saw service in 1916. Of the seventeen, three or four of them were desirous of dying for Ireland as from mid July, 1922.

The start of the Volunteers.

It was usual in our district to have the Big House people give the natives a day out, by way of a flower show. The cottiers used show their onions, etc. The big end of the show was the Band. Always the Dublin Fusiliers' Band from Naas was present. Shortly after the King's visit a "Show" was held. I applied for the engagement; I submitted a musical programme. The finale was "A Nation Once Again". The Show Secretary, Miss Fowler, replied, the engagement was ours, but the finale would be "God Save the King". We didn't get that engagement.

One thing that helped me along the right lines was the fight put up by the Dublin Workers in 1913. It was the first time I commenced thinking along physical force lines. It was the only time that bad feelings came between Ua Buacalla and me. He was at that time an active member of the A.O.H. and anti-Larkin. We were not on speaking terms.

I was surprised, therefore, when in early 1914 he asked me to help to organise the Irish Volunteers. We had a meeting at Maynooth which was addressed by Mr. Laurence Kettle, Míceál Ua Buacalla, The Borough Surveyor, Dublin, a brother to Donnall, and by Art O'Connor, who at that time was the District Council Engineer.

O'Connor was a fine speaker. He was a great help in promoting the Volunteer movement throughout Kildare.

Our Company started off with a membership of 180. There was a Committee appointed, of which group I was a member. We appointed as our Company Captain a Reservist of the Dublin Fusiliers, named O'Toole. When war broke out in August, 1914 he returned to his Regiment. He acted as a Recruiting Sergeant by day and a Volunteer Company Captain in his spare time.

We drilled with broom handles during the Summer. I was appointed a Section Leader. I was totally unfitted for the appointment. To make matters worse, I had a fair sprinkling of ex-militiamen in my Section; their comments on my right to be their Leader often caused me embarrassment. On the whole, I got on quite well with my Section. After the outbreak of the war it was noticeable that the Colonels, Majors and Captains who were still with us showed an interest in us. Often they visited us to say we were fine fellows. Once our Company Captain ordered us to parade to be inspected by one Major Montgomery. I refused to parade my Section; I was fired immediately. However, I was reinstated within a short time.

We split after Mr. Redmond's Woodenbridge speech. The majority voted to remain under Redmond. Our total strength after the vote was 22, against us were 135.

We had funds amounting to about £80; the treasurer came with us and I advocated holding on to the moneys; eventually we split it fifty-fifty. The Redmondites spent their share on Caps and Haversacks; we spent ours on Arms and Ammunition.

Maynooth Volunteers, 1916.

On Holy Thursday night, 1916, Captain Tom Byrne arrived at Maynooth. Byrne was a Volunteer organiser. We had not met him before. He brought the news the Rebellion was to commence on Easter Sunday. I gathered Byrne's appointment was O.C. Midland Volunteers for the Rebellion period. Byrne had service with the Irish Brigade during the Boer War in South Africa.

Our arms consisted of one .45 revolver, ten rounds ammunition, fifteen .22 revolvers with thirty rounds ammunition each, one Lee Enfield rifle, fifty rounds ammunition, twenty American single barrel shot guns with approximately fifty rounds for each, home-made buckshot (made by ourselves during the Winter of 1915 and the Spring of 1916) and three pikes 7 feet long. The task given us by Byrne was to march to Bodenstown Churchyard where we would link up with other local units. With Dublin Volunteers on our left, Meath and Midland Volunteers on our right, our job was to prevent military from the Curragh entering Dublin and to destroy telegraph and telephone lines and railway tracks. It was necessary to keep the news within a small circle. However, on Easter Saturday all Volunteers were notified to get Confession on Easter Saturday night and (to be less conspicuous) to travel to outlying districts for Communion on Sunday morning. The hour of mobilisation was 10.15 Sunday morning, the centre Ua Buacalla's store. The following Volunteers mobilised on Sunday : Ua Buacalla, Liam Ó Raogain, Seán Graves, Patrick Kearney, John Kenny, Edward Kenny, Patrick Ledwith, Joseph Ledwith, Mathew Maguire, John Maguire, Timothy

Tyrell, Thomas Mangan, Thomas Magee, Patrick Kirwan and Patrick Colgan. Two Volunteers failed to mobilise - Diarmuid O'Neill and Michael O'Neill. I wanted to give the honour of announcing the starting of the Rebellion to Ua Buacalla. His example and his patriotism had kept us together. He always was a self-effacing man. He insisted that I would make the announcement. I cannot recall what I said, but it was something about we going out in rebellion, I emphasised the seriousness of what we were about to do and I remember well saying that if any member wished to withdraw no hard feelings would be held. No Volunteer withdrew. We were about to issue the guns, ammunition and pikes when a messenger on a motor cycle arrived with a message from Eoin MacNeill, addressed to Ua Buacalla, cancelling any movement of Volunteers.

We hung around discussing the matter. Before we dispersed a further message to Ua Buacalla from P.H. Pearse ordered us not to leave our district but to await further orders.

We never received further orders. On Easter Monday at 3 p.m. Father Malachi Eaton, the Junior Dean of Maynooth College, told me he had heard the Volunteers were in arms in Dublin. I rushed to Ua Buacalla's shop to find the shutters on the windows, the shop closed and Donnall busily engaged filling school bags with buckshot, and the guns and pikes withdrawn from their hiding place ready for issue. With the exception of Tyrell, the Maguire brothers, the O'Neill brothers and the Ledwith brothers, the remainder of us lived in the village and word was sent to all except Patrick Kirwan, about which I will explain later.

The following answered the call : Domnall Ua Buacalla, Liam Ó Raogain, Seán Graves, Patrick Kearney, John Kenny, Joseph Ledwith, Mathew Maguire, John Maguire, Timothy Tyrell, Thomas Mangan, Patrick Colgan. I had decided not to mobilise Patrick Kirwan, he was a married man with five small children; without his small earnings they had nothing to live on.

All the party had not reported before I was called to the store door where I found Kirwan in a towering rage due to my omission to call him. I tried to reason with him about his helpless family, all to no avail, he had lived to fight for Ireland, etc. I admitted him, he proved himself during the week in Dublin to be a courageous fellow. While we were awaiting the Volunteers to mobilise, a message was received from Eamon O'Kelly (a native of Maynooth) and Organiser for the Irish Volunteers, that he and Captain Byrne were on their way to join us.

O'Byrne, O'Kelly and Tom Harris of Prosperous arrived to us at 6 p.m. We had gained a new Volunteer during mobilisation, Oliver Ryan, a Dublin man employed on the indoor staff, Maynooth College. He told me he wanted to take part in the fight with us. I told him we had no gun to give him; from under his overcoat he produced a .22 rifle and ammunition; we took him on. What a grand fellow he proved to be, until he died in the South Dublin Union, and unknown, some ten years back.

Our muster finally was : Domnall Ua Buacalla, Liam Ó Raogain, Seán Graves, Joseph Ledwith, Mathew Maguire, John Maguire, Timothy Tyrell, Thomas Mangan, Patrick

Kirwan, Oliver Ryan, Captain Byrne, Lieut. O'Kelly, Thomas Harris, Patrick Weafer, Patrick Colgan.

We had been just about to march away when Weafer offered his services. He was a prominent member of the A.O.H. and was Captain of Maynooth Redmondite Volunteers. Having a spare gun, we took him along. Patrick Kearney asked to be released from his promise to take part. He was excused. John and Edward Kenny asked permission to go home to say farewell to their mother; they failed to return. Thomas Magee and Patrick Ledwith were absent at Fairyhouse races; they failed to report. As far as I can remember, the O'Neill brothers, having failed to mobilise on Sunday morning, were not mobilised on Easter Monday. So our total strength was 15. Whilst waiting for Captain Byrne to arrive, I sent John Maguire to Dunboyne to mobilise the Dunboyne Company. He spoke with Seán Boylan and arranged to have the Dunboyne men meet us at Leixlip Railway Station at 8 p.m. The Dunboyne men, who numbered about thirty, left to keep the appointment before Maguire left Dunboyne. It appears they went about a mile on the journey and then returned home. Celbridge Company we did not contact, as their O.C. was Art O'Connor, a member of the Volunteer Executive. O'Connor did not mobilise his men. The Celbridge Company was the best equipped unit in North Kildare. A sister of mine living in Celbridge district, having heard the Maynooth Volunteers had gone out, called on Art O'Connor for confirmation at his home. She afterwards told me she met Art O'Connor, Seamus O'Connor, Solicitor, Dublin, and Eamon Moran, Ballysax, at O'Connor's house, and that Art O'Connor said

the Rebellion was a foolish step and he was not taking part. As far as I know, the rifles of the Celbridge Company, Irish Volunteers, were surrendered to the R.I.C. the week after the Rebellion. Before we left Buckley's store all of us knew we were going to attempt to reach Dublin. To mislead the R.I.C., we marched down Maynooth street in the direction opposite Dublin and towards Maynooth College. The people left their houses to see us pass. We had to use a bit of persuasion on a would-be helper, James Murphy, who, having a few drinks over the normal, insisted he was coming with us. Two members of the R.I.C., Constables Peter Cleary (one of the Belfast R.I.C. strikers) and Michael Nolan, formed up behind us but desisted when Eamon O'Kelly presented his revolver and threatened to fire. Cleary had been one of the R.I.C. who in Belfast and some years earlier had struck for more pay. While many of these were dismissed, Cleary had been retained in the Force.

We entered Maynooth College by the main gate. I suggested we would look up John Kenny, who was employed as personal servant with the College President. We found him in his quarters; he said the President would not let him come with us. The President, Very Revd. Monsignor Hogan, came on the scene and appealed to us to return home. He told us we were poor fools who were going to be slaughtered. I was cheeky enough to contradict him. He told me I was an impertinent fellow. He then appealed to Ua Buacalla to go home; failing, he said 'If you kneel down I'll give you my blessing'. He gave it.

We left Maynooth College by the back gate leading to the canal banks. We proceeded along the canal banks as far as Pike Bridge, about a mile on the Dublin side of Maynooth. We then proceeded along the railway line. Byrne detailed me to proceed about 800 yards in advance of the party to see if the railway bridges were occupied. I was to return to the main body to give the O.K. or otherwise. The bridge at Leixlip Railway Station was not occupied by troops. Two local residents were standing on the bridge, and, full of my own importance, I ordered them to move off, letting them see I was an armed man; I had my little .22 revolver. Byrne, who was armed with a .45 revolver, took my gun when he detailed me for the advance duty. We continued on to Lucan; at this time it was growing dark. When I inspected the bridge at Lucan I jumped from the surrounding wall on to the tracks - the wall was about 5 ft. high - and gave the O.K. The same thing happened at Clonsilla Station. By the time we reached there it was quite dark and a heavy drizzle of rain was falling. From Clonsilla on to Blanchardstown. On reaching Blanchardstown Station from the Western side I saw what I took to be the rere lights of a motor car (I should have said that Thomas Mangan, who was my most intimate pal, accompanied me on the advance duty; he carried his shot gun). We crawled on towards the motor car lights, and it was only when I bumped my head off something hard that I learned the lights were the reflectors on a level crossing gate. As we had lost a bit of time deciding what to do about the alleged car, I again, as at Lucan and Clonsilla, jumped from the wall on to the tracks. It was a good bit before I hit the ground;

the wall was 15-20 feet high. I was wearing a heavy overcoat and when leaving Maynooth I put all the spare packets of powder we hadn't used in my overcoat pockets - 8 lb. packets. I was lucky to have escaped serious injury. When I gave Byrne the O.K. he ordered me to remain with the main body and we marched to Blanchardstown Station. It was a great rest for me, as from the time I left the main unit outside Maynooth, Mangan and I trotted to each railway bridge and then I trotted back to the main body; I reckon I had trotted about twelve miles without a break. On clearing Blanchardstown Railway Station Byrne wheeled right and took us across country. It was amazing how he guided us across the fields. I marched beside him. He nearly always brought us to a field gate, only once did he miscalculate where there was a gate or passage and then only by a few yards. During the march strict silence was the rule. After about two hours cross country march we reached a small clump of trees where we halted. Byrne took me with him and we proceeded for a quarter of a mile or so when he told me we were approaching a dangerous spot on the railway line - I think it was the Liffey Junction - we were confronted with a big clump of briars. Byrne crawled into them; I followed and found the going heavy, the odd briar that didn't stick in my coat got me in the legs or face. Finally Byrne had to extricate me. He found everything O.K. and we returned across the fields to rejoin the main body. The march proceeded across country. We had reached the middle of a field when there was a loud explosion. Byrne said it was in Dublin. Then we halted at a wall about 10 ft. high. Byrne left us, ordering us to keep very still. He was absent about

five minutes; on his return he pushed Mathew Maguire up the wall, he in turn pulled another fellow and so on until we were all on the wall. He then ordered Mathew Maguire to jump; Maguire was armed with a pike; he warned him to jump noiselessly. Maguire jumped and landed into a heap of empty tin cans. I believe it was the dumping place for Ashtown Race Course. We thought the whole British Army had attacked us.

We crossed another fence shortly afterwards and found ourselves opposite Kelly's pub, the Half-Way House. Leaving the road, we took to the canal banks and when we covered about a mile we got a fall-out. We had our first smoke and even though it was raining and the ground was wet we enjoyed the rest. The halt lasted about ten minutes. We proceeded along the canal banks and crossed into Finglas Golf Links, passing a few cottages on the way. Dawn was coming as we swung right and found ourselves on the banks of the Tolka River at a narrow point running along the new portion of Glasnevin Cemetery. Byrne ordered us to cross. We waded through up to our waists in water. I saw we were confronted with another bank of briars. I decided to be cute and let the other fellows trample the briars. The bank of the Glasnevin side was steep and I, who was last to cross, found the bank unclimbable with all the water which the others left behind. It was more slippery than glass, so, with the help of a couple of the fellows, I was handed up. We proceeded along the East wall of the Cemetery until we reached the outside of one of the towers on the main wall. There was a dry cistern in the tower and we hid our arms

in it. Byrne then announced he was going ahead to reconnoitre, telling us to rest in the meantime. We explored the Cemetery, reading the names on the tombstones. I found the grave where a relative of mine was buried. Byrne returned to us in about one hour's time and ordered us to collect our arms; he then told us we were going to try to get to the G.P.O. He said that in the event of attack we were to crouch close to the houses and to take care we didn't fire into each other. We set off out through the main Cemetery gates towards the city. Mathew Maguire was sent on in front to give us warning if there was danger. He was about fifty yards in front as we were approaching Doyle's corner. He had cleared the corner out of sight for about a minute when he rushed back. We all got down close to the houses as instructed. When Maguire reached us we learned he had come face to face with his boss, one William Chamberlaine of Crew Hill, Maynooth, and he couldn't face him. We continued our march and saw a couple of Volunteers on duty at Cross Guns Bridge. We went on down Berkeley Road into Blessington Street. Many of the residents were on the streets or in their windows. Some of them advised us to go home or we would be slaughtered, others cheered us on. When we reached the Parnell Monument a terrific rifle fire barrage greeted us. We thought we were being attacked and we all raced for the shelter of the monument. It turned out to be a volley of rifle shots from the occupants of the G.P.O. to welcome us. As we neared the G.P.O. the garrison cheered us on.

The G.P.O.

We entered the G.P.O. by the main entrance. Comdt. General Connolly was at the door. As we entered he shook each of us by the hand and smiled his welcome to us. Connolly was one of my heroes. I had never before met him. I felt all excited that he would show such an interest in us.

We were marched in to the main hall of the building where we were greeted by Kildare men who were members of the garrison: Frank Burke, Míceál Cowley, Tom Brien, Mick Croke, Paddy Byrne and others. We were issued with mugs of tea and buns by Brian O'Higgins. When we had finished eating Comdt. General Pearse spoke to us. His words have remained with me since. I think of them with great pride. He told us how glad he was to have us with them in the fight; that our action in marching from Kildare, even if we did no more in the Rebellion, would gain us a place in history. He then outlined the position to us. He did not expect any action at the G.P.O. for days. The Citizen Army at St. Stephen's Green was hard pressed and had not sufficient men. A group of Volunteers were cut off at the Dublin City Hall and 'Evening Mail' Office. He gave us the privilege of selecting our own post. He added, "the opinion is a rescue party at the City Hall would have little chance of surviving". As one, we all shouted "the City Hall". We were marched out to the G.P.O. yard to the magazine. Here we had further cause for pride in learning the Volunteer in charge was Jim O'Neill, a native of Leixlip. I handed over the powder I had brought from Maynooth. O'Neill made me feel I had saved the Rebellion by my contribution. With the knowledge that my name would

live in history and that I had made a great contribution with the 8 lbs. of powder to the success of the Rebellion, I felt elated. From the magazine each of us was issued with a home-made bomb. The bomb, about one ft. long, was a tin, cylindrical in shape, with a sulphur fuse sticking out through a hole at the top. The instructions on the manipulation of the bomb which we received were, "Strike a match, touch the match to the sulphur, count three, then throw". I reckon the weight of the bomb I got would be about 3-4 lbs.

We were reinforced with Seán Milroy, who wore Officer's uniform, J.J. Scollan of the Hibernian Rifles and two Engineers, who carried a sledge each and one crowbar. They were Thomas Walsh and his son, Dominick Street, Dublin. The latter is now employed as an attendant in An Dail. We left for the City Hall by the G.P.O. yard wicket, into Abbey Street and then to the quays opposite the Metal Bridge. Eamon O'Kelly was in the lead. When we reached the hut at the Southern end of the bridge the toll keeper demanded a half-penny each. O'Kelly produced his revolver and the toll keeper allowed us pass. We entered a side street, Byrne ordered us to enter the Dolphin Hotel and we found an open door and charged in. After a few minutes Byrne decided the Dolphin Hotel was no use to us, he ordered us out. We went up a narrow laneway and came to a glass door but found it locked. Byrne brought our Engineers into action. They gave the door a couple of whacks of the sledge and we were in. The building was the Exchange Hotel. Byrne rushed upstairs, I followed, he ran into a room, I ran into another where I found two fat men. They turned out to be two jugglers who were due to open at the Coliseum Theatre that night. They were English. In my most authoritative voice

I ordered them out, advised them to go home to England and not to speak to anyone as we had all the houses occupied between Dublin and Dun Laoghaire. They were glad to scam. Then Byrne brought us all together and issued orders. Tom Harris, Pat Kirwan, Seán Milroy, J.J. Scollan, Pat Weafer, Seán Graves, Timothy Tyrell and the younger Walsh were placed in positions to defend the ground floor.

The remainder of us were taken upstairs. When we reached a low-ceiling room Byrne pushed up a board in the ceiling and pulled himself up and ordered the remainder of us up. I was next into the vent in the roof and he pulled me up. I found myself on the roof of the hotel. He ordered me to cross over the roof to face on to Parliament Street. I couldn't see any place to cross and asked Byrne how I would get over and he said, "If you stand there much longer you'll not get the chance to cross". I raced up one side and down the other side of the roof. The remainder then crossed over. We were hardly two minutes on the roof when a bullet rebounded from a chimney and struck Tom Walsh in the groin. He was removed from the roof. He died that night at Jervis Street Hospital.

Before we left Maynooth we heard Irishmen who were serving with the English Regiments in Dublin had joined forces with the Volunteers, so when bullets came towards us from various places we did not know where we stood. As our job was to harry the City Hall garrison, it was decided to try some of the bombs in that direction. I crawled up on the ridge of the roof and gripped a chimney. Mathew Maguire lighted and handed me the bombs. We carried out instructions as to lighting and counting three and pitched the bomb.

Nothing happened, no explosion. I pitched about six of them. Maguire relieved me and he had similar results. Byrne decided that as we had no obvious enemy he would withdraw from the roof. He left Ua Buacalla and I on the roof. We were not long alone on the roof when we noticed a small black object landing on the roof ridge at the side of the chimney. It slid to the opposite side of the roof and there was a loud explosion. Byrne came to the roof to find what caused the explosion. It appears the black object was a rifle grenade. We, of course, had never heard of such a thing before. We were withdrawn from the roof. The remainder of the party were manning windows front and rear of the building. Ua Buacalla and I took up a position in one of the front windows. Some time later Byrne came into our room. He said he had been out on the streets and as far as he could estimate we were now surrounded. He told us he was going to the G.P.O. to seek advice. I prevailed on him to remain in the hotel, pointing out that only he had military command and skill. He said it was too dangerous to send anyone out. Ua Buacalla tried to get going. I opposed strongly; he had a wife and young family and I hadn't any responsibilities.

For some time prior to Byrne coming to us we could hear some one in the City Hall direction ordering, coaxing and threatening the garrison to charge. We, of course, didn't know on what the charge was to be.

Byrne wrote a note to Comdt. General Connolly telling him where we were and that we were under heavy fire and asking for information as to the location of the enemy. I left the hotel by the door we had entered; it was covered by

Tom Harris, Pat Kirwan, Seán Milroy and J.J. Scollan. I went down the laneway we had earlier traversed and there was a good deal of rifle fire. I saw no enemy as I came out on the quays at the Metal Bridge. There was the toll collector, who demanded a halfpenny. Having seen O'Kelly succeed in gaining passage by presenting his revolver, I followed suit and I was allowed to pass. I travelled down the quays to O'Connell Bridge. I didn't know my way to the G.P.O. by the side streets so turned up O'Connell Street. There were Volunteers in the corner house at the Bridge; they didn't speak, I didn't either. At the G.P.O. I met Joe Plunkett. He was in uniform and wore a soft hat. I told him I had a message for General Connolly. He brought me to Connolly, who, having read the message, ordered me to return at once and tell Byrne to lie low as we were surrounded and an attempt to rescue us would be made at dusk that evening. I got back as quickly as possible by the same route. At the corner of the lane leading to the hotel there was a greengrocer's shop. I entered and bought a packet of Woodbines and a box of matches, that left me 7d. out of my total cash which on leaving Maynooth was 9d. I met Byrne near the corner of the lane leading to the hotel. He asked me for Connolly's reply. I was giving it to him when a terrific burst of shot gun fire came from the hotel. We ran to and entered the hotel to find all the fellows upstairs hanging from the front windows firing like mad. I went to a window and saw a group of soldiers using a sledge on the front door of the 'Evening Mail' offices. They were soon forced to break off and they didn't know where to run and, in the excitement, ran directly into

the shot gun fire. Not one of them (I would say about 20-25) was left standing. I remember seeing the Officer fall and we gave a big cheer. Then there was no one to fire at. Suddenly the Officer jumped up and the only Lee Enfield rifle in our crowd rang out and he toppled round the corner out of sight. Afterwards in Frongoch I learned from Gerald Boland that the Officer was killed. Gerald was on his way to report to his unit at Jacobs and was forced to take shelter in Lord Edward Street and witnessed the fight.

I must have been terribly excited at the time as I was chivvied afterwards by some of the fellows who told me I was hanging out of a window without a gun and calling on the soldiers to keep coming on. That put paid to our "lying low". Byrne ordered us to evacuate the building. We broke a wall into the house next door. It turned out to be the lock-up plumbing shop of Sir Patrick Shortall, a recruiter for the British and a member of the Dublin Corporation. We were only allocated our positions in Shortalls when a terrific outburst of gunfire was laid down. None of us ever heard anything like it. It was machine gun fire. Tom Harris, Joseph Ledwith and I were posted inside the front door. Our orders were to engage the soldiers if they attempted to get through the outer door. Harris had a .45 revolver, Ledwith a shot gun and bomb and I the same as Ledwith. The remainder of the party was spread throughout the other two landings. The firing became more intense and closer. The soldiers from the City Hall, with reinforcements from Ship Street, had entered the Exchange Hotel and riddled the lower ceilings with machine gun fire. From our place at the front door we

could see the lower portion of a soldier's legs through Shortall's window. Tom Harris asked me if he would fire and I advised against it. After a time the soldiers withdrew; it was a narrow shave for us; we hadn't a chance of survival. Judging by the madness we displayed in the Exchange Hotel we would have been a danger to ourselves, as much maybe as to our enemy. Within an hour of the fight at the 'Mail' Offices, Byrne, who had gone out to scout around, announced there was a chance we might be able to evacuate. We were to go out singly by the back door; we were to keep close to the houses; we were to fight it out if attacked. We started off, everyone for himself. I was last out. I was first to the Metal Bridge. The toll collector was absent. Crowds lined the quay (Northern side) footpath. I ordered them to move to the edge of the footpath to give us cover. They all did except one old man who wore a topper; he refused to make way. As our crowd was dashing across the Metal Bridge with what we thought was our lives at stake I regret to say I pushed him on to the roadway, an act I always regret having been guilty of. We reached the G.P.O. to be received as heroes. We were told we would be mentioned in dispatches in "War News" the next day. I was terribly disappointed "War News" was not published to have us mentioned in dispatches. I was very glad that fate had been so kind during the time the Courtsmartial were being held after the surrender.

We were allowed to rest until midnight on that first day of our entry to the Rebellion. Let me add that in what was the sharpest fight in Dublin, Mount Street excepted, I did not have the opportunity of firing one shot.

We reported for duty at midnight. Some of our fellows were posted to the roof of the G.P.O., a place we were all anxious to get to. The Maguire brothers, Thomas Mangan, Joseph Ledwith and I were marched off and placed in the section upstairs extending along from the corner of Henry Street to Prince's Street. Amongst others in that section were Joseph O'Duffy, a Liverpool-Irishman, one of the Kimmage Camp contingent, and some others whom I did not get to know. The corridor we occupied had a series of offices, having glass partitions facing inwards. O'Duffy, Ledwith and I occupied the room nearest to Henry Street, facing Earl Street. It was a large office, as we learned next day. It was the office and apparently part of the living quarters occupied by the Secretary to the Post Office. Tuesday night passed off very quietly except for occasional rifle firing from the roof. On Wednesday J.J. Walshe came along and ordered us to smash the glass partitions. We made quite a good job of the smashing. We noticed that in the room I occupied there were several safes standing on the floor. Sometime during Wednesday we were ordered to break open the safes to search for arms. Some other fellows came along to help burst the safes open. The safes contained sovereigns in some, half-sovereigns in others, five shilling and four shilling pieces in the remaining safes. When it was found the safes contained money, the doors were shut to again and secured. As we had prized open the door of each safe by driving a bar into the opening side, we had then to force each door back as near as possible to its original position. Months afterwards I read a tribute to the Volunteers for their

honesty in leaving the moneys untouched; the safes were found in the debris with cash intact.

Duffy and I continued to force open presses, desks and boxes in the room. In one press we found the blood-stained 2/Lieutenant's British Army uniform of a son of the Secretary. He had been killed in France some short time earlier. In an envelope we found a lock of his fair hair, marked by the boy's mother. I forget the name of the boy. There were a number of letters from the boy to his mother. With the uniform was a .45 revolver in a holster. Duffy having reported the finding of the revolver was allowed to retain it.

On Wednesday evening we were alerted for an alleged forthcoming attack by British Cavalry which it was said would come from Amiens Street Station. Up to the time of the alert nobody had thought of putting any protection against the windows. Whilst the precaution was taken from flying glass on the inside of the corridor, no one thought of breaking the glass in the windows. After the alert some one came along and advised us to barricade the windows with books. Ledwith and I, who occupied the two adjoining windows at the Henry Street end, collected a lot of books (ledgers) and piled them into the lower space of the windows, which we had raised. We left sufficient openings to allow our shot guns to be used. It was very exciting waiting for the charge which never came. On Wednesday also a rumour reached our position that the Germans had landed and had swept all opposition out of the way and were marching along the Naas road towards Dublin. I was thrilled to think the Germans had selected Kildare

to land in. It never struck me Kildare being inland it wasn't possible at that time to land there. After the alert things were very quiet. During the night I wandered down the corridor and contacted the Maguires who were in a front room, too, and Mangan who occupied a window overlooking the G.P.O. yard.

The garrison had dwindled by Thursday morning in our section to Duffy, the Maguires, Ledwith, Mangan and myself. I don't know how this came about but all who were there then were these few Maynooth men. Fires were raging along the block extending from Hopkins' corner up to Abbey Street. Hoytes' chemist shop was a most attractive sight with globular fire balls rising into the skies and dying out. The glass tower of the D.B.C. restaurant was also an attractive fire. The flames licking up the glass tower, dying out, the tower twisting and bending and finally collapsing. By midday Clery's was alight. The heat coming across the street made things uncomfortable. About mid-day on Thursday we were joined by an extraordinary character. He was known to us as 'The Cuban'. He was dressed in a loose-fitting cloth overcoat with a multi-coloured belt and a revolver stuck in the belt. He told me he had fought in several wars in Mexico and the Southern States. He spoke with a drawl and used the vilest language I had heard up to that time. He had such a vile tongue I wondered how he got into the Volunteers. The Cuban ranged the whole corridor. Whilst he was away from me a Volunteer came to me and said, "It is possible a gas attack is about to be launched on the G.P.O.". He handed me a three-quart can containing a liquid like plain water. He instructed in the event of

attack by gas we were to dip our handkerchiefs in the mixture and spread the handkerchief over our mouths and noses. Having told all the others about the anti-gas mixture I placed the can on a step of a stone stairs leading towards the G.P.O. yard. Some time afterwards my attention was attracted by loud shouting. The shouting and swearing was coming from the Cuban who having found the tin can on the stairway took a long drink, after which someone told him he had drunk the anti-gas mixture. He rushed towards me, holding his tummy and casting me to perdition for poisoning him. At the time I didn't care if he was poisoned. I felt he would bring us bad luck with his bad language. He reported to the First Aid Station. I learned on Friday he suffered no ill effects from his drink of anti-gas fluid.

We had from time to time made enquiries about having some food. The last time we got food was on Tuesday night. Late on Thursday afternoon I called to the kitchen. I saw Desmond Fitzgerald who told me there was no food available then. He gave me a bucket filled with tea and two or three old empty salmon tins to drink from. I called some of the fellows to have tea. We found that the nice strong tea had been given us in a bucket which had contained Jeyes Fluid. I returned to the kitchen and handed in the bucket. I was promised more tea, which was to be delivered to us. It never arrived. Thursday night passed quietly, no shooting worth mentioning. We spent the night watching the fire making headway in Clerys.

Friday was uneventful until some time late in the afternoon the first shell hit the G.P.O. It was followed

by a couple more shells. The roof of the building went on fire. We were ordered to withdraw from our post. We entered the main building. There was a good deal of confusion and after a time we went into the G.P.O. yard. At this time fire hoses had been laid on the roof. Amongst those I saw using a water hose was Willie Pearse. After a time the fire became more intense and spread from the Henry Street corner along the roof. Late in the evening I saw Tom Clarke, The O'Rehilly and Eamon O'Kelly together. O'Kelly called me and introduced me to the others. One of them asked if I knew the Coliseum Theatre. I did. Tom Clarke then instructed me to proceed to the Coliseum and, if possible, inspect the roof to find if it were a slate or a leaden roof. He said an Officer would follow and I was to await his arrival and report to him. I collected Mangan, the two Maguires and Ledwith. A ladder was standing against the wall bordering Prince's Street and when the last of us had reached the top we pulled the ladder with us and reached the street nearly opposite the Coliseum. The main gates and the entrance to the theatre were open. We went upstairs. It was quite dark inside and we had nothing but matches to light us on the way. possibly there was electric light in the theatre; that never struck us; we had no electricity in our homes at Maynooth.

We failed to find any exit to the roof although all of us tried hard. We then decided to await the arrival of the officer. We took up positions throughout the theatre. Mathew Maguire became a bit hysterical, I am sure for want of sleep. He had got the idea that I had taken him away from the G.P.O. to shoot him. He was still

in possession of the pike. The other fellows tried to reason with him to no avail. I suggested to his brother that he should take him up to the top of the building and let him have a sleep. The only means of defence I could think of was like we had in Shortall's shop at Parliament Street, Ledwith on one landing, Mangan next and I covered the door through which we had entered. When leaving the G.P.O. it was quite bright; when I took up the position inside the door it had grown dark. I cannot say how long we were in the building before darkness fell. I could hear movement in the G.P.O. The roof was a mass of flame. I cannot estimate how long we maintained our positions in the theatre, it was quite a while. I eventually called Ledwith and instructed him to cross into the G.P.O., contact O'Kelly and remind him we were still awaiting the coming of the Officer. Ledwith reported back that he had gone into the yard of the G.P.O. and had gone as close as possible to the blazing building; there was nobody in the G.P.O. I could scarcely believe him. I brought him back to the ladder and he crossed into the G.P.O. I sat on top of the wall. He shouted; I shouted. There was no one in the G.P.O. We returned to the Coliseum. I told Mangan the position. I didn't tell the Maguires lest it would upset Mathew.

In 1926 I was ordered by Peadar McMahon, who was then Chief of Staff at Parkgate, to write an article for 'An t-Oglac'. I recounted this incident in the article; this may be confirmed by inspecting my draft at G.H.Q. For some reason, the part saying Ledwith had the honour of being the last Volunteer to be in the G.P.O. during the

Rebellion was deleted from the article. On enquiring the reason I was given to understand the deletion was made on the instructions of Commandant Brennan-Whitmore who at the time had a sort of managerial appointment with 'An to-Oglac.'

We again took up our position in the Coliseum Theatre. We had a feeling the officer would turn up to us. How long we waited I have no idea; it seemed to be hours. Mangan came to me and reported he could see a light under the door of a room near his position. We listened close to the door and heard voices. It was decided Mangan would open the door and I would cover the door from the landing. Mangan was about to open the door when it was opened by a priest from the inside. The priest was Father O'Flanagan, C.C., Marlboro' Street. He had heard our Confessions when we had returned to the G.P.O. on Tuesday evening from Parliament Street. He was very relieved to find the people in the room were friends. The room, incidentally, was a bar. The drink in it did not interest us, we were T.T., the boxes of chocolates would have been welcome if we had discovered them earlier.

There were twenty or thirty people in the room, wounded men and Cumann-na-mBan; amongst them being Eamon O'Kelly, who had a foot wound received in the G.P.O. after we left, Desmond Fitzgerald and Frank Sheridan, Rathfarnham. The only lady I knew was Miss Louise Gavan-Duffy. Father O'Flanagan told us he required our help to remove the wounded to hospital. I told him we had to wait on for the arrival of an officer to whom I had to report. He got very cross and said unless we came to his aid prisoners would perish. It was then I saw Eamon O'Kelly who told

me it was our duty to help remove the wounded. We then decided to lay down our guns, which Father O'Flanagan threw over the G.P.O. wall. I still had my .22 revolver. I intended to hold on to it. Father O'Flanagan, before we moved off with the wounded, put us on our word of honour and asked us individually if we had any other arms. I had to surrender my valuable .22 which he also threw across the wall. I was helping to carry a very badly wounded man in a blanket, the other carrier was a man in uniform who was called Doctor Doyle. The wounded man was naked. He had a bullet wound under one eye, another in his chest and another near the abdomen. McGrath, I was told, was the wounded man's name. Whilst carrying him over a laneway he asked for a smoke. I thought he was delirious and I poked a finger between his lips. He wasn't having any of that. Dr. Doyle produced a cigarette which I lighted and held to his lips. He tried to take a pull and couldn't manage it. Finally we reached a street where a house projected. We halted there. I then noticed a man carrying a big Red Cross flag. I learned afterwards he was the caretaker from the 'Freeman's Journal' offices. The reason for the halt I found was occasioned by the fact that a sandbag barrier manned by British soldiers barred our way further down the street. The street was Jervis Street. Father O'Flanagan and the flag bearer advanced to be recognised. Whilst they were going forward someone said if the British found some of the helpers had been under arms we would all be shot. The Cumann-na-mBan girls ripped their red crosses from their aprons and pinned them on the arms of our coats. We were ordered to advance. I was supporting O'Kelly, who was able to travel by hopping

on the good foot and leaning on my shoulder. O'Kelly and I were the last to enter the hospital. We were all halted in the hall facing a big stairway. The British Officer gave the order to move and the party turned left. All had turned left except O'Kelly and I when two men wearing white coats ran down the stairs, grabbed O'Kelly and carried him upstairs. I remained in the hall. It never occurred to me to follow the three upstairs. When the officer and escort returned to the hall with the men folk no comment was made to find me standing there. (The explanation of the snatching of O'Kelly by the two is O'Kelly had been for many years a medical student in Dublin; the two men who took him away were members of the hospital staff to whom he was known).

We were lined up in the hospital hall. Those present being D. Fitzgerald, F. Sheridan, Mark Cummins, North Great George's Street, Ledwith, the Maguire brothers, Mangan and myself. A promotion was given me that night in Jervis Street which I was not enthusiastic about. When we were lined up the officer asked who was in charge of the party. Desmond Fitzgerald, pointing to me, said, "This man is, sir". The officer then asked me if he let us move off would we guarantee to rescue all wounded, theirs and ours. I promised to do so. He then said he would guarantee our safety out of sight. We moved off back to the Coliseum Theatre.

We sat on the stairway and it wasn't long until all of us were sound asleep. I woke to find the roof of the Coliseum ablaze over the section where we were sleeping. Having got all awake we left the burning Coliseum and proceeded down Prince's Street. Some distance down the

street we saw an open Ford touring car. We all got into the car; one of the crowd cranked the car; it wasn't any of the Maynooth boys; none of us could handle a motor. We started off in the car; it only travelled its own length and then stopped. Where we were bound for if the car had travelled I don't know. We proceeded on foot down the street and found a furniture store (Messrs. Todd Burns) open. We climbed into the store. Desmond Fitzgerald had again taken charge. He lined us up and ordered us to number. He had a most unorthodox method of numbering after each group of three, the No. 3 called out three twice. I was No. 2, Mark Cummins was No. 3. We tried numbering in this manner a few times; everything went fine up to No. 3 who was asleep on his feet. We got fed up with Fitzgerald and refused to carry on his numbering. I strolled round the store room, the only chance I had of keeping awake. After a time, for no apparent reason, we left the store, retraced our steps half way up the street and turned right. We saw a door open on the opposite side of the street. We dashed across the street and into the house. It was a big house and although there were only eight of us in the house Fitzgerald said there were too many. He asked me would I accompany him to North Strand. He might as well have said North Pole; North Strand was miles away to me. Against my advice Ledwith left with him. I learned from Ledwith afterwards that they went towards College Green where they separated; Fitzgerald got to Eoin MacNeill's house, Rathfarnham; Ledwith managed to get to Maynooth on Sunday morning.

Accompanied by Mangan, I had a look around the yard of the house. We found the entrance to a cellar which was used as a refuse dump. We climbed down into the cellar, pulling the cover of the entrance close. Portion of Abbey Street (that was where we were) had commenced to burn; the cellar was quite bright from the fires seeping through the grating outside the house on the street.

Mark Cummins had become highly strung in the G.P.O. during the week. He became restive again during the night. Mangan and I kept awake during the night. Whilst the others slept next morning we two came out of the cellar and entered the house. The house was opposite Easons. It apparently was used as an auctioneer's salerooms. There were posters announcing sales. In a press in the kitchen we found a small piece of bread and we ate it. We found a mattress and blankets on the floor in a room; we lay down and were soon asleep. I thought I was dreaming someone was beating me. In fact, there was; when I awoke a middle aged woman was whacking me with an umbrella. There were two other women (the caretaker of the house and her daughter) in the room. The lady with the umbrella took a poor view of us. Her premises, which she valued at £5,000, had been destroyed. She was the wife of the owner of the Prince's Bar, Prince's Street. I got on the right side of her when I told her I had a marvellous lunch for 6d. in her house some few months earlier. Mrs. Tierney (that was the lady's name) was overwrought but before she left she was all over us.

The lady of the house enquired if we were hungry. We were. She opened the kitchen press to give us the bread. She blamed the military for stealing it. She made us tea.

I brought in the other fellows from the cellar. After tea we said the Rosary and the ladies withdrew. They had military passes from the British.

John Maguire made his way to the roof of the house to see how and where the military were located. He reported there was a sandbag barrier at the O'Connell Street end of Abbey Street and another at the end of Liffey Street, both manned by military. We moved into the yard attached to the house where we remained for quite a time. The block opposite the house was burning fiercely and finally the house next door to where we were went on fire. I noticed during the morning that the house beyond it had a sign "The Boys' Club" on it, but it didn't catch fire, though the house on the far side of it did, as well as the one on the side nearest to us. Finally the house we had occupied took fire. Earlier Mangan and I had travelled a piece down the street underground where the gratings were along the pathway. We discussed whether we should travel underground and make our escape. We weren't too clear whether this were possible or not and eventually decided it would be a mean thing to try to escape. I had lost all track of time. It was quite bright; in fact, the sun was shining. We had a long discussion as to what was best to do. It was decided to make a dash towards the Quays. I volunteered to go first. The arrangement made was to wait a couple of minutes after I left and if I got through the others would follow. At the end of the yard there was a wooden gate having a small wicket. We knelt in the yard and said a few prayers for a successful dash. I stepped out through the wicket gate. I had just got clear of the gate pier when a shout "Halt, put them up" came from

the barrier which was only about fifty yards away. I halted. I was again ordered to put them up. This was terribly hard to do. I was helped to make up my mind quickly when ten or twelve rifles were pointed at me. Before leaving the yard we had decided we were not going to surrender. We had discussed the question of surrender and we had convinced ourselves that it was better to be killed even making a dash than to be caught and then killed. We felt there would be no live prisoners. I reached the sandbags and over them, much to my surprise still alive, I was taken by a little brat of a 2nd Lieutenant of the Royal Irish Regiment who kept prodding me with his revolver and telling me what a pleasure he would have in killing me. Luckily for me his attention was attracted when the other boys came out. We were put up against the front of a house beside the barricade. The brat placed a soldier facing each of us. He ordered the soldiers to kneel on one knee; the soldiers had levelled their rifles on us. Then a voice above and behind us spoke and enquired what was happening. The brat said he was going to shoot us swine. The voice said he was an Irishman, he was against us, we had fought a clean fight and if the officer gave the order to fire he would fire on him. We thought it was a joke to prolong our agony. The brat was in a rage. He ordered the soldiers to stand up; the voice and the brat kept on arguing. The voice reminded the brat that only for the Rebellion they would be in France and he wouldn't like if taken a prisoner to be shot out of hand. An escort shortly afterwards marched us to Mary's Abbey. On the way the soldier on my right said to me, "That was a near thing, I was the fellow facing you". I said he couldn't help it. He then asked me if I remembered him. I didn't. He told me he came from Edenderry, Offaly, and

that he had travelled in the same carriage from Broadstone Station to Maynooth one Sunday evening some time before when we were returning from seeing a football game between Louth and Kerry. He mentioned the name of a fellow traveller whom I remembered as being in the carriage. The fellow was a Maynooth man living in Edenderry named Ben Willock.

At Mary's Abbey we were searched and our particulars were taken by, amongst others, D/O. Hoey, 'G' Division. We were then taken to Capel Street where there were a great many men who had been collected from the Church Street area. We were kept separate from the Church Street men by a couple of sentries from the Leinster Regiment. One of the Church Street men was named Daly. He was a footballer in his native place, Sallins, and knew Mangan. He was known on the football field as the "Divil Daly". The men's women folk brought them food and tea in cans. Daly handed some of it to us and was caught doing so. He was promptly put in with us. At dark the men from Church Street were marched into a house opposite where we were (Dohsons, Capel Street). Just as they were moving off Daly got mixed with them and escaped from our lot. We were about an hour in Capel Street when a large group of prisoners were escorted past us. I believe they were the Four Courts' garrison. When it had got dark we were moved into a house (Skeffington's sweet shop). We were put in behind the counter. It was some time later we discovered there was another man there before us. We tried to hold a conversation with him. He was not talking. Hours afterwards the door of the shop was opened and another fellow was pushed in. The soldiers when shoving him in announced to us "Here's one of your 'Shinner' leaders, Whelan". It was

Jim Whelan, Ormond Quay. It was only after Whelan's arrival we learned the identity of our silent comrade. He was Seán Milroy, our friend of the Exchange Hotel. During the night Whelan was subjected to annoyance and abuse from the soldiers, who kept informing him he would be shot at dawn.

On Sunday morning we had a new guard. The Corporal was a decent poor fellow. When he learned I was from Kildare he became quite friendly. He told me he was from Carlow; his name was Boland. As the day wore on he became inebriated. He couldn't understand why we should start a rebellion until the lads returned from the Dardenelles. I said what would happen if they didn't return. He brought in porter in his water bottle. Only Mangan and Seán Milroy drank porter. We collected amongst us and asked Boland to bring us in some bread; in all we collected 3/-. I gave up my remaining 7d. He brought us a big loaf, some cheese and another water bottle full of porter. Mangan and Milroy had an unexpected feast. By this time he was very tight. He was sitting on the counter drinking with us when a Sergeant came along and placed him in arrest. We saw him next morning so his crime must have been overlooked. Late on Sunday night we were moved to a tap room at Dobson's publichouse. It was alive with fleas after the large crowd of men who were there on Saturday night. Loose corks were scattered over the floor, the place was filthy. The Sergeant in charge of our guard (a Dublin man) was a vicious type. He was an ignorant thug. Immediately he had us inside the tap room he posted sentries in the room. He instructed them to shoot at the least sign of movement. He searched us about twenty times during the night. He seemed very

anxious to get possession of a gold watch and chain which Frank Sheridan wore. He claimed to know from which house Sheridan had, as he described it, "highway robbed". He kept nagging us all night. After each searching performance he made us sit on the floor but refused to allow us lean against the wall. We had to sit upright. At the least sign of sleep he ordered us to stand up to be searched. He was particularly antagonistic towards Whelan. Whelan told me afterwards he remembered the fellow. Whelan was a member of a jury when the fellow was charged, found guilty and sentenced to six months jail for snatching a sheep which was being driven down the quays. On Monday morning we were marched off to Ship Street Barracks. We were only after being placed in a room when a fellow came in to enquire if we required him to send any messages to our people. He was so nice that instinct warned us country lads to have nothing to do with him. When he had withdrawn without his services being availed of Seán Milroy told us he was Johnnie Barton of the 'G' Division.

When we reached Ship Street Barracks the square was packed with military who were being addressed by Sir Mathew Nathan, the under Secretary. He was telling the soldiers what fine fellows they were. About 3 p.m. on Monday we were marched from Ship Street to Richmond Barracks. We were placed in an upstairs landing in 'K' block; our room overlooked the gymnasium. We saw P.H. Pearse, Major McBride, Tom Clarke and Willie Pearse being removed from the gymnasium on Tuesday morning. On our way to Richmond Barracks we were accompanied by a number of women "Separationists"; they did not like us. Over the door of our room was an allocation

notice, "This room to accommodate ten men". We were soon joined by Harry Boland, Peadar Slattery, Dinny O'Callaghan, Brady, Talbot Street, whose first name I cannot remember, and a publican from Moore Street who, although he did not take part in the Rebellion, had received a slight graze of a bullet in the throat. I cannot recall the publican's name. He wasn't too friendly to us. He blamed us for all the troubles and losses he had and was suffering. Harry Boland knew the fellow; he used to play with the Purveyors' Hurling Club. We got fed up with him; he didn't wish to be associated with us. Finally we ostracised him. We also had a large number of fellows who were picked up for looting or were known criminals. They became quite uppish towards us when a military fellow who came into the room advised them not to mix with us scum. On Wednesday we nearly had a fight with them; they commenced shouldering us any time we passed them. Harry Boland organised us and when they commenced walking up and down the room five or six of us marched against them and crashed into them. They came at us again and we got the better of them. Afterwards they became quite docile and friendly. We awakened one morning to hear shooting. We decided some of our leaders were being shot. We all knelt and recited the Rosary. We numbered about 60 in the room. Each morning we were issued with one hard biscuit and a bucket of unsweetened tea and we were given a couple of empty salmon tins as drinking utensils. The biscuit was so hard it lasted us for several hours.

It used grow very chilly at night time so we lay as close as possible. Whilst Harry Boland was with us we arranged for him to make a pillow of my legs. I did the

same with his legs. During the first few days in Richmond we had several identification parades. Harry Boland, Seán Milroy, O'Callaghan, Slattery and Brady were identified. Amongst the crowd brought in to identify us was a soldier who had been a prisoner in the G.P.O. I met him on Thursday in the G.P.O. He was carrying out some job near our post. Some Volunteers were taunting him and I intervened on his behalf. I learned he had worked at Kilcock in his pre-army days as a groom with Joe Kelly, The Mount, Kilcock. When he was brought in to identify anyone he could he walked down the line and failed to recognise us. When passing me he winked and passed on. I believe he came from Rathfarnham and although he knew all the Rathfarnham Volunteers he did not identify one person for the British. I heard he called to the relatives of the Volunteers in Rathfarnham to inform them of the welfare of the Volunteers. The Volunteers who had been identified were notified one morning they were being removed for Courtmartial the same day at 10.30. Harry Boland suggested to the others that they should go before the Court as "snappy" as possible. Jim Whelan had a cut-throat razor and they had a shave of sorts. The only water for all of them to use was contained in one of our drinking receptacles (salmon tins). I felt very sad at parting from Harry Boland. I had met Harry a few years before at the G.A.A. Annual Convention where, although only a young lad, Harry used to play a major part.

The day I was deported there were numerous identification parades. They were being held continuously during the forenoon. Looking out through the window of our room we could see two R.I.C. men from home amongst those brought in

for the purpose of identifying. They did not come to our room, for which we were grateful. The two R.I.C. from Maynooth were Sergeant Dunne and Constable Cleary. They were two inoffensive fellows and perhaps if they had reached our room they might have been as kind to us as was the Rathfarnham soldier. At about 4.30 on the day of deportation our names were called. We were issued with a tin of bully beef and two of the hard biscuits. At about 5.30 we were taken on to the square and formed into column of fours. We were kept there for quite a while during which detectives roamed each rank and pulled out various Volunteers for Courtmartial. Hoey was very active. He appeared to be relishing his job. Another fellow - a tall grey-haired fellow - was active too. I was told by someone that fellow was the Superintendent in charge of the 'G' Branch.

We hadn't heard that other men had been deported already. We hadn't a notion what was going to happen to us. All sorts of rumours spread through the ranks. The most persistent rumour was we were being taken to France to dig trenches. In the crowd on the square were a number of Enniscorthy and Galway men. Many of the Galway men wore báneens. It was the first time I had seen a báneen. A couple of the Enniscorthy men were in postmen's uniform. I had eaten the bully beef before I left the square. It tasted fine. Eventually we moved off out the main gate of Richmond Barracks and headed towards the city. We passed through the grounds of the Royal Hospital, which was then the Headquarters of General Friend. We marched via the North Quays on towards O'Connell Bridge. As we got to the Northern quays there were many people about who acted very friendly. At Ellis Quay Pawn Office I saw two people from home. One failed

to recognise us. The other, a young lad named Weafer (Frank), ran alongside us. He gave us news of our relatives and I asked him would he send word to our folk that we were alive and well. He asked if I required anything and I asked him for cigarettes and matches. He disappeared but caught up with us at O'Connell Bridge. He made a couple of attempts to get to me but was stopped by the military. He finally succeeded in getting through the ranks and gave me two packets of cigarettes and a box of matches. He cycled to Maynooth that night to give the news to our relatives.

In the rank in front of me there was a Volunteer in uniform. When people shouted to us to keep our hearts up he used answer that they never were down. He was a source of great encouragement to me, who could easily have cried at the thought of being driven out of Ireland. This Volunteer was Mark Wilson, a Kildare man, a native of Athy, who was living in Dublin. He was a great man on that occasion. We reached the North Wall where we were put aboard a cattle boat. Some fellow in the crowd said we were being taken out to sea to be dumped. Nobody took this suggestion seriously. When we had set off from the North Wall a grand fellow in uniform joined us Maynooth fellows. He remembered our arrival at the G.P.O. on Easter Tuesday morning. He was Eamon Bulfin whom I got to know better whilst in Stafford Jail.

We landed in England, at what port I don't know. We were put on a train. We travelled for several hours to find ourselves at Stafford. A number of locals were there to give us an unfriendly greeting. I can recall a fish-woman with a basket of fish pelting us with herrings. A couple of men broke through the escort near where I was but they

soon retreated as some of our fellows set about them. When we got into the prison - a most forbidding place it appeared - a batch of prisoners were marched on either side of a stairway and ordered to turn inwards. I was a good bit back in the group. They were ordered to go forward and, as far as I could see, they walked through holes in the wall. With the next group I went upstairs to the second landing. It was then I learned the fellows were not marched through the wall. I found myself standing facing a cell. Our group was ordered to go forward. I stepped into cell 2/2. When the door closed on me I felt as if I was enclosed in a tomb. I tried the door, which was studded with bolts and closed flat with the wall. It was the first time since I left home that I felt defeated and depressed. After a short time the cell door opened and a military Corporal came in. He was Corporal Conner, one of our warders. He said to me I was an awful fool to have followed a Socialist like Connolly. I didn't know what a Socialist meant; I felt it was a name given by the British to belittle Connolly. I argued against the Corporal without knowing what I argued about. He asked me if I had any money. I hadn't any. He asked me if I had any souvenirs of the rebellion. I hadn't. He told me if I had anything it would be better to give it to him as the Government would take it and it would be better to give to him than to them. It was my first close contact with an English soldier; I was not impressed with the loyalty this fellow showed. I had saved a good few of the cigarettes from those Weafer gave me. I had no match. I asked Connor for a match. He told me I was not allowed to smoke. I didn't believe him. He gave me three matches for a silver match

case I had received as a Christmas gift a few months before.

Shortly after O'Connor left we had breakfast. It was a right good breakfast too; a tin of hot cocoa, a lump of bread with a piece of margarine. After weeks of the hard biscuits at Richmond Barracks it was real good. After breakfast I took off my shirt and vest; they were covered with lice. I threw them in a corner of the cell. We were marched down shortly afterwards for medical inspection and baths. Before entering the bath we were made leave our clothes outside the bath house. When I had finished my bath I emerged to find my clothes gone and a suit of canvas khaki left and a gray-back shirt. I felt very humiliated to be lousy but lousy I was in a big way. A good few other fellows were lousy too. I was glad when I got back in my cell to hide my shame. Later that day my cell door opened and two medical orderlies entered. They told me to let down my trousers as they were about to treat me for having crabs. I had never heard of such a thing as crabs; the only crabs I had known of were the crabs that grew on trees. I protested violently about the assertion that I had crabs. I thought the inference was I had a disease. The soldiers explained the position to me and I took the treatment. I hoped nobody would hear of the ignominious treatment I had to have. When the soldiers pulled my cell door to, the lock slipped before the door closed so I had an opportunity of having a look out the corridor. The soldiers entered the cell opposite mine, leaving the door open. Patrick Grealish from Oranmore, Co. Galway, was the occupant of this cell. Patrick seemed to be even more mystified with the treatment than I was. Like my cell, Patrick's lock slipped too and

the door remained open. I could see Patrick standing in the cell as the soldiers left him, amazed at what had happened to him, even more amazed than I had been.

The food during our stay at Stafford was: breakfast 7.30, a portion of black, badly baked bread and a small piece of margarine, about half a pint of very weak, unsweetened tea; dinner 12.45, a piece of very bad potato, less than half a pint of what was supposed to be soup; in reality it was greasy water. Only on one occasion was I lucky enough to get a small bit of meat. For tea, served at 4.30, the same menu as for breakfast. Sunday was our worst day. Breakfast was served at 7 a.m., lunch 12.30, tea 3.30. I was always hungry - I felt more hungry after a meal than before it. I suffered a greivous loss when I was having my bath - my cigarettes were retained. When I got my clothes back after fumigation I found a tiny little butt of a cigarette in the corner of a waistcoat pocket. I had a good many unlighted pulls from the butt until it finally dissolved. During the first few weeks which we spent in Stafford Jail we were in solitary confinement except that in the early morning when emptying our slops we were able to have a few words. We were taken out to the yard for half an hour's exercise each afternoon. There were two flagged circles in the prison yard. We marched around the circles spaced one yard apart. Talking was taboo. We managed an odd word nevertheless. Until we were allowed to mingle we attended Mass in a building; afterwards we had an outdoor Mass in the prison yard. It was a great surprise to me to find military warders on raised platforms facing the prisoners during Mass. It was supposed to be a deterrent against talking amongst us. Our

Chaplain was Revd. Father Moore, C.C., Stafford Town, an Englishman, who showed us every kindness and who was revered by us. We were issued with hymn books in the church. Our organist, who presided at the harmonium, was a fellow prisoner, French-Mullen. I doubt if ever "Hail Glorious St. Patrick" and "Faith of our Fathers" were sung with such gusto as we sung them at Stafford Prison.

After about ten days of imprisonment books were issued to the prisoners. I was unlucky - I got no book for days afterwards. I didn't know of the issue until one morning in the wash-house I was asked by Eamon Bulfin to exchange with him. I got after O'Connor, the warder, and in due course I got a book. It was the Protestant version of St. John's Gospel. Although it was not my idea of a book for reading to gain relaxation I made good use of it. I made up sermons and delivered the sermons to very large, attentive and impressed imaginary congregations. I was due to have a hair-cut a few weeks before Easter and overlooked it. When I arrived in Stafford I had a massive head of hair. After my bath I was taken for a hair-cut. The barber had a horse clippers. He started at my forehead, travelled over my neck and up again, repeating a couple of times. When I got back to my cell I had a look at myself in my highly polished tin. My head, which was bigger than a football, had been reduced to the size of a big apple. I had been having a weekly shave for some time before the Rebellion. Having no facilities for shaving in Stafford, I decided to grow a beard and moustache. I persisted for a few months and then gave up in despair. I could only grow an odd patch of bright red beard. My moustache growing was even a greater failure; whilst I got a good crop on my

upper lip, it persisted in growing outwards instead of sideways. When I reached Frongoch Camp I had Jimmy Mallon to remove it and my patches.

I spent a good many hours each day counting the bolts on the cell door - there were 39 of them; counting the holes in the ventilation over my door and under my window - there were 159 in all. The bricks in the walls and roof of my cell, there were 597. I would commence counting with both eyes open and always got the numbers correct. Then I would close one eye and contradict the count of both eyes. Then I'd close the other eye and get a different number. The failure to get the right number with one eye was deliberate. After a few rounds of counting I might give a sermon to my imaginary audience, or I would spend a few hours spelling words backwards. I became very proficient at this job and am still. I had Mathew Maguire on one side of me and Bill Thorpe (senior) on the other side. I used knock at the walls. Thorpe never answered. Maguire did occasionally. He told me not to be knocking as it interrupted him at his prayers. Tom Kilgariffe, Dunmore, Co. Galway, occupied the cell above me. He paced his cell all day. We were about two weeks in Stafford when we were permitted to write a letter to our homes. Connor called on me one day to ask would I write a letter for a prisoner who was unable to write himself. I jumped at the opportunity and was taken to the other man's cell. This poor fellow was one of the many from Enniscorthy who had been rounded up by the military. He had nothing whatever to do with the activities against the British. He was an ex-militiaman. The letter he was having written was to his sister in Arklow. I asked him what I would put in the letter. His version went something like this: "I am

sorry to be writing to you from a jail, I who was always loyal to my King. It is hard to see the innocent in jail whilst the guilty ruffians are free". I repeated what he had said to him but what I wrote was very different. I wrote "how happy I am to be with such fine patriots," etc. etc. The poor fellow had appealed against his arrest and imprisonment. He told me so. I was mad with him for being so disloyal to us. He was about 65 years of age. I often had a qualm of conscience when he would come to me to say he had no news of his appeal. I was glad when he was released with the first batch from Frongoch.

Stafford Prison had two distinct buildings, the Crescent or the New Wing, and the old Jail. I was in the latter section. The majority of the prisoners in the old section were drawn from Galway and Wexford, with a few from Belfast.

Of those who took part in the Rebellion in Dublin there were Mathew Maguire, John Maguire, Thomas Mangan and I from Maynooth, Eamon Bulfin, Percy Reynolds, Seamus Robinson, Paddy Mahon, Mark Wilson and a few men who fought at Ashbourne; Matt Kelly, Lusk, was one of those. He had a bullet wound in his right forearm. We also had Darrell Figgis and for two days we had the Reddin brothers.

Figgis had quite a good time from his arrival. The Prison Governor, a North of Ireland man, had literary inclinations. Figgis spent the greater portion of his time in the company of the Governor. When out scrubbing the landings I used see him leaving with the Governor. His wife took up residence in Stafford and looked after his culinary wants. With Mathew Maguire one afternoon I was scrubbing the corridor adjacent to Figgis's cell. The cell door was

open, the cell was empty. I went in when a warder had gone to the other end of the corridor. The cell was well equipped with nice knee rugs, books and papers, several boxes of chocolates and fancy bread. A hovis loaf got rough handling from me. I tore the belly out of it, grabbed a handful of chocolates. Maguire and myself had a rare treat the evening of that day. We were allowed to talk to one another at that time. We were brought together in the lower floor. Figgis it was who made the announcement to us. I recall the remarks he made about a thief being amongst us. He went on to tell about the theft from his cell. He did not specify what had been stolen. I was the thief.

The following day we were allowed to buy cigarettes and fruit from vendors in the jail yard. I had no money but those who had money were very decent. I went back to my cell laden with cigarettes. We were granted permission that evening to remain out of cells until 8.30. We had Rosary that night, given out by Pim, with Figgis standing beside him. Pim had mounted the iron stairs and from the top of the stairs recited the Rosary. Figgis appointed himself leader and told us what to do and what not to do. He tried to make us feel 'twas through his advocacy we were granted our recently gained freedom.

One morning about two weeks earlier I heard a noise; on looking through the spy hole in my door I saw a Capuchin Father being marched down our landing. He was dressed in a brown habit and wore a dark flowing beard. In the wash-up room that morning I told the story of the arrival of the priest. He turned out to be Pim dressed in a brown

dressing gown. I liked Pim much better than Figgis, he was closer to us.

The 8.30 return to cells only lasted a few nights, afterwards we were entirely free. One day Bulfin, Robinson and I were walking our landing. We were joined by Figgis. He commenced asking us about the Rebellion. He wound up by saying "Now is the time to write the Rebellion story". He was going to be the writer. He didn't want to trouble us writing our experiences, just tell them to him and he would do the rest. He invited us to tea in his cell that evening. We accepted. We decided we would take the tea but wouldn't talk. Immediately we got into the cell tea was served, a nice tea, too, that could have been better only for Robinson's impulsiveness. Figgis wanted us to talk and eat. We wanted to eat and no talk. We had reached the stage when the cake would come when Robinson told Figgis we weren't going to talk and we got up and left.

Amongst the notabilities we had in the Old Jail at Stafford was O'Flaherty, a Fenian from Loughrea, P.J. Doris of the "Mayo News", William Sears and C.J. Irwin, "Enniscorthy Echo". Doris loaned me a copy of "Ben Hur" written by Wallace. He told me a remarkable story. Wallace was in the Diplomatic Service, U.S.A., in the Holy Land. Michael Davitt made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Wallace contacted him and told him he wanted Davitt to intervene on his behalf with the Secretary of State, U.S.A., who was a friend of Davitts, to have Wallace's tour of duty extended for three years to enable him to collect the data necessary to write "Ben Hur". Davitt did as requested. Wallace presented a copy of the book to Davitt; it was this

copy Doris loaned me. It bore an inscription from Wallace to Davitt.

I didn't have an opportunity until I went into the Rebellion of meeting men of the calibre of those whom I have mentioned. An incident occurred to me the first night I was in Stafford. On the right hand side of the cell door a bent hook protruded. I thought it was a hook on which to hang clothes and which had been reversed. I proceeded to put it in reverse. I found it difficult to get it into the correct position. I was working on it when the spy hole clicked and the night warder enquired what was wrong with me. I said I was alright. He said "What are you ringing the bell for?" I said I hadn't been ringing any bell. When I heard him descending the stairs I continued at the hook. He was back in no time threatening if I again rang the bell what wouldn't happen to me. I couldn't convince him I was not ringing the bell. I had no bell to ring. His interference was only keeping my work back. I heard a bell ringing in another part of the building and felt sure the warder was convinced at last that he had been blaming me in the wrong. I had the hook almost in the position I felt was its correct one. I gave a great tug to it and, to my surprise, I felt a tremor coming back through the hook. I then realised the hook must be a bell-pull. I beat it to bed with nothing off but my jacket; when the warder came to the door I pretended to be asleep.

The prisoners from the New Wing used to come to our yard for exercise. We had much good fun. Outdoor concerts were held. Amongst the artists were Mick Collins who used to recite "Kelly and Burke and Shea", Joe B'Reilly who sang "The Girl from the County Clare", Barney Mellows "The South

Down Militia" and Mick Carolan "We'll have our own Again", and many others.

One morning we were visited by Mr. Alfred Byrne, M.P. We were at exercise in the yard. He stood up on one of the platforms the warders used stand on during the early days. He had just started off to address us when someone threw up an old rag ball we used kick around. We turned away and left him alone.

One night I was taken over for an interview with Mr. John Clancy, M.P. There were a number of Co. Dublin men there when I got over. Mr. Clancy told us he was working hard to get us out; he advised us to be good boys. I said I didn't want him to work for me. It turned out I wasn't the Patrick Colgan he wished to see. The other Patrick Colgan from Naul was in some other jail. The men from Naul followed my example and would have nothing to do with Mr. Clancy. The third Sunday I was in Stafford I was taken out of my cell and, with another prisoner, was taken to a building in the prison yard. The other fellow, Corish, was called in first. He came out with an open parcel; the parcel contained underclothing. I went in to find a parcel containing home-made cakes, half a dozen apples, half a dozen oranges, one lb. of butter, one tin of café-au-lait, one tin of cocoa, one lb. of cube sugar, 100 cigarettes and matches. Everything was given me but the cocoa, coffee, cigarettes and matches. I tried to bargain with the soldier to give me the cigarettes and matches and to keep the coffee and cocoa but he refused. I had resolved never again to smoke during solitary confinement. The moment the cigarettes came in view I

got a terrible craving for a smoke. On emerging from the building Corish asked what I had got. When I told him he begged me to give him a piece of bread. The warder escort promised to allow me to do so when I returned to my cell. Corish was so hungry he begged the warder to keep his promise. I divided the wheaten bread between Corish, Mangan and John and Mathew Maguire. I broke off a piece of butter for each of them. When I got back to my cell dinner was being served. I ate my dinner and then got stuck into the home-made cake. I ate three-fourths of the cake. After dinner I decided to leave the other quarter for the following day. Then I started in on the apples. I even ate the hearts. Next followed the oranges, I even ate the peels. I was able to take my tea which came at 3.30. Before I retired I finished the last quarter of the cake. I felt grand. I used to be so hungry often I used dream of eating lovely ham and meats.

On the 29th June our side of the prison left for Frongoch. It was grand passing through the country. The guards were very nice during the trip. We made a lot of noise at the stations when the train stopped. The guards never resented our boisterous conduct. The four Maynooth fellows were sent to the North Camp. I was sent to Hut 7, A Lines. I had as hut companions, amongst others, Mick Collins, Frank Burke, William O'Brien, I.T.G.W.U., Mark Wilson and Sean O'Duffy. Our Camp Commandant was Captain M.W. O'Reilly. He was a fine looking fellow and was very smart in his Volunteer uniform. There were many men in Camp who rose to great heights in the National Movement afterwards.

Frongoch at first was much nicer than Stafford. We could be outdoor all the day. The wash-house for our line ran behind our huts. They were nine houses. The walls were of speckled asbestos. Frank Burke, Patrick Grealish, Willie Mulryan (another Galway man) and I were in the wash-house one morning. Grealish and Mulryan were inspecting the walls. I said they were made of rubber and if kicked would rebound. Patrick Grealish was sceptical and he decided to put my assertion to the test. He took a couple of steps towards the wall and drove his foot through it. Having been blooded, he continued kicking until he had made many a hole in it. We impressed on Grealish the importance of keeping quiet about the affair. I had a nerve-racking day and Burke and I kept with the two Galway men all the time lest they might talk. That night the whole Camp was paraded by the Camp Commandant, O'Reilly, who announced that an act of vandalism had been committed in the Camp. He recounted the occurrence and emphasised that the right thing to do was to have the culprit come forward. Grealish was between Burke and I. We kept whispering to him to stand firm and he did. As the vandal was myself rather than poor Patrick Grealish, the vandal did not step forward. I would not have cared to step up to our Camp Commandant and confess. I fear his sense of propriety even then might have made him act injudiciously.

The life in Frongoch has been so fully covered by Brennan-Whitmore in his "With the Irish in Frongoch" it would be of no use to try to cover the same ground, except to generally disagree with the importance Whitmore has taken unto himself. A few words on some of the people I

met in the Camp: Mick Collins - gay humour all through our term in Frongoch; his kindness in sharing his issue of two cigarettes with me who received the same issue as he did. I being sworn into the I.R.B. by Mick on the 16th December, 1916.

Tom Pugh reading to us from the daily papers smuggled from the North Camp daily during the "No Names, No Numbers" Strike. The lead given us on the "No Names, No Numbers" struggle by two of the oldest members in Camp who had the honour of being first to refuse to identify themselves, viz., William Sears and Domnall Ua Buacalla. The surprise at some of the fellows who did answer their names and numbers. The stand taken by all the prisoners in still refusing to identify themselves when called upon to collect food parcels at a time of great hunger. Dick Mulcahy and Bob Price making the announcements in the Dining Hall.

The character shown by Tom Daly (known as Blackguard) when he received word his wife had died in Dublin and that parole would be granted him if he would only answer his name and number. A like stand by Martin Murphy, Four Courts Garrison, on the death of his mother. Father Stafford, our Chaplain, coming amongst us in British Officer's uniform and his being "frozen" into appearing in clerical garb. My visit to London to appear before the tribunal presided over by Judge Sankey assisted by Mr. Mooney, M.P., and the instructions we received to refrain from answering any questions as a protest against the attempted conscription of Seán and Ernie Nunan.

Our route marches up the Welsh Mountains, with prisoners helping the old members of the escort to carry the rifles. Seamus Malone, Westmeath, contradicting the British Camp Commandant when he charged us with causing the civilian doctor to commit suicide. The building of a snow man on the parade ground and hiding it from view until Colonel Heygate Lambert came on parade.

Michael Ó Lonsigh and Liam Ó Rinn reciting the Rosary in Irish. The Blackguard Daly catching live rats and placing them inside his shirt. Paddy Tobin, Enniscorthy, taking me one side occasionally to ask "Are you prepared to do your duty when released?" Paddy was a big shot in the I.R.B. Hearing Liam O'Brien pulling Sergeant "Jelly Belly's" leg about the progress of the war.

Sergeant-Major "Jack Knives" blustering manner. "Leather Jaws", a line officer, trying to count us under provocation.

Lieut. Burns, the Camp Adjutant, trying to cajole us with soft talk.

Seán Hales throwing the hammer at the Camp Sports. The Camp Commandant's daughter who looked at us with contempt. And lots of other incidents amongst a grand lot of comrades.

The night of our release, our high spirits at Crewe Railway Station on our way home. And being home again on Christmas Eve.

Recollections of Seán McDermott.

During the period I was in Richmond Barracks the people in our room learned Seán McDermott was a prisoner in the room opposite.

One morning, a short time before we were deported, the escort bringing him from the ablution shed allowed him to come to our room for a few moments. The only prisoner in our room who was acquainted with him was James Whelan, Ormonde Quay, Dublin. I had not before then set eyes on him. I had been reading "Irish Freedom", on which he had a controlling influence, for some years. I felt when he came into the room I was seeing a person who was distinctive from all other people I ever had met. I can see him still, leaning on his walking stick, looking a monarch amongst men. Never before or since have I seen anyone with such magnetic eyes. I can remember clearly the pink coloured scarf he was wearing, the pallor of his face, but, above all, the burning big brown eyes, so kindly, so unwavering. He spoke with us, enquiring if we were alright. Whelan introduced him to the four of us from Maynooth. He spoke of his comrades who had been executed. Whelan in a jocose manner said, "They wont waste a bullet on an old cripple like you". Seán McDermott's words have lived with me still. With determination he said, "Boys, don't think I'm afraid to die. It will be a privilege to die in such company".

I could not explain the feelings his words conveyed to me. He shook hands with us. That was my first and my last meeting with the man who in a short few moments had made the greatest impression on me. I was in Stafford

Prison when Seán McDermott and James Connolly were executed. On the morning they were executed I woke up thinking I had heard a rifle volley. I felt then that McDermott had been executed. A few days afterwards news came through that he was executed on the morning I dreamt I heard the volley.

1917: Reorganisation of the Irish Volunteers.

In February, 1917, I was called to Parliament Street, Dublin, where I met Mick Collins, Diarmuid Lynch and Dick Mulcahy. I have an idea Martin Conlon, Cabra Park, Dublin, was also present. I was told that during our internment an attempt had been made in North County Dublin to organise a Volunteer Force. The prime mover in this effort was Archie Heron, whom I believe was a Labour Union organiser. The people I met at the Exchange Hotel in Parliament Street did not look too kindly on Heron's activities. I was told it had been decided to organise the Volunteers under similar conditions and control as existed before the Rebellion. Finally, I was asked to organise North Kildare. I undertook to do so. Within a few months I had organised groups in Maynooth, Celbridge, Kilcock, Straffan, Rathcoffey (Mainham) Cloncurry, Johnstown Bridge, Moyvalley, Cloherinkoe, Carbury, Prosperous, Eadestown, Naas, Athgarvan, Newbridge and Kill. The men in charge in the areas as set out above were: Thomas Magee, Art O'Connor, James O'Keefe, James Logie, Pat Dunne, Pat Feeney, Chris. Forde, T. Groome and later Cusack, Michael Kelly, Luke Dempsey, Tom Harris, Treacy, T. Patterson, Michael Smythe, Jack Fitzgerald. When I had completed the job I reported to Mick Collins.

I was again called into Dublin. I met Collins, Mulcahy, Bob Price, Lynch and D. O'Hegarty. I was instructed to proceed with the formation of a Battalion Staff. I called a meeting for Prosperous in May, 1917. The group leaders attended. I was appointed O.C., Tom Harris Vice O.C., Art O'Connor Adjutant, Michael Smythe Q.M. We decided to push on with the job of recruiting, which went very well.

Sometime later at a meeting of the Leinster Council, I.R.B., held in Gardiner Street, Dublin, the question of reorganising the Volunteers was discussed. It was decided that whilst the organising and recruiting would continue, no staffs were to be appointed until the sentenced prisoners were released. The position in North Kildare was discussed. It was decided to let things stand as they were until the prisoners were released when a convention would be held and the sanction of the convention would be sought. At this meeting amongst those I recall as being present were Mick Collins, Martin Conlon, who presided, Seán Murphy, Secretary, Diarmuid Lynch, Diarmuid O'Hegarty, Dick Mulcahy, Seán Boylan, Meath, Christy Byrne, Wicklow.

The Convention.

The Convention was called for 5 p.m. on a Saturday evening in November, 1917. It was held at Croke Park in a loft-like room where the Hogan Stand has now been erected. On my way to Croke Park I met several of the ex-prisoners from Frongoch - Seamus Robinson, Joe Gleeson, Seán O'Kelly, 'Blimey' O'Connor amongst them. People attending the Convention were screened at the door leading into the meeting place by Mick Collins, Diarmuid Lynch and Diarmuid O'Hegarty.

Eamon De Valera presided at the meeting. A long discussion took place on a proposal that Eoin MacNeill should be tried by a Volunteer Court for his action in countermanding the 'Manoeuvres' which were to be held on Easter Sunday, 1916. Catha Brugha was the principal speaker in favour of bringing MacNeill to trial. A great deal of time was taken up on this discussion which, as far as I can recall, was referred to the incoming Executive Council for decision.

Another long discussion ensued on whether the Volunteer organisation should be actively associated with the non-military organisation, Sinn Féin. The decision was left to the Executive. It was stressed that the Volunteers would help in every way with the promotion of Sinn Féin. The election of the Executive Council, which was the principal business of the Convention, was quickly dealt with. Amongst those appointed to the Executive were Cathal Brugha, Mick Collins, D. Lynch, R. Mulcahy, Tim Lynch, M. Staines, D. O'Hegarty. As far as I remember, Eamon De Valera did not seek appointment. The Convention ended in the early hours of Sunday morning. The remainder of 1917 was a time of great organising.

1918.

The first bit of excitement I recall was the arrests under the "German Plot" scare. Although receiving notification of the intended raids, I was not on the list. Art O'Connor, Celbridge, was one who was sought. He evaded arrest. We had the Conscription threat soon after the "German Plot" arrests. We gained many recruits into the

Volunteers during the threat, the majority of whom left the organisation when the threat had passed.

The instruction issued to Volunteer units was to resist conscription. Looking back on that time, we were not in Kildare, at least, in a position to do more than offer passive resistance. We had fewer arms than we had in Easter Week.

The Sinn Féin organisation had made good headway in each parish. The Volunteers worked hard to put the organisation (Sinn Féin) in a strong position. The General Election in Kildare was controlled by the Volunteers. We supplied all workers inside and outside the polling booths.

The Convention to select the candidate for North Kildare was held in Prosperous. Two candidates were put forward. I put Eamon O'Kelly forward. I had the support of the Volunteers. Art O'Connor was put forward by the Sinn Féin element. I had two reasons for pressing O'Kelly's candidature. He had been with us in 1916. He had been an organiser for the Volunteers in pre-Easter Week days. O'Kelly sprung from the next door to "Big House" Class. His father had been the local M.O. and M.O. to Maynooth College. His grandfather had held the same positions. His immediate relatives in North Kildare and County Meath were the big graziers. Cardinal Cullen was his great grand-uncle. He had broken with traditions and from his set in becoming a Volunteer. He had earned their intense dislike.

Art O'Connor was a good Irishman too; he worked hard to build up the Volunteers up to Easter Week. In spite of hard feelings over his non-participation in the Rebellion, particularly amongst the Maynooth fellows who had taken part,

he was one of the first men I approached when I commenced to organise in 1917. I had selected him as my Adjutant and, whilst I realised Art's leanings were more to the political than the military side, I had a respect for him. From the time Art went on the run after the German Plot raid I never heard from him. The date for the selection of the Sinn Féin candidate in North Kildare was publicised. Two days before the selection took place Art was arrested in Co. Galway, and the plea was put up at our Convention at Prosperous that we should select a prisoner "to put him in to get him out". Seamus O'Kelly presided at our Convention. Like Art, he was more politically than military minded. He advocated Art's candidature. Finally, the opposing sections at the Convention agreed unanimously on my proposal to select Domnall Ua Buacalla. I had the job of breaking the news to Domnall, who accepted only because it was his duty to do so.

O'Connor was selected to contest South Kildare. Our two candidates were elected.

1919.

Drilling in public by Volunteers was banned by the British in 1919. G.H.Q. (Irish Volunteers) ordered public parades. I mobilised the units situate within six miles of Maynooth who were joined by Volunteers from Dunboyne. We drilled and marched, witnessed by the local R.I.C. but they took no action.

It was in 1919 the attack on R.I.C. at Knocklong took place. I was called to Dublin the Saturday following the rescue of Seán Hogan. I was called in for the purpose of

meeting Dick Mulcahy who was Chief of Staff. He was in bed with the 'flu. The interview took place in Cullenswood House where he was residing. He explained that it was decided to organise a unit to be known as the Special Reserve. It was to be recruited from known and trusted personnel. Its duties were to, if necessary, travel to various centres as directed by G.H.Q. to carry out operations as directed. I was invited to be of the unit; I accepted. Mulcahy asked me if there were any others of the Kildare men who had taken part in the Rebellion whom I thought would be suitable. I nominated Tom Harris, Joe Ledwith and Timothy Tyrell of the Maynooth 1916 men. I was instructed, without giving full details to the men mentioned, to sound them out. All but Tyrell were prepared to do whatever was required. We did a bit of secret training with revolvers and grenades supplied by G.H.Q. Before going to see Mulcahy I had met Mick Collins in his office on the ground floor of Cullenswood House. Fintan Murphy was working in the office. After the interview Collins and I went to the Farm Produce Store, Camden Street, for tea. I was anxious to get news of the Knocklong fight. Mick told me of it and I had a personal interest in it when he told me one of the participants was Seamus Robinson. My Volunteer area was the direct line of communication between West and South of Ireland to G.H.Q. In fact, we were kept going delivering between G.H.Q. on the one hand and the West and South on the other hand. It was not unusual to have three or four visits each day from both Joe O'Reilly and Dick O'Hegarty with dispatches. Rarely had they left when dispatches were received from Dublin. Never did the Dublin-going dispatches arrive whilst either of the Dublin men were with me. It became so hard to get

carriers G.H.Q. appointed a special courier from my unit.

The usual procedure when one had a dispatch to deliver was for the courier to call to my place of business. On the Tuesday following my visit to Mulcahy in Dublin I noticed a fellow dismounting from a bicycle outside my office. Suspecting he was a dispatch carrier, I approached him to enquire who he wished to see. He wanted to see me. I asked him whom shall I say wanted to see him. He replied he was a friend of mine. I then identified myself. He in turn took a notebook from his pocket, opened it and showed a page with my name written in. He asked me if I recognised the writing. I told him it was written by Mick Collins. He then identified himself as Seán Treacy, a friend of Seamus Robinson. He told me the Knocklong boys were staying at Bulfins near Birr, that Bulfin, while anxious to keep them, was having a bad time lest they should be traced. Mick had sent him to me to settle them up for a few nights pending arrangements for the finding of quarters for them in Dublin. He wanted to move quickly from Birr although I could not think of any place where they would be safe. I said to have him come along to-morrow. "We may all have to sleep in one room but I'll settle ye somehow". We arranged a meeting place beside Maynooth Church for the following night. Domnall Ua Buacalla came to my assistance and we were able to keep them for a week until Dublin had made arrangements. I was disappointed when Robinson went in to Dublin direct to stay with the family from which his wife comes. Those who remained were: Breen, Hogan, Scannell, O'Brien and Seán Treacy. Certain death awaited them if captured, yet a more cheery lot I have never met. It would not have been

an easy matter to capture them. They were armed to the teeth with revolvers and grenades. We had great fun during their stay. Seán Treacy, whilst as full of fun as anyone else, spent a lot of his time reading Small Arms Manuals.

They finally moved into Dublin to Phil Shanahan, Corporation Street. They left their spare revolvers, ammunition and grenades in my charge. I got word later that they were ready to receive their belongings. There were sufficient arms and grenades to fill two large portmanteaus. I made two journeys with a full portmanteau each time. I cycled from Maynooth to the tram stop at Lucan, took a tram to Parkgate Street, a Dublin tram from there to O'Connell Bridge. I had a vague idea where Corporation Street was. It took me quite a while to locate Shanahans; when I did I entered the pub, went to the counter and bought a bottle of lemonade. I had noticed a man sitting on a form talking to a woman who was drinking a pint. I asked the assistant who served me if Mr. Shanahan was in. In a loud voice he asked me, "Do you know Mr. Shanahan?" I said I did. I heard a movement behind me, it was the man from the stool approaching me. My inclination was to bolt with my portmanteau. I was soon assured I was in the right place. The man identified himself as Phil Shanahan. The portmanteau was taken over by the counter-hand and emptied. I enquired where the boys were only to find they had gone to Clontarf Baths to swim. I couldn't get over the cheek of those fellows, who had every policeman on their trail, taking such a risk. The following week I brought in the remainder of the stuff. They were again missing. That night I attended the Abbey Theatre, my first visit there. I was on the gallery. When the lights went on at the conclusion

of the first act I found that the fellow sitting on my right was Dan Breen. I gave the Knocklong fellows up as being a set of loonies who knew no fear.

Twice during 1919 I was asked to help the Meath Volunteers to seize gelignite from the County Council Stores. On both occasions the raids were failures. Once I learned the place we raided had supplies of gelignite but it had been used two weeks earlier. The second stores had none at any time.

During 1919 a farm labourers' strike took place in Kildare. It was said that the farmers had approached the R.I.C. for armed protection. I approached the farmers' leaders and told them that unless they refused R.I.C. protection I would encourage the strikers to attack those protected and the R.I.C. as well. I offered to see that order was kept. It was a ticklish assignment as many of the strikers were Volunteers. We managed to keep both sides within bounds. Following the strike, a branch of the I.T. & G.W.U. was formed in Maynooth. Speakers from Dublin came to address the meeting. The R.I.C. forbade a public meeting. It was decided to hold the meeting indoors. I was informed of the arrangements and called to the hall as the meeting was about to commence. I said unless the meeting was held outdoor in defiance of the R.I.C. ban no meeting would be allowed. It was pointed out to me by one of the Dublin men that I had no standing except that of force. I was not a member of the Union. I became a member of the Union then to give me standing. The meeting was held in public. It was not interfered with by the police. Tom Farren was one of the Dublin men.

Late in 1919 orders were received to seize all guns held in the area. The orders were carried out successfully in all but one case in the Carbury area where the occupants had put the house into a state of defence and resisted the best efforts of the Volunteers to enter. During the engagement one Volunteer was slightly wounded. Frank Purcell, who had become Adjutant of the Unit, was in charge of the party.

As mentioned earlier, all dispatches from West and South of the country came through Kildare. It involved Volunteers making several journeys to Dublin each day. At the request of G.H.Q. I found a man who would act as courier; he was Michael Fay, Celbridge. Fay came to his home on leave from Dublin at Easter, 1919. He was at the time a medical student at U.C.D. I approached him and asked him would he accept the appointment as courier. It was a big thing to ask him to sacrifice his University career. He accepted and he in time was o.k'd by G.H.Q. He was entitled to come under pay on the list of the Director of Organisation. He refused to accept any payment. I know he often made three journeys to Dublin and back, each by cycle. Strange as it may sound, he was denied recognition by the M.S.P. Board until 1950 and then the meagre return was made to him. Had he accepted payment from the Director of Organisation which was offered in 1919 he would have qualified for recognition as a member of G.H.Q. Staff.

1920.

In the Spring of 1920 all R.I.C. Barracks in my area were evacuated, with the exception of Naas and Newbridge

where strong garrisons were stationed. On Easter Saturday night, 1920, G.H.Q. ordered the destruction of all vacated R.I.C. Barracks. In my area there were twenty-one vacated Barracks. Although it meant the sending of some small groups to more than one Barracks, all were destroyed except Leixlip Barracks which was occupied by two R.I.C. men. I decided to leave Leixlip Barracks stand for another date. Early in May I decided to destroy it. I mobilised men from Maynooth, Cloncurry, Celbridge and Kilcock. The only danger point was Lucan where a big garrison was housed. I placed a number of men in position along the Lucan road and others along Maynooth and Celbridge roads. We had information that the two R.I.C. men were in the Barracks. Accompanied by Edward Smith, who was armed with a sledge, and Thomas Connolly, armed with a revolver, both of Maynooth, we approached the front door. Smith put in the lower panel of the door with the sledge, Connolly and I followed through up the stairs. On reaching the top of the stairs the Sergeant, in pyjamas, emerged from a room holding a lighted candle. He surrendered. I told him to dress and take his wife with him. I sent them under escort to a house up the street. We set the Barracks alight. Whilst doing so, a door next to the Barracks opened and a fellow I knew protested to me about the danger his house stood from our activities. As far as I know, this man was not then a member of the I.W.A. I learned with surprise afterwards that he was one of the persons who certified as to service for members of the I.R.A. before the Military Service Pensions Board in 1935 and onwards.

Late in May, when returning from a Leinster Council Meeting, I.R.B., held in Dublin on a Sunday evening, I met Joe O'Reilly coming from the direction of Maynooth. He had been there with a message for me to say the woollen mills at Celbridge were being occupied by R.I.C. On the following Tuesday I issued instructions to have the mills burned down and the Courthouse in Celbridge destroyed also. The mills were very extensive; they had been vacated for over forty years. It was not possible to destroy them entirely but they were destroyed sufficiently to stop immediate occupation.

To keep a clear picture of how the political situation was moving even then, I give the following item: When Michael Fay, the Celbridge Volunteer O.C., received the message from me on that Sunday evening, he set about mobilising the local Volunteers to prepare them for the job of burning which was set for the following night. He called to the house of Volunteer Jack O'Connor at 9 p.m. to arrange to proceed by a roundabout way to the mills. Art O'Connor, who at the time was acting Minister for Agriculture, was at home. Fay mobilised Art. On Monday Art sent Fay a message saying he would be absent that evening as he had to attend a Cabinet meeting in Dublin. When Fay called as arranged to meet Jack O'Connor near the latter's home he met Art O'Connor. Fay said, "As you are back in time you had better mobilise too". Art refused, saying destruction of buildings such as the mills was against the best interests of the National Movement. He implied that I was destroying places like vacated R.I.C. Barracks without authority and that the Minister for Home Affairs, Austin Stack, was opposed to such action. Fay reported this conversation to me the following

morning when making his report on the burning of the mills. I, in turn, reported to G.H.Q. I understand Art O'Connor was asked for an explanation by the Minister for Defence. I didn't ever learn how the matter ended. As I consider this an important item, I give my informant's location (Michael Fay, Solicitor, C/o Murtagh and Fay, Solicitors, Eden Quay, Dublin).

The portion of the Celbridge mills which was not destroyed was occupied by a large contingent of R.I.C. during the month of August. I received information that from Breen's publichouse, Celbridge, an underground tunnel was connected with the portion of the mills which were occupied. I reported to Mick Collins. The person most likely to be in possession of such information was Art O'Connor who had been the District Council Engineer. G.H.Q. got after him on the point. He had an idea he had seen an old plan at one time which showed a tunnel as described. He undertook to look up some old documents he had at his home. I was very enthusiastic about the whole affair. It would give us a chance in a weak county of doing a big job. Mick Collins, too, was enthusiastic. The mills were externally viewed by some members of the Dublin Company of Engineers. The idea in mind was, if the tunnel existed, to mine the place and give the R.I.C. the option of surrendering with their arms or being blown sky high. There were several chances given us of carrying out easy attacks on the R.I.C. It was decided by G.H.Q. to try for the bigger effort. Several times I spoke to Collins about it; he kept after Art O'Connor but up to the time that the R.I.C. evacuated the place in September, 1920, no report on the tunnel had been made.

I had been advocating that the area which I controlled, which extended from Chapelized into Offaly and thence round to Rathfarnham and from Blessington to Enfield, Co. Meath, would be divided. In September, 1920, the area was divided, Tom Harris taking the section Naas, Newbridge, Rathangan. I retained the extreme North of the County and portion of South Dublin. In September, 1920, the only successful ambush carried out in Kildare was carried out by Tom Harris on an R.I.C. patrol at Kill, Co. Kildare.

Sergeant Jeremiah Maher, R.I.C., Naas.

Early in 1920 Tom Harris reported to me that he had been approached with a proposition that Sergeant Maher, R.I.C., who was the clerk to the County Inspector, R.I.C., and who was stationed at Naas, was prepared to render every assistance to the I.R.A. I passed the information on to Mick Collins who instructed that I would test him by requesting Maher to give a copy of the reports submitted by the R.I.C. Sergeants to the County Inspector in respect of members of the I.R.A. In due course the reports came through and they were compared with reports already in possession of G.H.Q. and were found to be correct. From then onwards Maher gave us anything of importance. I was instructed by Collins to put it up to Maher that the Police Code would be of great assistance. Promptly Maher gave us a copy, and each month a copy of the code and all secret instructions issued to County Inspectors from Police Headquarters reached us. In or about July, 1920, Maher reported to Harris that he did not think it safe to continue giving the documents to locals who were known to be members of

the I.R.A. For a month or two the reports and codes were handed to Harris personally. Collins, realising the importance of the Codes and Secret Instructions, asked me to try and arrange for some person who was considered safe to act as receiver and carrier to G.H.Q. Harris and I considered the situation and as Harris had a more intimate knowledge of Naas he undertook to try and find a suitable person. He soon reported back that the most suitable person was an Irish teacher named Seán Kavanagh who had recently come to Naas area. I asked G.H.Q. to enquire about Kavanagh from the County whence he came (County Waterford). He was O.K. Harris approached Kavanagh, who was not a member of the I.R.A. Kavanagh was told I required him to act as courier to G.H.Q. and that he would be required to become a member of the I.R.A. He refused. I instructed Harris to say to Kavanagh that unless he did as he was ordered he would be forced to leave Kildare. Kavanagh then undertook to join the I.R.A. and he acted as courier to G.H.Q. until his arrest in December, 1920. In fairness to Kavanagh, I would say I appreciated his point of view in not wishing to embroil himself in a County so weak nationally as Kildare was at that time. From the time Kavanagh undertook the job he carried it out in a thorough manner. Towards the end of 1920 the only place where the codes for R.I.C., Military or Naval Forces could be had was from Maher at Naas, so that he and Kavanagh did a responsible job at a very vital phase of the fight. Maher became a Chief Superintendent in An Garda on the establishment of the State. Kavanagh is the Governor of Mountjoy Jail.

The week preceding "Bloody Sunday" I was called to G.H.Q., where I met Mick Collins. He told me there was an important job coming off soon. It might be necessary to ask me to give a hand. He enquired if I had four men who had a good knowledge of Dublin city. I gave the names of Tom Harris, Joe Ledwith, Michael Fay and self. I heard nothing further until the Friday before "Bloody Sunday." Joe O'Reilly came to me with a verbal message to say our help would not be required, with an added warning to be on the lookout over the week-end.

On March 16th, 1920, Tom Cullen, from Mick's staff, was coming down the quays towards O'Connell Bridge. He was carrying important documents in an attache case when he was suddenly dived on by two detectives. He raced for it into Keogh's publichouse, dropping his case on the counter to one of the assistants. Cullen escaped. The attache case was found. Amongst the documents was a letter from me to Collins giving my brother's address at Carton, Maynooth as a safe place to send messages. Late that night I received a message from Joe O'Reilly about the document being found. The following night my brother's house was raided. Nothing was found.

In May, 1920, I was called to Dublin by Mick Collins. I met him in McGarrys, Fitzwilliam Square. The job on hands was the disarming of the R.I.C. at Castledermott Barracks, Co. Kildare, during an inspection by the County Inspector, Kerry-Supple. Castledermott was part of the Carlow Brigade area. The O.C. was Seán O'Farrell. Present at McGarry's house were Mick Collins, D. O'Hegarty, Farrell

and myself. Collins gave us the information that the County Inspector would hold an inspection outside Castledermott on a certain date. All the R.I.C. in Castledermott would be on parade, less the Barrack Orderly man. Those on parade would carry unloaded rifles; the County Inspector would be unarmed. The parade ground was the yard in front of the Barracks, which was bounded by a low wall. Approach to the Barracks was easy. The scheme was to surprise the inspection party, rush and seize the Barracks and hold up those on parade. O'Farrell was asked for his views; he was of opinion that the job could be carried out but he would need at least fifty armed men. I was asked for my views. I felt surprise was the main thing and not more than 10-15 men would be required for the actual hold-up. It was agreed to have not more than fifteen men carry out the job.

A long discussion took place on who was to be in control of this action. O'Farrell claimed the right of taking control. I offered to supply the men to carry out the hold-up. This was agreed to. I nominated Tom Harris to take control. The following Volunteers with Harris formed the party: Jack O'Sullivan, T. Domican, Kill Company, T. Harris, J. Harris, J. Higgins, Prosperous Company, P. Mullaney, Leixlip (outpost), J. Ledwith, T. Conneely, J. Murphy, Maynooth Company, F. Purcell, Cloncurry Company. I instructed Harris to proceed to Carlow to satisfy himself that the necessary arrangements were being made at that end. When Harris returned from Carlow he reported to me that in as far as parade work was concerned Carlow was far and away superior to ourselves. Nevertheless, he felt it was just as well he had our own fellows for the actual job. He had

a look at the R.I.C. Barracks at Castledermott. He was satisfied it was a fairly simple job. It was emphasised at our Dublin meeting that as few as possible were to be told of the job. On the day set for the inspection the party set off for Castledermott. The Kill and Prosperous men travelled in one car, the Maynooth and other fellows in a separate car. Somewhere between Kilcullen and Castledermott the car conveying the Maynooth contingent collided with a military car in which was the Officer in charge Curragh Camp. One of the front wheels of our car was smashed. The Officer in charge Curragh offered to have the wheel repaired at the Curragh. However, our driver, J. Murphy, assured him "'twas a matter of nothing". On arrival at the meeting point arranged with O'Farrell, Harris was surprised to find almost one hundred unarmed men on parade from Carlow Brigade Area. There seemed to be no responsible person in charge. Harris had them hide in the fields. The inspection was timed to take place at 3 p.m. At 5 p.m., no word having been received from the fellow charged with notifying Harris of the County Inspector's arrival, he sent Conneely into the town. Conneely had some refreshments in a publichouse and when passing the Barracks on the return to Harris an R.I.C. man sitting on the wall said to him, "Ye can go home, there's nothing on to-day". Sergeant Maher reported later that at mid-day a message was received by the County Inspector, who immediately cancelled the inspection. How the County Inspector or the R.I.C. at Castledermott learned of the attempted attack (if they did, and it would appear they did) was never discovered.

I was arrested at the end of November, 1920. I was

glad I was not caught in the home of Denis O'Neill, Victualler, Mill Street, Maynooth. This was the only house in Maynooth where I found shelter. I, no doubt, might have had shelter in the home of any of the I.R.A. men in the locality but those houses were as likely to be visited as my own house. From the time of the finding of the dispatch case at Bachelor's Walk I had not slept at home. Twice prior to my arrest my home had been raided. After arrest I was taken to the Curragh Camp where I found also as prisoners Tom Harris, Michael Fay and my brother, Pierce, whose home had been used for receiving dispatches. In mid December we were removed to Ballykinlar Camp. When I arrived at Ballykinlar there were a few hundred prisoners there. They were mainly men who had been rounded up in Dublin following the action there on November 21st, "Bloody Sunday".

Whilst there is no doubt of the sympathies of those men being with the I.R.A., very few of the prisoners were members of the Army. In fact, the prisoners were an indisciplined bunch. No sooner did a British soldier enter the Camp but groups of prisoners gathered round to try to glean news. One fellow, Sergeant Williams of the Provost Staff, was very popular. He was most obliging. He undertook to post letters for all the prisoners without the censor seeing the letters. He even supplied stamps to prisoners who had none. He canvassed prisoners for letters. He, to my mind, was altogether too obliging. There were a few prisoners whom I had met before arrest and whom I knew were members of the I.R.A. I called them together and suggested we should take steps to stop prisoners treating with Williams. Before we had time to give effect to our decision the Camp filled.

Unfortunately, a number of members of the I.R.A. were amongst the late comers. In due course a roll of those who claimed membership in the I.R.A. was made out. A meeting of those was held and at that meeting a Provisional Camp Commandant and Staff and a Provisional Camp Council were elected and each Province was given equal representation on the Camp Council. I was appointed Camp Commandant, Dominick Mackey, Clonmel, was appointed Vice O.C., Seamus Ward, Tirconnall, was appointed Adjutant and Tom Meldon, Q.M. Meldon had been a prominent member of the Q.M. team at Frongoch.

The members of the Council were: Leinster, Dr. O'Higgins, Carlow Brigade; Munster, Art O'Connor, Clare; Ulster, Ward, Tirconnall; Connacht, Paddy Hogan, Loughrea. Hogan was not present at the meeting. He had made it known that whilst he was not either an I.R.A. or a Sinn Feiner, his allegiance was to both. The Council was given authority to add to their members by co-option. Later Joseph McGrath, Dublin, and Tom Treacy, Kilkenny, were co-opted.

The Council issued instructions to the members of each hut to elect a Hut Leader. The Hut Leader in my hut was a fine fellow, Maurice Hogan, Killarney. In turn the Hut Leaders appointed by election Line Captains. I cannot recall the names of all the latter; amongst them were Tom Nolan, Dublin, Jack Fitzgerald, Kildare, P.C. O'Mahony, Kerry. I think Bernie O'Driscoll, Cork, and Mossie Donegan, Cork, were others. The first job of the Council was to appoint staff to run the Camp. Doctor Richard Hayes and Dr. T.F. O'Higgins were our M.Os. Mick Hassett, Wexford, was our Provost Marshal and Sam Holt and Andy Mooney, Leitrim, were

our Post Office workers. Henry Dixon, Dublin, was Chairman of the Educational Committee. Many other Committees, such as Drama, Football, Boxing, etc., were appointed. When the Council was satisfied that all those appointed were doing a good job it was decided to inform the British Camp Commandant, Lieut. Colonel Little, of our intention to run the Camp within the wire with the least interference from the British. Little was a decent old fellow but he was terribly stupid. When I told him of our demands he saw red and got into a temper. He had cooled off by next day. We gave Captain Newtown, an oily, hail-fellow-well-met fellow, his Intelligence Officer, the credit for getting Little to see the light. Newtown was somewhat like Burns of Frongoch but much more astute. So, following the granting of our demands for control, we had not interference within the Camp except Camp Commandant's inspection, Line Officers' count and a daily visit from the obliging Williams.

We had a replica in Ballykinlar of the Frongoch Sergeant Major "Jack Knives", this time in the officer rank - the Adjutant, whose name I forget. He was known to all of us as "Got Me". He earned his name from us by ending all his announcements with "Play the game with me, I'll play the game with you; got me?"

1921. The Shooting of Tormey and Sloane.

On Monday, 21st January, 1921, two prisoners from Westmeath, Joe Tormey and Pat Sloane, natives of the same townland, had received letters from home at 12.45. They proceeded to the Hospital Hut corner and were exchanging

news from their letters. They were at least fifteen yards from the wire entanglement separating Nos. 1 and 2 Camps. This corner was a place prisoners usually stood. Word came to me in my hut that two prisoners had been shot. I rushed to the place where the men were dying. There were a number of prisoners in the immediate vicinity of the place where the men lay. They were prevented from approaching the dying men by a sentry (the sentry who had fired) who was in a raised sentry box at the main gate. When I appeared on the scene I walked towards the two men. The sentry ordered me back and sighted his rifle on me. I kept on and knelt beside the two men. I had a crucifix with a Plenary Indulgence. I held their hands to the crucifix and recited an Act of Contrition. Dr. O'Higgins and Major Kyle, the Hospital O.C., were quickly on the scene, as was Father McLister, our Chaplain. The bodies of the two men were removed to the Hospital building. Excitement amongst the prisoners was intense. Suggestions were put forward amongst others that we would capture the Camp Commandant next day and put him to death, and many other wild schemes. From the time I was appointed Camp Commandant I had the loyal help of all the prisoners. Much more loyalty was given me than I deserved. When, therefore, at dinner in the Dining Hall I counselled obedience to the Camp Council, even though in the state of mind the prisoners felt it must have been difficult to obey, they acted as a well-disciplined body.

Acting on the advice of the Camp Council, I demanded the right to communicate with Mr. T.M. Healy, K.C. Paddy Hogan was appointed Solicitor to the next-of-kin. He and I saw Colonel Little several times during the next few days.

We demanded an inquest. Telegrams to Mr. Healy, which Hogan sent, were held by the British. Finally, a military Court of Inquiry was held. We refused to attend this Court. We were not represented at the Court. Over thirty years have now passed since Tormey and Sloane were killed. I am convinced that their shooting was most uncalled for.

We set about getting the facts to our G.H.Q. in Dublin. It was done in a most ingenious manner. Joe Considine undertook to write the statement on a linen handkerchief, which was, when the writing was complete, covered with a layer of linen. Henry Dixon arranged that his son, Mr. Joe Dixon, Solicitor, Dublin, would seek permission to see him on legal business in Camp. Permission was granted for the interview. Henry was handed the handkerchief prepared by Considine. He managed during the interview, at which the British Intelligence Officer, Newton, was present, to exchange handkerchiefs with his son. The handkerchief was duly delivered at G.H.Q.

After the shootings relations between ourselves and the British were very strained. Dr. O'Higgins was in charge of the Hospital. The British M.O. was one Major Kyle. O'Higgins and Kyle had got on very well in the running of the hospital. O'Higgins had assisted at the post mortem on the bodies of Tormey and Sloane. He was a vital witness for us. For no reason other than to get rid of him, Kyle commenced interfering with his work. I informed Colonel Little if Kyle continued his interference I would withdraw all medical help. Little promised he would speak to Kyle on the matter. Instead of Kyle amending his ways he became more aggressive. With the sanction of the Camp Council, I

ordered O'Higgins and the others to withdraw. On the night of the day O'Higgins was withdrawn, a Dr. Leonard, a prisoner in No. 2 Camp, was appointed by Colonel Little to replace O'Higgins. On learning of Leonard's arrival, I saw him. I explained the position to him. I told him he would have to resign. Leonard refused to obey my instructions. I told him he would not be allowed to practice. Leonard was not a man who was prepared to run any risks which would upset his comfortable life in Camp. I evidently got him to realise that to disobey meant trouble for him. He asked me if he could tell Major Kyle that I had ordered him to abstain from work. I told him he could tell whatever he liked. I ordered him to leave the hospital at once. On the same day that I stopped Leonard from working the story of the shootings taken to Dublin by Mr. Joe Dixon appeared in "The Bulletin".

Paddy Hogan had been arrested the same day, the charge being that he had a coin in his pocket. We were provided with paper scrips in place of our cash. On learning of Hogan's arrest, the Camp Council instructed me to call for his release. I wrote to Colonel Little protesting against the arrest of Hogan. He was released. I wrote Little also informing him that Dr. Leonard had ceased to act as M.O. in the Camp Hospital.

About 9 p.m. that evening an escort came to the hut where I was housed. I was placed under arrest. Next morning I was brought before Little. I was charged with (a) threatening a fellow prisoner, to wit, Dr. Leonard. (b) threatening the same prisoner with death if he failed to obey my illegal orders. (c) interfering with the proper running of the Camp. (d) organising a mutiny amongst the prisoners. (e) publishing false and scandalous stories against His

Majesty's Forces.

I was remanded for General Courtmartial. I made some sarcastic observation as I was being led away. Little ordered me to be taken back. He awarded me seven days' No. 1 Punishment. I made some other smart quip. He increased the sentence to fourteen days. Another remark got me up to twenty-one days. Finally I was led off to a cell in the guardroom.

Later I was taken to a punishment hut in No. 1 Camp. When the boys learned I was in the hut they threw in food to me. Most welcome of all were 50 cigarettes and two boxes of matches which Jack Fitzgerald got to me. Having recollections of the loss of my cigarettes in Stafford Prison I hid the cigarettes and matches in the back lining of my waistcoat. Although I was searched several times the cigarettes and matches were never found; for which grace the souls in Purgatory, to whom I prayed daily to save my cigarettes and matches, my thanks are due. I was moved during my first night in punishment to a guard room in the military section of the Camp. No. 1 punishment meant a piece of bread and a mug of water for breakfast, for dinner and tea. I had no bed, no blankets. The cell was dark and a small frosted window was at the top of the ceiling. I never felt hungry, I never felt cold. I had my cigarettes. The first day I was there Kyle called to give me a medical examination. I refused to be examined. He explained he had to report on my fitness to undergo punishment. I still refused. He was accompanied by a B.S. Major who volunteered to Kyle to make me take his examination. I made a move towards the B.S. Major; he ran through the door. Kyle

also withdrew. He returned sometime afterwards to offer me some medicine which he said would keep me right. The guard had overheard my interview with Kyle and the B.S. Major. They told me I was a hell of a fellow to stand up to the swine. They gave me tea in the evening and a piece of bread pudding. During the time I spent in the guardroom the daily guard was from a Battalion of the Derbyshire Regiment. The Cuban at the G.P.O. was a mild spoken chap in comparison to these soldiers. I found in the corner of my waistcoat pocket one dozen 2d. stamps. I traded them with the P.A. Corporal for two packets of Woodbines. The Corporal used bring me my meals. Occasionally he substituted tea for the water in the evening time. At the end of the twenty-one days I was not released. I sent for the Orderly Officer and demanded my release. I was released on the night of the 23rd day and was taken to No. 2 Camp. There I met many of the men who had been transferred from No. 1 to No. 2 Camp. A couple of days after my arrival in Camp No. 2 I received a letter signed by Dr. O'Higgins and Paddy Hogan giving me an account of the happenings in No. 1 Camp after I left. It appears the prisoners were told by my successor, Joe McGrath, that he had been assured I had been transferred to Mountjoy Jail. Another letter which they had written to me fell into the hands of Joe McGrath. I believe it caused an estrangement.

Much more important events have occurred since then which almost obliterate the rights or the wrongs of the life in Camp No. 1 after I had left.

I appointed a man who was known to me in each Line to enquire if there were any prisoners likely to be sought for

by the British. The following had been identified in Dublin as being men who had been in action in Dublin on 21st November : Tommy Whelan and Aidan Corri, Mick Crowley (known as Paddy O'Sullivan in Camp) and Mossie Donegan (known in Camp as Thomas Fitzpatrick), the latter two for activities in West Cork.

I interviewed all of them separately. Unless something unforeseen occurred, Crowley and Donegan were safe. I issued instructions that no prisoner was to identify himself to any member of the British Forces except I gave instructions allowing him to do so. I arranged to have Whelan and Corri change their identity with other prisoners who were willing to answer to their names. Whelan refused to do so, his reason being that he was not in action on 21st November. He had witnesses to prove he attended his Sodality at the time the actions took place. He felt that when his identification was blown sky high it would throw doubt on the other identifications. I had prisoners who were very friendly with him to try and get him to alter his decision - all in vain. Some weeks afterwards Williams entered Camp one morning, calling Whelan's name. I enquired what he wanted him for; he said, "Whelan is one of the lucky ones, he is due for release". I called Tom Nolan, Whelan's Line Officer. I told him Whelan was being taken away. I sent him to make a last appeal to him. It was in vain. With Nolan I made a last appeal to him. He would not change his decision. I said I would not produce him for Williams. He bade me goodbye and reported to Williams. He was a grand lad. He gave his life a few weeks afterwards. One of the five others executed along with him was a great

friend of mine, Paddy Moran.

When I spoke to Aidan Corri I told him I intended to get someone to answer to his name. Before I could approach anyone to do so, a prisoner named Owen Slowey, Drogheda, came to me to say he had been arrested before he had a chance of doing anything for the country. He asked to be given some task. I had enquiries made about Slowey but there was no information to be had on him. No one in Camp knew anything about him. I spoke to him several times after the first interview. I concluded that Slowey was made of the same stuff as Oliver Ryan who came into the Rebellion. I finally decided he would be a good "Aidan Corri" and I arranged the exchange of names.

Some few weeks after Whelan had been taken away Williams entered the Camp seeking Corri. I asked again what he wanted Corri for. He was a lucky one who was being released, he said. I reminded him of the way Whelan was released. I said "I will give Corri for release. If he is not released I will not produce any other man". He gave me his word Corri was for release. I called Corri. Owen Slowey stepped forward and was taken away. Slowey was taken to Arbour Hill for an identification parade. From thence to the Castle. He was interrogated. He remained Corri. He was subjected to the most vile treatment from the Auxiliaries, including cold baths, cold water hosing and innumerable beatings. He remained Corri for over a month and until he was identified by an R.I.C. man from Drogheda.

On the evening of the very day that Slowey was identified in Dublin Castle as his true self, at night roll call in Ballykinlar the man now answering Corri's name was seized by the military and taken to Dublin. G.H.Q. had instructed that the "Corri" taken would identify himself on reaching Dublin. The second "Corri" was a Galway man named Fahy. He identified himself as directed. The man who answered Fahy's name was next seized and so on until the British got tired of the job. The morning following the taking of Slowey I was notified that Hut 31 was required as a Post Office for the Camp. The occupants were to be transferred to No. 2 Camp. I had a prisoner exchange with the real Corri and sent the latter to No. 2 Camp. Leo Henderson, who was the Camp Commandant, shuffled him up further. Later, an identification parade was held, first in No. 1 Camp and then in No. 2. I had been put into No. 2 Camp before then. We noticed that the windows in the parcels' office had been painted with white paint but there were three or four spaces left clear in the windows. The people to identify Corri were placed inside the hut. The prisoners were paraded and ordered to march by the hut at a slow pace. Some prisoners felt we should refuse to parade. I felt if we were lined up there was a great danger of Corri being identified. Frank O'Duffy, Monaghan, who had succeeded Henderson as Camp Commandant, ordered us parade. I agreed with the order. The coolest man on parade was Aidan Corri. I sought him out before going on parade and suggested that he and I would form a file. It was reasonable to think that the Camp Authorities, believing I was responsible for the hiding of Corri, would concentrate elsewhere than near me for him. Anyway, they didn't find him. Some short time after the parade I was taken out to

the British Camp Commandant's office. Little had been replaced by another Officer. With the Camp Commandant were "Got Me" and an apoplectic looking old gent, the G.O.C. Northern Command. I was invited to be seated. I was introduced to the "Apoplectic" as the former Prisoners' Leader who had a burst-up with Little. They tried to make me feel that Little must be an awful clown to fall out with a fine chap like me. I smoked a few of the G.O.C.'s cigarettes whilst we talked in generalities. Then the G.O.C., Major-General Cameron I believe his name was, said, "I am being made a damned fool of in the eyes of my superiors. I have 1,000 men in Ballykinlar. I can identify anyone but Prisoner Corri". He added, "I give you my word of honour as an Officer if you produce Corri he will not be taken away". He said he knew I was responsible for the changing of Corri's identity. To bring the interview to an end, I admitted I had a hand in hiding Corri. I knew he was in Camp and if given the run of the two Camps I could find him. But I wouldn't find him for them. They tried soft talk and hard talk to no avail. I was removed to a cell in the guard room at night fall. I was returned to Camp No. 2. They never found Corri. Even when the Camp closed down at Christmas, 1921, the prisoners in Camp No. 2 arranged that travelling warrants for the prisoners would be given to their own O.C.

A few notes on Camp Personages.

(1) Through P. Lane, a prisoner from Dun Laoghaire, I met C.Q.M.S. Love, an Irishman serving with the British Army Staff at Ballykinlar. Love told me that all other ranks

having contact with the prisoners were members of the Intelligence Branch. Sergeant Williams was the senior N.C.O. in the Intelligence Section. Love, who lived at Castlewellan, offered to act as courier between G.H.Q. and the Camps. He never accepted a penny for his services. Any dispatches for G.H.Q. reached there safely. To cover his activities I used give him personal letters from various prisoners which were handed to the Intelligence Officer. He had two pairs of boots in Camp. He carried the dispatches in and out sewed under the sole. Jack Fitzgerald, Newbridge, did the boot stitching in Camp; a member of the I.R.A. did it at Castlewellan. Love was held up several times on the road between Camp and Castlewellan by R.I.C. He was taken to the R.I.C. Barracks and stripped twice. Shortly after my removal from Camp No. 1 he was transferred. He was replaced by C.Q.M.S. Farrell, a native of Cavan. Farrell volunteered to do the job. He was accepted and trusted by McGrath and later by Mossie Donegan, who replaced McGrath. Sometime in September, 1921, Donegan invited me to Camp No. 1. The only means of getting there was to feign sickness. I feigned gastritis and was sent to hospital in Camp No. 1. I met C.Q.M.S. Farrell. I immediately took a dislike to him. He was too ready to die before he would allow a dispatch with which he was entrusted fall into enemy hands. I mentioned to Donegan my feelings. He couldn't see any justification for my belief. I asked Donegan would he give me permission to send through Farrell a test message. He agreed. I had a chat with Father McLister. I told him my opinion of Farrell. Father McLister said he had the same feelings. I then asked Father McLister would he take out a letter from me for the

for the Adjutant General through Father Fullerton, St. Pauls, Belfast. Although he had always honoured his undertaking to the British to minister to our religious needs only, he said he would take my letter out. On a Thursday I wrote to the Adjutant General telling him a tunnel had been built from a hut in 'D' Line. It was complete and about 100 of us would make the attempt on the following Tuesday night. This went through Farrell. My letter vice Father McLister explained I was sending a letter to him (the Adjutant General) as a test for Sergeant Farrell. On the Monday morning following, military commenced digging outside 'D' Line; they tore the hut mentioned to pieces.

In October Donegan and I got out of Camp. In a house in Dundrum we met Farrell; he was there delivering dispatches. I told him I did not trust him. He swore to his faithfulness. We should not be missed from Camp until the count at 7.30 the following day. At 9.15 the night we left military searched the hut Donegan occupied and the hospital where I had been, looking for us. R.I.C. held up traffic in the Newry district within an hour of our escape.

Leo Henderson spoke to me about Farrell some years ago, about 1926. He told me that documents in the possession of the Four Courts garrison in 1922 had amongst them correspondence from Farrell to the British Authorities demanding back pay due him for intelligence work he had done in Ballykinlar Camp.

SIGNED: Patrick Colgan MAJOR.
(Patrick Colgan)

WITNESSED: C. Saurin LT. COLONEL.
(C. Saurin)

DATE: 20th May 1953

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