ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21
NO. W.S. 1.606

ROINN COSANTA.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913–21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS.

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 1606.

Witness

Patrick Hegarty,
Enniscoe,
Crossmolina,
Co. Mayo.

Identity.

I.R.A. Organiser, Nth. Mayo & Sligo.
O/C A.S.U. (Flying Column).

Subject.

Irish Volunteer activities Co. Mayo
1913 - 1921.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil.

File No S. 2905.

Form B.S.M. 2

W. S. 1606

File S.2905

Bureau of Military History, 1913-1921.

STATEMENT BY

Patrick Hegarty,

Address Enniscoe, Crossmolina,
Co. Mayo.

Date 19th April, 1957.

ORGANISATIONS WITH WHICH ASSOCIATED.

Irish Volunteers
Irish Republican Army.

POSTS OR RANKS HELD.

2nd Lieut. Lahardane Company;
O/C 3rd Battalion;
I.R.A. Organiser North Mayo & Sligo;
O/C A.S.U. (Flying Column).

PERIOD COVERED BY STATEMENT.

1913 - 1921.

COMMENTS OF INVESTIGATING OFFICER.

The witness is 65 years of age. He does not follow any occupation, as he is invalided with heart trouble. He appears to have a good memory.

His statement was taken down by me at a number of interviews over a period of four months. He gave me every co-operation.

J. B. Briody Capt.

Signature of Investigating Officer.
(J.P. Briody).

Date 19th April, 1957.

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ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21
No. W.S. 1606

STATEMENT BY PATRICK HEGARTY

Enniscoe, Crossmolina, Co. Mayo

If any of you young writers who contemplate writing a story aspire a rise to fame by so doing, God give you strength to start.

I am not one of those who expect a Nobel prize; neither do I belong to the timid type who are afraid of the critics. I have formed no individual style in placing words into phrases that read as picturesque, figurative, cultural or otherwise. I just write sentences (possibly understandable) as I remember them, sentences and phrases - I hope - with a touch of commonsense, and this is what we all need a good pinch of.

I was born on 21st February 1892 on a farm at the foot of Mount Nephin, in the parish of Addergoole in the County Mayo, the fifth oldest of a family of eight. My father and mother were of a sturdy stock with a strong nationalist outlook on my mother's side. She often told me a great-grand-uncle of hers, named Gilboy, joined Humbert's army in 1798 and soldiered with him to Ballinamuck, Co. Longford. A number of the O'Hegarty clan (The O'Hegarty Mor), as they were called, joined Humbert's army at the Fair Green in Lahardane where Father Conroy was P.P. and who was later hanged in Castlebar for the part played by him and his love for the freedom of his people.

My schooldays were much the same as all others. We much preferred to kick a sock filled with hay than to settle down to the detestable job of 'book larning'. The teacher's outlook was, in all fairness, nationalist. The U.I.L., A.O.H. and the I.N.F. (Foresters) were the only nationalisms talked about at that time..

At about 18 years of age my brother Martin and myself took to cycle racing. I raced on various tracks - grass and cinder - all over Ireland, particularly in Connaught, for about seven years, and I won five provincial championships and was second in an All-Ireland Championship held in Athlone where I was beaten inches by Bertie Donnelly of Dublin. Other cyclists of the period were: Miley Byrne, Jack Barnes, Mangan, Dorgan, Woodcock, O'Shea, Rogers Bros., Ginnell Bros., Paddy Farrell, Dick Kenny, The Rigg Bros., Paddy Carney. There were other names I do not remember. Later on, I took up foot-running and won many competitions over a mile and three-mile events. I was more pleased when I won these events than the hundreds of various trophies I won on the bicycle. We were all a family of athletes. Martin, my eldest brother, won provincial championships. My sister Nell (Mrs. Jordan) won cycle races. Sean was good on the cycle and so was Eamon, my youngest brother, who was later killed in the civil war of 1922. His remains lie in Kilmurry Churchyard. Bart, another brother, twin with Sean, was a long-distance runner who competed in England and who also was a formidable boxer.

Those athletic days I never forget. To the young men of my county I would say: Play the game; train zealpusly if you want to win; you will never become what you should if you train on alcohol or tobacco. I am not a 'Pussyfoot'. A little of either in moderation may be no harm. Do not indulge; be ready to give the defeated man or team a sincere clap and show at all times you are a good sport. Remember, if the other fellow was not there, you would have no competition.

I would like to see a greater number of our young Irish boys getting into togs and trying themselves in the Athletic field. Uoung men! get going and show you are equally as good

and doubtless superior to your brothers in the colleges.

The political and military turmoil of 1913 and after.

Home Rule was the national topic of this period, particularly in the peasant homes of Ireland. The Irish papers would give glowing accounts and banner headlines to the part played by the Irish Party under John Redmond. The wonderful "fight on the floor" of the Bri ish House of Commons was waged and no quarter given. John Dillon, M.P., "Wee" Joe Devlin, M.P., T.P. O'Connor, M.P., Liverpool, Tim Healy, M.P., William O'Brien, M.P., and others were the "spark plugs". On the opposing side for Ulster you had Sir Edward Carson, M.P. (a Dublin man), F.E. Smith (known as "Galloper Smith"). Carson's rallying cry was "Ulster will fight and Ulster will be right". The British Parliament at this time was supposed to be Liberal with Asquith as Prime Minister. Carson was Tory or Conservative. Asquith courted the vote of the Irish Party by promising them Home Rule on conditions, The Carson-Smith combination set about securing arms and did get arms from Germany and England. Thousands of rifles were brought in and hidden in depots for future use. Carson at this time organised his Volunteers. Redmond & Co. also set to organising and, in 1913, both sides were drilling.

The Home Rule Bill was passed in The Commons and hung in suspension owing to the declaration of War on Germany in August 1914. Now was the time when England showed her cunning and statecraft; here now was the chance where Irishmen could show their loyalty to King and country and John Redmond was promised that if he supported England's war effort a generous measure of Home Rule would follow immediately after England won the war. Redmond & Co. fell for the gag and believed in the promise of England's diplomats, who never kept a promise except the one they could not break.

We, of the Irish Volunteers, were busy, a company was

formed in almost every parish; the priests at first were more than sympathetic; some of them urged us on and would watch us drilling, which we did at least twice. Very well I remember our own company with Drill Sergeant Jemmy Jennings, an ex-British serviceman. It was he who taught us all the drill and was a "stickler" on the Manual of Training, close and extended formation, skirmishing, target practice, first aid, with particular stress on the terrain we travelled over, cover, vantage points for attack, a line of retreat. It was then estimated we had upwards of 150,000 effectives in Ireland, fairly well-trained; but, alas! no guns or ammunition, and a very poor exchequer.

Here are the names of the first officers of Iahardane Company: Captain, Charles Flynn; 1st Lieut. Wm. Barrett; 2nd Lieut. myself; adjutant, Pat McHale, ex N.T., and Q.M. Pat Carney, N.T.

On Garland Sunday, July 1914, the Howth gun-running took place. Childers and his companions landed the long Mausers into the safe keeping of the Volunteers. This gave us hope and courage to carry on as the call for arms was the constant call of the Volunteers; to satisfy this demand Redmond & Co. got in some obsolete Spanish rifles (which had seen use in the Tripoli war) without ammunition. To be candid, we Volunteers in the country did not know where we were heading. The R.I.C. never hindered us, but carefully noted all our actions.

Recruiting for the British army was pushed forward vigorously with every space in town and country covered with posters "Your King and Country Need You" and a soldier standing to attention pointing to other posters with soldiers on the march with "Join the army, good pay, plenty of excitement" and would depict all the advantages gained with

how your dependants would be cared for. One such poster quoted Thomas Davis showing a sailor standing on the deck of a warship reciting: "Sing Oh, let man learn liberty through crashing wind and lashing sea". The Propaganda Brain Trust were getting along preparing the Irish mentality for greater injections of propaganda. Pretty soon, Redmond & Co. with all the sham squireens, landlords and some public bodies, the Hierarchy, parish priests, and, of course, all the Justices of the Peace joined hands under the Union Jack shouting long and loud, exhorting the young men to join the British army and save Catholic Belgium. To assist their recruiting campaign, they brought to Mayo their latest "Hero" - Corporal Mike O'Leary of Cork, who was supposed to have captured a company of Germans singlehanded and brought them back across No Man's Land as prisoners to the English lines. Mick was promoted Sergeant and, wearing his Victoria Cross, was made a willing actor in their propaganda campaign. There were many O'Learys who never stopped to think, but were carried along with the mob. Mike's father, a decent old fellow as most fathers are, was on the recruiting platform one day with his son and was asked what he had to say about Mick. "Musha", said he, "I knew it was in me boy; how could he escape it all; the O'Learys were FENIANS and beat the hell out of the English every time and every place. Give it to them Mick, me boy", said I,"and let no Englishman ever get the better of you. You have the right drop in you and beat the blazes out of them English". Reader, you can very well guess the consternation on that recruiting platform.

In 1915, a great Irishman, one of the greatest, died. His name - O'Donovan Rossa. His remains were taken from America and buried in Ireland. Padraig Pearse spoke these words that echoed through every corner of Ireland: "They (the English) have bought half of us and intimidated the other half. The fools! the fools! they have left us our Fenian dead and while Ireland holds the ashes of these men

Ireland unfree shall never be at peace!"

I shall here mention a story told to me by Jack Ridell, who knew Rossa and his partner when they went prospecting for gold some miles north of Nome, Alaska. They were late for the Gold Rush but, however, they staked some placer claims and did some mining in the gulches. Rossa later quit mining and headed south. His partner stayed on and, one evening, while Ridell was with him, he got sick and told him he belonged to the Invincibles and that it was he who shot Burke and Cavendish in the Phoenix Park, Dublin, and when he met an Irishman he could trust he would reveal the message. He told Jack Ridell (who was of Scottish origin) to bury him a little distance from the shack and put a little monument of stones over the grave with a cross. The man's name, as far as I can remember, was Walsh, and Ridell told me this story in the Atlin country of British Columbia. I tried to check it with an old man in New York, named Tynan, who was an Invincible and over 80 years of age, but I drew a blank and failed to get any more information.

Conscription was now very much talked about. The Lord Derby scheme in England and the Ballot Act about to be invoked if voluntary enlistments were not forthcoming. Thousands of Irishmen bought tickets for America trying to escape conscription here were caught in what was called the Draft in America and found themselves in the American army, and hundreds more were trapped in Liverpool when British crews refused to operate the boats carrying Irishmen to U.S.A. The women jeered and called them slackers and cowards and they returned to Ireland with very little cash. They were met by some of the Volunteers who welcomed them home and advised them to save their money and, if possible, buy a rifle and prepare for the coming fight.

About this time I was sworn into the I.R.B., an oath-bound organisation sworn to overthrow English Rule in Ireland. It was Michael Kilroy who swore me in and never during my lifetime did I regret or forswear my allegiance to the aims and objects of an Irish Republic. I was not in Dublin during Easter Week 1916, but had some pikes made by a local blacksmith named Tom Murphy. We had the depth of water at Kilcummin, Killala, and some men always to call on if rifles were landed on the west coast. Michael Kilroy was expecting a message from Dublin about them and instructed me to keep on the alert. As far as I ever knew, the message got no further west than Athenry, Co. Galway. Liam Mellows was in that area and gave a sample of what could be done with the limited few active.

During the fight in Dublin a local landlord was about to evict several of his poor tenants along the slopes of Nephin. An R.I.C. hut was on the property with four men and a sergeant to give the landlord protection. He had got several warnings to stop the evictions, but did not do so. Cattle drives took place and a coffin was placed outside his mansion, all to no purpose. Patrick Queenan and myself arranged with Tim Jordan that he would go to Castlebar and, on his way home, stay in Durkan's Hotel, Lahardane, and accompany a Mr. Durkan to a concert in the local hall. Jordan was the marked man and Queenan and myself knew he would be arrested if he had not a good alibi. Our plan was to shoot into the landlord's mansion and Jordan would be safe in Durkan's at the time of the shooting. As arranged, I went to contact Queenan at the time specified and had two guns with me. Queenan, who had cars for hire, was called to drive two local school teachers to town in a trap and when I called he had not come home. The time arranged was when the landlord's workers were going home. I considered that one could do the job, so I took one gun and

arrived at the mansion at just twilight. There were two large plate-glass windows to the south of the halldoor, and Bang! Bang! I blasted holes in each window from about a distance of 10 feet and heard the crashing of glass. I retired cautiously and, once outside the gate leading to the mansion, I was racing away like a buck deer. I ran about 2½ miles, hid my gun and arrived in the Concert Hall in good time; as I was then training for long-distance runs, no notice was taken of me. I met Queenan and Jordan when the concert was over and told them both what happened. Queenan could not help being late, and the next day was a day of excitement in Crossmolina. Police were busy and everyone having his own construction on what did occur; some claimed the landlord was shot and his wife wounded.

Jordan was arrested and released, as they could not connect him with the "dastardly outrage" as it was called. Inside two weeks, the landlord came to terms, agreed to 3s.9d. in the £ reduction in tenants' rents, withdrew all lawsuits; the police protection was removed and he finally sold the estate to the Irish Land Commission for distribution.

After Easter Week 1916, the Volunteers were very quiet and, in 1917, a reorganisation took place in Castlebar. I was summoned to this meeting where a new organisation plan was adopted. The country was divided into four spheres of action, north, south, east and west battalions, County Mayo Brigade. Michael McHugh of the House Castlebar was elected brigade commandant; John Hoban, vice O/C.; Ml. Kilroy, Newport, Q.M. and Dick Walsh, Balla, adjutant. Myself for North Mayo, Tom Ruane, vice O/C. for East Mayo, Sean Corcoran, Kiltimagh, and Thomas Ruane, Kiltimagh, vice O/C. for West Mayo; Tom Derrig, Westport, for South Mayo, Ned Moane, Westport, Vice O/C. and Liam Forde, Ballaghaderreen.

Our duty was clearly defined and that was organised in about eight months. I had in or about 22 companies in pretty decent shape.

On 17th March 1918, - St. Patrick's Day - H.Q. issued an order that all Volunteers would mobilise in their respective H.Q. areas, Ballina being H.Q. for North Mayo. To Ballina on that date all Volunteers converged; each man had one day's ration, the R.I.C. tried to stop us on our march to Ballina at Ardagh. Here, Lahardane, Crossmolina were joined by Moygownagh and Ardagh. On arrival in Ballina all companies were merged into one parade and marched through the town, by Humbert's Monument and the Post Office and halted in the old Market Place in Garden St. About 1200 took part in the parade.

Ten days later (Good Friday) March 27th, I was arrested and charged with illegal drilling along with Frank Jordan, Paddy Gallagher and Willie Lydon of Ballina. We got two months for drilling and two months in default of bail. We were kept for a few weeks in Sligo Jail and then transferred to Crumlin Road Jail, Belfast. While there I met many fine types of men - Austin Stack, Terence McSwiney, Joe (Wee Joe) McDonagh, Kevin O'Higgins, Tom Derrig, Fionan Lynch, Larry Gardner, "Widger" Maher, Seumas Robinson, Eamon Fleming, Jack Grace, Seamus Murray, Hugo McNeill, Mick Brennan and his brother, Frank McGrath, Eamon O'Dwyer, Sean O'Neill, Wm. Renn, McQuill, Dundalk, P.C. O'Mahony, Seumas de Burca, Seumas Lang, Art O'Connor, Sean Kelly (The Bull) and many others. We had one hell of a time when we smashed everything smashable in one wing of the jail; a number of us were handcuffed behind our backs, dragged down the stairs and thrown into basement disused cells. I spent with others four days and four nights in that way and about ten days

handcuffed in front in the usual way.

The jail was a bedlam of noise. We would start about 10 p.m. for our usual concert so as to amuse all criminals, the warders and the jail audience we commanded from our Belfast friends across the wall.

A "dignitary" with special "conciliatory" training was sent by Max Green (Head of the Prison Board) to confer with us inside the prison and end the hunger strike, for, by now, it was fast developing into a miniature war. All our concessions would be granted if we remained quiet, so said the "dignitary". A wild yell from about 100 men: "Damn your concessions; freedom we want". Our little concessions were granted and peace was restored, but only for a while.

I was turned loose on 1st August and "back to slips" again; more organising and training. The conscription scare served to fill the companies to full strength. The general election came along and military men were instructed not to allow their names to be put forward for nomination. All Volunteer officers were to devote most of their time to army affairs and, of course, assist in the election of the man nominated. For some reason, moderate-minded men were expected as the choice. The army and Sinn Fein clubs had to do the choosing. The election came along and Sinn Fein won in a canter.

The first T.Ds. elected for Mayo were Dr. Crowley for North Mayo; Wm. ~~Shiels~~ SEARS for South Mayo; Joe McBride for West Mayo and E. de Valera for East Mayo.

After the Armistice of 11th November 1918, and the general election, the people thought their freedom was assured; many Volunteers became lax and would not show up for drill. I would say too much reliance was placed on the political position and too little on the military position.

with out country under the control of an alien military force and a domestic semi-military R.I.C. Both forces had to be defeated before Irishmen could claim freedom. Napoleon's formula: "An army, like mechanics, is the product of the mass multiplied by the velocity" was a sound policy for Volunteer citizen soldiers.

In the Spring of 1919, I went on organising work to Co. Sligo. In Sligo town the Volunteers were fairly well organised; in the outlying districts army work was very slow. Military classes were conducted in Sligo and I called a meeting in the Hottentots Hall (as it was called) to prepare for an attack on an R.I.C. hut in the Dromore area. This, I figured, would give the men a real chance. They agreed to go with me.

I was then in an area outside the jurisdiction and had to have the matter submitted to another "source". I was infofmed that the "source" was hostile to me and Volunteers were warned to be careful or I would ruin the organisation. I countered that this was the real way to learn, by doing something. Some time afterwards, that "source" was taken to Dublin.

There were a number of fine fellows in and around Sligo. Another land case, somewhat similar to the one I handled in May, cropped up. This man had R.I.C. guarding his home. I had a friend, a Volunteer officer, to show me where the place was and I sent him to Jim Keaveney for a Webley revolver and one dozen rounds and, after getting same, I cycled out to the place, blasted the windows and door and took off. This gentleman gave up the grabbed land inside one week.

I then moved to South Sligo and stayed in Farry's of Ballymote. About this time, the Republican Loan was launched and I was asked to assist an intensive drive to

ensure its success. An old friend, Alec McCabe, was arrested and I was warned. A warrant was issued for my arrest. Alec was a great man on the Loan. I was given Paddy O'Brien as secretary and I never handled any of the monies collected. Mick Collins, whom I met in Sligo Jail, wrote me some letters as he had thrown himself wholeheartedly into the success of the Loan and urged me to go full steam ahead. The morning after McCabe was arrested I had a meeting arranged in Geevagh. The day was Sunday and I did not sleep in Farry's that night as I was on the alert. I instructed Bertie Farry to have a car ready for me at 9 a.m. Coming down the street towards Farry's, I saw two R.I.C. men coming towards me. They crossed from the side-walk and shouted: "In the name of the King, halt". I turned to run up the street, but realised I was going towards the barracks, turned round and faced them. They both dived for me and I got one blow in when I was caught by one burly fellow and thrown on the side-walk near Miss Hannon's. On seeing the other fellow rushing to attack me, Miss Hannon came to my assistance as did her two brothers and kept the other fellow at bay. I struggled with my man and eventually got on my legs again and although I was lifted off my feet several times, he failed to knock me down again. My raincoat was up about my head which was buried in his stomach butting him like a billy-goat. All of a sudden, I straightened and twisted to left and right leaving my two coats with the "Peeler" (R.I.C. man), but the "goat" was free and able to hit the other R.I.C. man a smack before sailing for the corner and out the Keash road. I was followed by police with carbines. By this time, the general alarm was sounded, the barracks being but a short distance away. I was signalled to by the occupants of a car, reached them safely and then went on to Geevagh. Miss Hannon regained my coats and sent them after me out the Riverstown Road.

On to Geevagh and held our meeting and then to Highwood Hall to meet the Volunteers. On emerging from the Hall and sergeant and three R.I.C. men tried to arrest the driver, Farry, myself and a young man from Dublin. By this time I had secured a .38 Colt revolver from Tommy John Conlan. My Dublin friend also had a gun. I advised the sergeant to have sense and quit or, if not, to double his insurance as there would not be a next time.

I went to Ballymote that night to a concert in a school near Gurteen and stayed the night with an old and trusted friend, Thomas Casey of Gurteen.

On the following day I arrived in Riverstown. (I met Joe McDevitt - better known as Professor McDevitt - in Collooney on the night before). Tommy John Conlan and Tom Dignan had the Volunteers there as arranged. McDevitt, O'Brien and myself arrived by car and, after Mass, the congregation gathered around, when an R.I.C. sergeant with a few men made a rush to arrest me. The Volunteers closed in and surrounded the car in which we still were. The sergeant proclaimed the meeting illegal and I proclaimed his presence illegal and gave him to understand he was risking his life if he tried to arrest me. After the meeting was over, the entire manpower followed me to a field north west of Riverstown where I drilled them openly. I asked that only men between 18 and 60 years of age take part, but some old men of 70 years wanted to join the Volunteers. Joe and myself lost our car temporarily; later we found it, had to go out to Tubbercurry that night where I did a quiet disappearing act from the stage. I was speaking to the audience when the R.I.C. came in and made for the stage. I slipped out the back exit, as previously arranged, and Jack Walker took me by bicycle to his father's home.

Next morning, two R.I.C. men called and asked if Jack was at home. His father said no, and the police warned him of his being seen with me the previous night.

The next night I was brought by a schoolteacher - a Mr. Kelly - to a house near Cloonacool belonging to a Mrs. Burke. She was the wife of a Head Constable in the R.I.C. and had two sons in the Force. Mr. Kelly was boarding there and took me upstairs to bed. He went off to school in the morning and a little boy of about 10 years of age came into my room with breakfast on a tray. As he was about to leave he said he knew me and asked if I would write him some Sinn Fein songs. I willingly agreed to do so and asked him to get me some paper and a pencil. He did so and assured me he would not say anything about who I was and, to emphasise his intentions, he put his finger on his lips.

I got up about 11 a.m. and said I would like to write some letters. The young Mrs. Burke took me to the room. While writing, two R.I.C. men from Tubbercurry came to the house and Mrs. Burke, junior, was talking to them at the door before I realised they were so near. I had my gun ready and watched from behind the curtains. When they left, my hostess told me who they were. I had already told the woman my name was Duffy. Mr. Kelly returned from school and we went for a walk through the fields. He told me it was the safest place I could stay. That night I told them who I was and the old woman asked me a special request, that if ever I captured any of her sons not to shoot them. A very deep question flashed across my mind: here was one mother praying for the safety of her sons as my mother was praying for me. All mothers of the human race, civilised and savage, worry over the fate of their sons in war or peace.

The next evening I went to a house away off the main

road and spent two days digging potatoes with a spade and enjoyed it with the entire family in the field.

A night with the Tinkers. About Thursday night I took off for Monasteraden. I was trying to make my way to Ballymote by bicycle and kept off the main roads where possible. I had no light on the bicycle and lost my way on the byroads. A light appeared some distance away and I decided it was better to get to it. When I got near there was no mistaking it was a tinkers' camp. Immediately the genial old head of the Clan McDonagh recognised me. He shook my hand and said "Yes, sir, Mr. Hegarty, is there anything I can do for you? Don't be uneasy, I won't spy on you and maybe you would have a saucepan of good strong tay (tea) and 'tis good it will do ya". I agreed, and stayed in the camp swapping stories with the men and their wives and families. After being instructed and cautioned about all the highways, byways and boreens, I wished them luck and bade them goodbye. Ever since, I have a healthy regard for my old friends, the tinkers.

The next Sunday I showed up in Monasteraden and stayed in Corcoran's. No R.I.C. were present at the meeting and everything passed off quietly.

The following Sunday, 19th November 1919, I planned to hold three meetings at Clonloo, Killaraght and Breedogue, Co. Roscommon. During the week I went with Batty Flynn of Gurteen to settle a coal strike at Arigna. We called to a house named Deignan's beside the pit. I was supposed to be what would now be called a Public Relations Adviser. A solution was found and a reconciliation agreeable to both sides arrived at.

I asked Batty if he would drive me to the meetings on Sunday. He informed me his heart condition was not good

and if there was any trouble he advised me to try and get someone else and if I didn't, he would risk it. Anyone found driving me would risk imprisonment and the probable loss of his car. I went to Dr. Doyle on Saturday night. He and Jim Hunt were to accompany me on Sunday. Dr. Doyle had got Dom O'Grady, who had a garage in Gurteen, to drive us. I knew Dom and the doctor were both good athletes and Jim Hunt was handball champion of great physical build. We took off for Clonloo and linked up with Jim Hunt at Killaraght. Everything was O.K. at Clonloo. Two R.I.C. men were there, but did not interfere. One of them left before the meeting closed, presumably for Boyle H.Q. After the 9 a.m. meeting, we proceeded by Lough Gara's shore to 11 a.m. Mass. Everything passed off there O.K. On our way to Killaraght we did not notice the other policeman following us. He went direct to Gurteen and notified his superior. We then took off for Breedogue. The priest's name I do not know, but he d elayed Mass until we arrived by preaching a long sermon. We got the congregation, as we expected, and left Breedogue about 2 p.m.

On our way back coming near Murphy's crossroads I saw the road ahead lined by R.I.C. men on both sides. O'Grady was at the wheel, Hunt beside him. I was behind Hunt with Dr. Doyle on my right behind the driver. O'Grady shouted back to me: "What will I do, Padraig?" I shouted back: "Dash through, life or d eath". In an instant, he "gunned" the car and dashed forward to meet the forces of His Majesty, George V, last King of Ireland. A Head Constable with three men signalled us to halt by shooting into the air. In a few seconds we were on top of him. Then he tried shooting at the tyres - no effect. I could see the main body extending in formation left and right from the centre so as to give them a greater fire-power area. The road wasn't very wide and the

car was careering and swaying from every angle over the frost covered road. About halfway through the main body, a lunge thrust of a rifle was made at me. The bullet lodged in the back cushion. I drew my gun and fired four times in quick succession. Consternation seemed to have gripped the enemy; they could not very well shoot indiscriminately as they would certainly shoot each other. In about 100 yards, four others took up the shooting and when we got to them the main party had to cease fire. About 150 yards further on there were two in the kneeling position, one on each side of the road. I fired at the man on my left and, on passing them, Dr. Doyle shouted: "I'm shot! I'm shot!" He was crumpled in the bottom of the car. I caught him and pulled him on to the seat and told him to stoop his shoulders and keep his head down. In another few hundred yards were two more R.I.C. men with their bicycles pushed out on the road. "Go for them, Dom", I said. He did and both were sent spinning to the ground and their bicycles smashed to smithereens. There were more bullets flying, but with a stiff gale of wind I felt comfortably safe. Round a hairpin bend which O'Grady negotiated faultlessly. After about three miles on this road we stopped to examine the doctor's wounds and have them dressed. Luckily, he had dressings in his bag. I rendered all the aid I could under his directions. He had two flesh wounds in his legs. The car, being an open roadster, was perforated with bullet holes. The number I did not count as I had to be on my way on foot so that Dr. Doyle could get back for proper treatment. We missed the military who were on the Boyle road and, had we not been on the road we were, we would have gone smash into them.

Jim Hunt took me to a farmer's house where we had a feed of bacon, cabbage and potatoes, washed down with a couple of cups of strong tea.

On O'Grady getting back to Gurteen he was attacked again by the police who had returned. They shouted: "We will get him in the back of the car" as they thought I was in the back lying down. O'Grady kept moving and got another bullet into his car. He brought it back some time later and left it in the custody of Canon O'Connor, P.P., Gurteen.

Hunt and I proceeded to the lake where two of our men (I do not know their names) rowed us across and we finally arrived in Monasteraden. Hunt left me in the house of a Mr. Finan. We shook hands on the day's accomplishment and he went home to his mother's house where he was arrested next morning and got six months in jail. So ended a day, as Professor O'Donnell wrote, without fair play.

I was well treated in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Finan. On the following Wednesday evening I was accompanied to Gurteen by two young fellows - one named Corrigan and the other I cannot remember. I had to see my wounded comrade. On entering the doctor's house, he was surprised to see me as the house was raided twice that day; so it was not safe to sleep there. I asked him what was the chance of a night's shelter with Canon O'Connor and, with Dr. Doyle limping along with the aid of two crutches, we called on the Canon who brought both of us in and treated us kindly. He it was who condemned my actions from the pulpit a short time previously. That was the first time in my life a hot water jar was placed in my bed. I figured to myself that if I got much of this princely treatment I would become a 'sissy'. I had a good sleep, breakfast and dinner, thanked him and bade him goodbye. I secured a bicycle and went to Killavelle where I stayed with Fr. O'Donnell, a most lovable padre and a staunch follower. Afterwards, I cycled to Keash where I met Harry Conroy and went with him to Tommy John

Conlon of Geevagh and from there to Mulligan's, Ballintoher. Jim Keaveney escorted me from there to Pat Flanagan's, Hill St., Sligo, where I had a consultation with a number of the leaders: Billy Pilkington, Jim Keaveney, Charlie Dolan, Dom McHugh, Jim Devins, Ml. Nevin, D.A. Mulcahy, R.S. Bradshaw, Seumas McGowan, Tom Clark of Dromard and Frank O'Beirne. I told them I was going back to my native hills of Mayo.

I would like to mention here some men in South Sligo who were fine soldiers: Frank Carty, Mick O'Hara, Hughie Nealon, Jim Duffy, Dr. Martin Brennan, Tom Scanlon, Harry Brehony, Sean Ginty, the Durkan brothers, my old friend Tom McCarrick and Jack Brennan of Cloonacool. Goodbye Sligo, I'm on my way!

I arrived home by bicycle a few days before Christmas and kept low for a short time. I went to Mass on Christmas Day in my native parish of Addergoole, or as it is now called, Lahardane; came home, had a good feed of turkey and left that evening for Keevagh, and the next morning my father's house was raided. I stayed a night or two with Fr. Martin Hegarty and was very well treated. On the following Sunday I travelled with him in a pony and trap to a local school. One R.I.C. man was there. Fr. Martin asked me not to create any trouble. I stayed in a house about a mile from the school (Mr. Moffatt's) where there was a concert that night. When I arrived I found two R.I.C. men inside; it was about time to stop this system of spying and, as a dance usually follows the concert, I got a few Volunteers together - my brother Eamon with Pat Joe Marley, Mike Marley, Mike Waters, Ml. Gallagher, Martin Flanagan, Martin Gallagher and Martin McNeely. When the R.I.C. men were coming back to the dance from the house they were in, I jumped from behind a fence and told them to put their hands up. One complied

and the other sprinted towards the school, so I had to bang one bullet under his feet and this was enough. We stripped them, giving back their watches and anything else they had in their pockets including a few shillings and sent them off to their barracks, but, before doing so, I made them go down on their knees and promise to quit; they did so. They were not beaten in any way. I got some useful documents on one of them.

The next day there was a general raiding by police and, a few weeks after that, I, with five other men, intercepted a lorry load of barbed wire on its way to a barracks. The wire was carefully hid for some time and later was used by some of the men who assisted me for fencing purposes. We also intercepted a lorry load of steel shutters.

Nearing Easter 1920 I had two companies assist me in capturing Ballacorick Barracks. I arranged with a local Volunteer, a native of the district named Martin McAndrew - a careful and shrewd soldier - to sum up the situation and, when all was ready, I had the companies from Lahardane and Crossmolina to meet at Keenagh crossroads. I instructed them as to what to do, as our fire power was very limited. All communications were disrupted and I placed men on the roads some with only bicycle pumps to hold up all traffic until the operation was completed. Captain Sean Corcoran, my brother Eamon and Captain Loftus were in charge of the main attacking body. The barracks was surrounded from all vantage points. Captain Corcoran informed me he had the sergeant under observation in his own room; his wife and two children were in another room. I saw where this was going to be easy if handled properly. I flashed my light into the ladies' room and had Corcoran call on the sergeant to surrender. I told the sergeant's wife what was about to happen and that if she

did as I requested, nothing would happen to her husband, herself or the children. I told her to have her husband come into her room with his hands up. This he did. When I told him in forcible language - but not vulgar by any means - to come to the front door with his hands up, allow myself and my men to enter the barracks and have his men surrender as well. This he did and, as his wife became nervous, I put my gun in my pocket and told him to lower his hands. I found a gold watch on the bedroom table and gave it to him. He showed me his athletic trophies and asked if he could have them. Certainly, I replied, anything else? Yes, his bookcase and his wife, plucking up courage, asked if I would spare the piano. I agreed and said I would have the articles mentioned placed in safety. The two other R.I.C. men, who were glad to surrender, I placed in another house and the sergeant and his wife and family in a different house on the other s ide of the barracks. Then McAndrew got his barrel of paraffin oil which he got in O'Boyle's publichouse, sprinkled the place and sent it up. It was a great blaze. I got several copies of the Police Gazette and in one number was a complete description of myself and other wanted men, some of whom I remember, and am sorry if I can't remember all of them: the Loftus brothers from Crossmolina, Stephen Fleming, Flip O'Donnell, Jemmy O'Hara, Ned O'Boyle, Ned Murphy, Peter McNamara and James Flynn who was in command of Crossmolina Company. From Lahardane there were Captain Sean Corcoran, Captain Hegarty, Ned and Sean (my brothers), P. McNeely, Martin Gallagher, Martin Flanagan, Martin McNally, Mick Waters, Pat Kelly, Ed. Flanagan and Bernie Brennan, a Sligo man from Gurteen, were amongst those who took part.

After this, I spent a period with Michael Kilroy in and around Newport.

Later, in 1920, I was selected as a member of Mayo Co. Council, and attended the first Republican Council meeting Conor Maguire was elected chairman and Eamon Gannon vice-chairman. The place was raided when it was known I was present at the meeting. I slipped out and made my escape, stayed in the old Workhouse that night and had a comfortable sleep. The Ryan brothers of Castlebar had scouts on the watch.

One Sunday later on, Martin McNeely and myself were cycling to a sports meeting at Esgragh and, on our way by Rake Street, we called into a publichouse for refreshment. An R.I.C. man was sitting on a stool at the counter with a pint in front of him. I pulled my gun and ordered hands up and disarmed him, had a lemonade and wished him luck. We went on to the sports field and with other Volunteers collected for the Railwaymen's Strike Fund as, at this time, they were refusing to man the trains containing English troops. Hats off to Labour!

Towards the end of July I stayed with a great and true friend, Ml. Gallagher, and went home for a change of under-wear. On leaving, my father said:I should sleep at home as there were a few of the lads around who would keep watch. I went to bed. My brother Ned and Gallagher went out the fields hunting for rabbits and arrived back about 5.45 a.m. They said everything was fine. Ned came to bed with me and Gallagher went home. I was dozing off to sleep again when I heard noise and woke to find rifles pointing at my chest. The kitchen door had been left open. There were also rifles pointing into the room from all the windows. We were ordered to get up and dress and I was asked for my name. I refused and so did the others. My three brothers (Martin, Bart and Ned) and myself were handcuffed. There were military under

Major Egan, a Belfastman, together with the R.I.C. from Castlebar. I would say about 70 in number. An aeroplane swooped overhead as we were marched to the lorries. They were going to arrest my father as well, but released him at the lorries. He was then about 73 years of age. It was the last time I saw my father. We four were taken to Castlebar and then to Sligo jail. We were two days without bed or bedding, while in Sligo we got some sort of a hokus-pokus trial 'in camera' within the jail. We were then taken to Belfast Jail. In about three weeks my other brothers were turned loose and I was courtmartialled in Victoria Barracks, given two years hard labour and deported on a Destroyer to Walton Jail. We were treated as human beings while there. The Governor was a gentleman; the chaplain, a Canon Sigerson, a lovable character, said if he could let us go he would.

A rumour got around that a rescue was planned after the "Ruddy Warehouse fires" in Liverpool (as they called them) so, at about 2.30 a.m., we were ordered to get ready. Fourteen of us were handcuffed separately and then a chain contraption linked us all together so when one moved all moved. In Manchester, as we were having a stop, a gang - presumably Irish - noticed us and shouted "Up the Republic".

Our next step was Lincoln Jail where we punched our time, gave no quarter and accepted none. The Governor was a bit of a fancy Dan Tyrant. One day when out helping on the Fire Brigade, I was shown how to handle the nozzle and play the water on a supposed arc of fire. I picked up my hose, fidgetted around a bit and turned it full blast on the Hon. Governor. Two of the warders rushed me. I dropped the hose and pretended to have lost all control and was rushed back to my cell and the next morning was brought before the Governor. I had a time trying to act the idiot, inquired

about his health and the expense of having his suit pressed. The Deputy at his side burst out laughing. I was sent back to my cell till the next morning and escaped the bread and water punishment.

It is only right to relate an incident with the chaplain who was so different from Canon Sigerson. After two weeks, services were arranged for us prisoners. The first visit our new Canon made was a reminder and an eye-opener for us "soft boiled" prisoners. On opening my cell door, No. 3, he pulled the card out of the slot, a red card to denote I was a Catholic. Then he entered my cell, the card in his hand, and accosted me as a murderer because "illegal drilling" was printed on the card to denote the crime for which I was committed. "You murderer! you murderer!" he said, "do you think you will get pardon from God trying to overthrow the British Empire. You Irish, fed on potatoes and buttermilk, can never do that". I slammed the cell door, locking us in, and assured him if he was a younger man I would have him under me, but, considering his age and his pot belly, I would refrain from hitting him. I told him in a few words, as best I knew, what I considered was true christian charity and assured him that while England tried to hold Ireland in slavery, and while one English soldier remained in Ireland as the symbol of English Authority, so long would Irishmen continue their fight for freedom. I said that, even if the Irish were fed on potatoes and buttermilk, they would never rest until they toppled every cornerstone of that much-vaunted Empire, and perhaps the day would come when he and his people would graciously accept butter and potatoes from Irishmen.

While in Lincoln, I was told by the Governor of my father's death. He lived only seven weeks after being beaten

by Black and Tans on Christmas Day 1920. I remember writing on a slip of paper: "Christmas Day 1920, in Lincoln Jail, sitting on a little stool with a very empty stomach".

Here is the last savage incident perpetrated by the Black and Tans in the old homestead at Carrowkeel, as told me by my sister Cecelia; in early July 1921, a party of Black and Tans raided the home. My brother was taken some distance away and his moustache pulled out, as also the hairs on his head, with a pair of pliers, then beaten and kicked while on the ground. The neighbours heard him scream until he became unconscious. His head was swollen to three times its normal size. He was attended by a priest and doctor, never really recovered and died some time later. My sister, Cecelia, was dragged along a gravel road on her bare knees and beaten. She became a cripple and could not leave a wheel chair. She died young as a result of her injuries. My mother, poor soul, was a witness to this barbaric treatment I would like here to mention the names of other comrades associated with me in the North Mayo Brigade whom I have not mentioned so far. Ballina - Tom Ruane, Joe Ruane, Frank Jordan, Alfie Colleary, Tuckey Colleary, Vin Colleary, Joe Doherty, Pat Ruttledge (who was engaged in reorganising the judicial system), Martin McGrath, Pappy Forde, .. McHale, Davy Ryder, the three musketeers - Paddy Coleman, Crimp Grimes and Chuddy Conway (known as Gultha-Gultha), Frank Flynn, John Moylett, Murty Gilmartin, John Moran, .. McCawley, Pat Cosgrave, Bonniconlon area - Tom Loftus (one-time Brigade O/C.), Pat and Tom McAndrew, Scally Mallon, Pat Lafferty, Pat Lawrence, Seamus Kilcullen, (O/C. Brigade at the Truce and after), Tony Kilcullen, Matt Kilcawley, Tom Kilcawley, the brothers Gildea, J. Burke (Enniscrone), M.M. Tolan, Denis Tuffy, Denis Sheeran, Tom Finnerty, S. Kavanagh,

Ml. John Hanly, Tom Coen, Ned Hannon, Ted Kilgallon, Jack Byron, John Gallagher, Lakefield, J.J. Brogan, .. Morrison and James of Knockmore (both killed in action), Tom Burke, E. Browne, Jack Finerty, Wm. Jennings, Jas. Boyle, Wm. Doherty and Dr. Ferran of Foxford, Tom and Mick Harte, Paddy Bourke of Ballycastle, Dr. Crowley, Dr. Madden, Anthony Farrell, Ml. O'Connor, E. Nealon - killed in action, Sean Langan, .. Kelly of Belderrig, Ml. Kelly, Ml. Keaveney, Co. C., Alex Boyd, Pat Boyd, John Barrett of Crossmolina, Mick Mulherin, Ml. Mulderrig, Joe Sharkey, Andy McNeely - one of the first in Crossmolina, J.J. Leonard, Martin Harte, Ml. Reilly, Pat Kelly, Pat Maycock, John Joe Browne (Mellows), the Molony Brothers, J. Burke, Pat Coleman, Pat Loftus, Pat Corcoran.

As the brigade took in all of Erris, there were some good Erris men. Seamus Kilroy and his brother Tom, Sean Munnelly, Mick Lavelle, P. Carabine, Tom Murphy, John Neary, John and M. Reilly, Dr. Gaughan and his brother Mick. There were four brothers named Collins and their wonderful mother who was imprisoned for six months, Padraig McAndrew (an old timer) and Tom McAndrew on the Co. Council.

In Ballycroy we had Brian Corrigan, .. Sweeney and Louis Cleary with his aunts, plus several others. Many are gone, but their names still live with those who worked, helped and suffered that Ireland shall not be a dream nation built on sentiment and hope, but a nation embracing all its children, north, south, east and west!

<u>The Bowen-Colthurst Incident</u>: The year was 1927, two years after I left Ireland. I was in Anyox, British Columbia, Canada, known as the Atlin Country. This Anyox was a great copper mine and smelter camp, a Guigenham property run under the name of Granby Consolidated.

Archie Moore, a mechanic by trade, of Scottish ancestry, had a homestead ranch reclaimed by himself along the Frayer river. His wife lived on the r anch and Archie came to Anyox to work every winter. In the Spring of 1927, he went home on a visit and learned from his wife that a gentleman by the name of Captain Colthurst had purchased a ranch or was given one by the Government close to his own ranch, and that his wife (Colthurst's wife, or the woman living with him) told her he had grown a beard as he wanted to appear old and was afraid to go anywhere. He was in Victoria before going there and was wellknown as a remittance man and was mixed up in some affair in Dublin City, Ireland.

The Captain had borrowed some farm machinery from Mrs. Moore and, knowing nothing about farming, broke the machines lent to him. The cost of repairs, Archie informed me, was about 200 dollars, a big sum of money in 1927. Mrs. Moore had asked the captain to make good the damage and he bluntly refused to pay for or repair the machines. The wife w rote to Archie and a sked him to come home and straighten out the matter. Archie w ent home and called on the Captain. An argument arose and Moore hit him and s aid: "I'm coming back in a short time with some Sinn Feiners who are in the camp. Moore had heard about us from old Pat Clune from Macroom, Co. Cork, who was a room-mate of mine. There were with me McAndrew, Joyce and the Flanagan brothers.

Moore looked me up when he got back and I was only too delighted to have an opportunity to accompany him on his mission and meeting Captain Bowen-Colthurst face to face. He w rote his wife to say the day we would arrive and, by return, he had a letter from her to say that Colthurst was gone for an unknown destination, leaving a message for Mrs. Moore and 100 dollars in currency with another homesteader requesting that she would not tell those Sinn Feiners in

in Anyox anything about him. I told Archie Moore the whole story, how Colthurst had murdered Sheehy Skeffington, Dickson and ~~Maguire~~ McINTYRE in the streets of Dublin in 1916.

Colthurst completely disappeared and we never heard of him again.

A Showdown with Captain Karl Spindler:

I have a personal interest in the following statement: Prior to 1916 I was instructed to go to Kilcummin, Mayo, where the French landed in '98, and take soundings of the harbour. I sent the water depths and a rough sketch to G.H.Q. and then proceeded to Belderrig to investigate a rumour relating to the Walsh brothers who were supposed to contact some fishermen in or near Belderrig, who were supposed to see submarines.

In 1930, Captain Karl Spindler travelled on a lecture tour of the United States. I was living in the city of San Francisco. A meeting was called in the Auditorium, sponsored by I.R.A. Pearse and Connolly Club, United Irish Societies, Knights of the Red Branch, A.O.H., plus German-Irish Clubs for the purpose of hearing Captain Spindler give his graphic and interesting talk. He was dressed in naval uniform; about 5'11" in height, weighing around 180 lbs. with a dark complexion; spoke English fluently, was square shouldered and streamlined, as most sea captains are.

He stated that he was commissioned and entrusted with the ship AUD carrying a full crew with a cargo or rifles and ammunition to Ireland. On board was Sir Roger Casement and Captain Robert Monteith.

After leaving the Kiel Canal, the AUD headed up the North Sea. The crew were dressed as fishermen and were not supposed to speak German. All were disguised, wore beards and looked very sloppy and unkempt. On coming round the north coast of Scotland they were spotted by an English patrol

boat and ordered to heave-to. Red Crosses were plastered all over the ship and signals put out to "Keep away - Fever on board". The English captain actually went aboard the AUD and Captain Spindler offered him a drink of whiskey. He gulped it down and left; most of the crew were in bed or strewn round. It was just enough to frighten any man. Then the bows of the AUD were headed for Ireland and in some time they were sailing around the Mayo coast, keeping a reasonable distance from the shore. They arrived at Banna strand, Co. Kerry, where they were supposed to land the arms. They kept on cruising and were on the alert for the pre-arranged green signals. Hour after hour passed scanning the shore for the green light that did not appear.

There was not much time allowed and he (Spindler) decided to put out to sea, blow up the AUD and sink her with her cargo of arms and ammunition. Time bombs were placed in her holds and then, on being ordered to surrender, he changed into uniform, ordering his crew to do the same so as to be treated as prisoners of war. They abandoned ship and informed his captor to pull away as the ship was doomed and, in a few minutes, the AUD went down and with it the arms and ammunition which, if landed safely, might have changed the valiant attempt of the men in Dublin city.

In the final part of his lecture Captain Spindler remarked how the slow-thinking, slow-moving Irish let him down and how badly planned was the taking over of the rifles by the Irish.

This was more than I could stand, so I pulled him up and said I did not like the sneering way he made the remark and informed him that the men who were entrusted to take over the arms had met with a mishap and were drowned. He told me he would have the necessary corrections made in his papers and book as it gave poor publicity to the Irish side.

Viewing the position from a military point of view personally, I consider our organisation was lacking. If Captain Spindler was disappointed, so were we all; we had much to learn. There were roughly about 2,500 people present including many Americans who knew nothing about Easter Week, 1916.

All this is written up in 1957, 35 years later. I retain a keen memory for what happened; there may be slight errors and many incidents I might not have mentioned. I hope I have not offended any person.

In January 1922, I arrived back from Lincoln Jail after being released, free, and, as the Governor said many times to us, "Carry on".

Signed: Patrick J. McGrath

Date: Good Friday April 19.57.

Witness: J. R. Bond Capt

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