

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BURO STAIRS MILITARY 1913-21

No. W.S. 1,064

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS.

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 1,064.....

Witness

Michael Healy,
Benmore,
Bullaun,
Loughrea,
Co. Galway.

Identity.

Lieut. Bullaun Company, Irish Volunteers
Co. Galway, 1917 - ;

Captain same Company later.

Subject.

Bullaun Company Irish Volunteers,
Co. Galway, 1917-1921.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil

File No. S. 2373.....

Form B.S.M. 2

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STATEMENT BY MICHAEL HEALY,
Benmore, Bullaun, Loughrea, Co. Galway.

I was born in March, 1891, at Kilnadeema, Loughrea, but I have lived at Benmore since I was a year old. I attended Bullaun National School until I reached fifteen years of age. After leaving school I worked on my father's farm at Benmore.

My father was a very active member of the Land League in Parnell's time. He was a close associate of Mr. P. J. Kelly of Kilnadeema who was at that time a very prominent figure in the Movement in County Galway. My father often spoke of the hardships endured by the farming community and recited ballads commemorating evictions etc. It was after Easter Week 1916 that I began to take a lively interest in Irish affairs.

I joined the Irish Volunteers in the summer of 1917. The Company was Bullaun. Laurence Burke of Kilnadeema, afterwards Commandant of the Loughrea Battalion, recruited me. He is at present a member of the Garda Siotchana and is stationed at Ballinasloe. He was the first organiser of the Irish Volunteers that I remember. He organised the Bullaun Company. The officers of the Company then were :-

- Captain:- Martin Nevin (now deceased),
- 1st Lieutenant:- Michael Healy (myself),
- 2nd Lieutenant:- Timothy Nevin (now deceased).

The number of men in the Company at the beginning was about fifteen. Some left after a month or two. Those who remained were :-

- Volunteer John Nevin)
- " Michael Nevin) Brothers of Lieutenant Timothy Nevin.
- " John Finnerty)
- " Patrick Finnerty) Two brothers; Patrick at present a Sergeant in the Garda Siotchana.
- " Patrick Duane)
- " Thomas Duane) Two brothers.
- " John Healy)
- " Ned Healy) Brothers of mine
- and " Thomas Dealy.

Our Company commenced to drill immediately after its formation. The drill instructor was Thomas Doyle of Kiltulla. I think he was Captain of Kiltulla Company. He was a very good instructor. We did simple drill including left and right turns, forming fours, re-forming two deep, marching, about turn on the march, changing direction etc. Later on we were taught to take up positions in extended order at the double to advance and retire in extended order. Every man in the Company was able to use a shot gun and was a good shot, having plenty of experience in the shooting of rabbits, pheasants, grouse and snipe. The Company had one Lee Enfield rifle. It belonged to Volunteer Peter Sweeney (now deceased) of Loughrea who was residing in our area in 1917. Volunteer Sweeney, who had been interned after 1916, gave us the rifle for training purposes.

Volunteer John Healy taught us the mechanism of the rifle and how to take a correct aim etc. He had been three or four years in the R.I.C. but had resigned from that force early in 1917. He also took over the drilling of the Company from Thomas Doyle of Kiltulla. Our early training included occasional route marches from Bullaun to Loughrea six miles away. The nearest R.I.C. barracks was New Inn about two miles to the north-east, until it was destroyed after its evacuation in the summer of 1920. The garrison at New Inn consisted of one Sergeant and about six Constables.

Before I pass on from the year 1917 to 1918 I would like to state that a Sinn Fein Club was started in Bullaun about May of that year. Volunteers Peter Sweeney and Joseph O'Flaherty, both of Loughrea and now deceased, organised the Club. I was Secretary from the outset and continued so until the Club ceased to function. The members took a very keen interest in the Roscommon, Longford, Clare and Kilkenny elections. Our President was an old Fenian named James Keane. The majority of the twenty or so members were Volunteers. The Parish Priest took no active part in Sinn Fein although he was sympathetic.

The Club distributed "separatist" literature.

In the year 1918 our Company collected all the arms in the Company area which corresponded in area with the parish of Bullaun. The R.I.C. failed to get any although they had searched for them. We collected ten shot guns, five single and five double-barrelled and a small number of cartridges. The owners of the guns were all friendly and handed them to us quite willingly. The time would be about July 1918.

About October 1918 I remember being asked by Volunteer Michael "Occles" Hogan of Kilrickle Company, later Colonel Hogan, to go to Kilrickle Company area to raid four houses for arms. Lieut. Timothy Nevin went with me. Hogan himself and three men from Kilrickle Company met us. The idea behind inviting me to carry out the raid was that we would not be known to the four families to be raided. Lieut. Nevin and I entered the houses while Hogan and the three others remained outside. We had no trouble in three of the houses getting three shot guns and some cartridges. These three families were quite friendly. The owner of the fourth house was a man named Hardy and was hostile. He and his son told us that they had already given their gun to the Volunteers. We knew that this was untrue and after a lengthy argument and some persuasion they produced a double-barrelled shot gun and handed it over to us.

Shortly before this I had been promoted Company Captain by election which followed the appointment of our first Captain (Martin Nevin) as Battalion Quartermaster, Loughrea Battalion.

In early summer of 1918 I visited the homes of two members of the R.I.C. who were home on vacation. They were Patrick Moclair of Benbeg, New Inn, Co. Galway, and Thomas Kelly of High Park, New Inn. Both men were taken prisoner and detained for a day and a night at Joseph Ward's house in Kiltulla. They both promised to resign.

Patrick Moclair kept his promise to resign and emigrated to the United States soon after. Kelly returned to his barrack in Co. Sligo where he had been stationed and did not again come home on vacation.

Later in the summer of 1918 there was to be a sports meeting in New Inn under the auspices of the Gaelic Athletic association. The meeting was proclaimed. That would be about August 1918. As far as I can now remember the Parish Priest of the combined parish of Bullaun and New Inn made representations to the R.I.C. and the meeting was held.

Towards the end of 1918 I canvassed on behalf of the Sinn Féin candidate, the late Mr. Frank Fahy, in the General Election. The opposing candidate was Mr. W. J. Duffy, Loughrea, who stood for the Parliamentary Party. Duffy had a big following in Loughrea area including the well-to-do business people in the town and the British ex-soldiers and their families. The constituency included Loughrea, Closetoken, Bullaun, Kiltulla, Killimor, Athenry, Oranmore, Derrydonnell, Clarinbridge, Maree, Craughwell, Kinvara, Gort, Ardrahan, Kilchreest, Kiltartan, Kilbecanty, Derrybrien, Ballinakill, Abbey, Duniry, Woodford, Portumma, Leitrim, Kilnadeema, Kilmeen, Kilrickle. As far as Sinn Fein was concerned the only troublesome place in the whole area was Loughrea. The remaining places were quiet and generally supported the Sinn Fein candidate. Nevertheless, there was a general canvass of the whole area as some of the elderly people had not yet learned the Sinn Fein gospel and we tried to teach them in the course of our canvass. It was a house to house canvass lasting two weeks. I covered my own Company area and was well received by the voters except some bordering the Loughrea area. Those who canvassed with me were Battalion Quartermaster Martin Nevin, Lieutenant Timothy Nevin and Volunteer John Finnerty.

The election meetings usually held after the Masses on Sunday were quiet. Mr. Fahy's supporters had no public meetings in the town of Loughrea as there was not the remotest chance that they would get a

hearing in that town. He had some very good workers there including Joseph O'Flaherty whose house was Sinn Fein election headquarters, and Peter Sweeney another prominent Sinn Feiner. I think these two were close associates of Arthur Griffith. Other prominent supporters of Mr. Fahy in the Loughrea area were :-

Laurence Smyth afterwards O/C., Loughrea Battalion, I.R.A.,
 Charles Coughlan, Captain, Loughrea Company, Irish Volunteers,
 Volunteer Martin Ryan, Cahirtina, a prosperous farmer,
 Volunteer Daniel Corry, Cattle dealer, Loughrea,
 Volunteer Joseph Gilchrist, Loughrea, and
 Captain James Flynn, Publican, Loughrea.

On the evening of polling day I marched my Company into the town of Loughrea to protect the ballot boxes which were being brought in from all out-lying districts to the Courthouse. When we arrived we had to fight our way into Sinn Féin Headquarters in O'Flaherty's of Main Street. We were armed with sticks. Volunteers were in Loughrea that evening from the following Companies :- Closetoken, Kilnadeema, Kilmeen, Leitrim and Mullagh. They were stationed at Sinn Fein Headquarters and at the Courthouse. The Volunteers were attacked with bottles, stones and sticks. The attackers were mostly British ex-soldiers and their wives. The women were led by Mrs. Duffy wife of the Parliamentary ^{Party} Secretary candidate. The women attacked more fiercely than the men. Father O'Meehan, Mr. Fahy's most prominent supporter, was wounded in the head with a stone and the wind-screen of his car was broken with bottles thrown by the women of Loughrea. Father O'Farrell, C.C., Leitrim, was also attacked and his car was damaged. Many of the attacking party, including women, had drink taken. This behaviour continued until about 2 a.m. the following morning. At this time the mob were still attacking the Sinn Fein Headquarters. One officer of the Volunteers named Dolan from Ballinasloe opened fire with a revolver over the heads of the attackers. The British Forces and R.I.C. who had

up to then taken no active measures against the mob succeeded in dispersing them without delay. Most of the Volunteers then left the town.

About the month of May 1919, my Company arrested an ex-British soldier named Michael Keane of Gortavoher, Bullaun. He had been observed drinking with the R.I.C.. He was addicted to drink. He was arrested on suspicion of giving information to the R.I.C. and brought to Ballydonnellan Castle, Cappatagle near Ballinasloe. The castle was unoccupied and was in good repair. There was no furniture in it. It was selected as a prison by Ballinasloe Battalion in whose area it was situated. Lieutenant Timothy Nevin of my own Company, Lieutenant Peter Griffin of New Inn Company and I brought Keane to Ballydonnellan Castle where we handed him over to Captain Daniel Byrne and Volunteer James Larkin of Cappatagle Company, Ballinasloe Battalion. I believe he was tried and found not guilty and released in a day or two. I do not know who were the officers at his trial. I was not asked to give evidence and I cannot recollect anything further about the matter. This was the only case of suspected spying in the Company area.

I think it was about September 1919 that subscriptions to the Dail Loan were collected in the parish of Bullaun. I was Secretary to the local Sinn Fein Club at the time. The response was excellent, every member in the parish supporting the claim except one. A member of this family had been in the R.I.C. and was killed in an ambush in Co. Tipperary a short time before. Each family subscribed one pound making a total of fifty-two pounds out of fifty-three houses in the parish. Volunteer John Finnerty and I collected from one half of the parish and Lieutenant Timothy Nevin and Volunteer Patrick Duane collected from the other half. The money we collected was handed over to Joseph O'Flaherty, Loughrea. All the subscribers got back their money with interest years afterwards.

Later on in 1919 at the end of October or thereabout, Captain Martin Killalea of Kilrickle Company asked me to bring a few men to his area to arrest a man named Thomas Sheridan, Ballintubber, Kilrickle. I brought Lieutenant Timothy Nevin of my own Company and Lieutenant Peter Griffin of New Inn Company with me. We went on push bicycles to Kilrickle and were supplied with a car there. We arrested Sheridan on the road on his way home from the village of Kilrickle and brought him in the car to Tynagh where we handed him over to Captain Michael Kenny and Lieutenant Michael Brehony of Tynagh Company. He was tried in Tynagh by Captain Kenny, Lieutenants Brehony and Harney, Tynagh, Company Officers. I was not admitted to his trial and do not know the charges that were brought against him. He was an old Fenian and I learned afterwards that his arrest and trial arose out of petty jealousy. He was released and we brought him back to his home in the car. I never could understand why this man was arrested and tried by Company Officers except that they were acting as Parish Court Judges.

In November, 1919, my Company raided the mails at Dunsandle railway station. I remember that the order for the raid came from Battalion Quartermaster Martin Nevin, Loughrea Battalion. The whole Company was engaged. We held up the train at about 4.30 in the evening and took two mail bags. There was no armed guard on the train and the railway men were friendly. We brought the two bags of mail to Radford near Dunsandle railway station and examined the letters there at the house of Patrick Hynes. We got no information as a result of the examination. We re-posted all the letters except those addressed to British soldiers throughout the county.

About December, 1919, I bought a .22 rifle and twenty rounds of ammunition for a pound from an ex-British soldier named Michael O'Halloran whom I knew in Loughrea. I arranged through a local postman to get O'Halloran to sell me the rifle. It was used in the attack on Bookeen R.I.C. barracks about six months later.

I cannot remember anything worthy of note happening in the first few months of 1920. The usual parades were held twice weekly well away from all roads. A few chosen Volunteers were allowed to fire about three rounds per man from a Lee Enfield rifle and a Webley revolver in a sand-pit about two miles away from any road. Battalion Council meetings were held in the Leitrim Company area in Mrs. Leahy's farm house. The Companies were Loughrea, Bullaun, New Inn, Closetoken, Leitrim, Kilmeen, Kilchreest and Kilnadeema. Later in 1920 Leitrim Company was transferred to Portumna Battalion. Battalion Council meetings were then held at James Flynn's public house in Loughrea and sometimes at Closetoken at Plower's farm house near Closetoken Parish Church. James Flynn, Loughrea, was Battalion Adjutant and later on Martin O'Regan, Loughrea. Laurence Burke was Battalion Commandant until arrested in 1920 when he was replaced by Laurence Smyth now deceased. Martin Nevin was Battalion Quartermaster all the time from 1917 to 1921.

The local elections were held about mid-summer, 1920. I was selected as Sinn Fein candidate for Bullaun electoral area and was returned unopposed as a member of Loughrea Rural District Council. All the members of that Council after the election were Sinn Fein except Councillor Patrick Cahill of Main Street, Loughrea, who was elected as a Parliamentary Party candidate. A list of those elected to the Council is appended. It will help to show the close association and co-operation between the I.R.A. and Sinn Féin at that time. I attended the first meeting of the Council after the election. Stephen Jordan of Athenry was elected Chairman and Martin Murray of New Inn Vice Chairman. The meetings were held at the Workhouse, Loughrea, and I continued to attend them until some time in 1922.

Later in 1920 a resolution was passed by the Council refusing to recognise the authority of the British Local Government Board. The resolution was proposed by Councillor Thomas Downey, seconded by Councillor Raymond Hennessy, accepted by the Chairman and passed unanimously, the Parliamentary Councillor Cahill dissenting. A little later Councillors Jordan, Downey and Hennessy were arrested and sentenced to twelve months imprisonment as a result of the passing of this resolution. About December, 1920 the Workhouse was raided by R.I.C. who did a great deal of damage to the furniture in the Council Room as well as destroying documents belonging to the Council. They were apparently searching for the minutes of the Council meetings. They did not get the minutes as the Clerk (Mr. J. Kelly), the Assistant Clerk and Mr. Laurence Flynn succeeded in keeping them from falling into the hands of the R.I.C.

I must now go back again to July, 1920, when Bookeen R.I.C. barrack was attacked and destroyed. I remember that the question of the attack was discussed at a Battalion Council meeting held in the Public House of Battalion Adjutant James Flynn of Loughrea. That would have been about the month of May. There was no Brigade in South East Galway at that time. Laurence Burke was Battalion O/C. The question of blowing in one of the gables with gelignite was discussed and it was arranged to approach Seamus Murphy, Brigade O/C., Galway, for the supply of gelignite. It was to be handled by Volunteers who were County Council gangers with a knowledge of explosives gained from quarrying. These men were Volunteers Patrick Leahy, Michael Grace and John Leahy of Leitrim Company, Loughrea Battalion, and Volunteers Hubert Dillea and Michael Hanlon from Killimor, Daly Company, Athenry. Very late in June there was another meeting at James Flynn's. The arrangements had been made for the supply of gelignite. Four tins of petrol had been procured by Battalion Quartermaster Martin Nevin. He obtained them from his cousin Volunteer John Nevin of Bullaun Company who had them for threshing purposes. The plan of attack laid out at this meeting as far as I can now remember was that Bullaun Company was

to have a long ladder, petrol and a mason's hammer at the rear of the barrack. The ladder was for climbing on to the roof, the hammer for breaking the slates of the roof and the petrol for setting fire to the roof after a hole had been made. My orders also included having the road blocked at Bullaun and Benmore to prevent or delay any reinforcements that might come from Loughrea or Ballinasloe. I detailed the men for this job and the road was blocked at both places.

The attack took place on Thursday night and Friday morning, the 1st and 2nd July, 1920. On the evening of the 1st July I gave orders for the blocking of the road to Lieutenant Tim Nevin. I and four others (the three Volunteers from Leitrim Company who were to handle the gelignite and Battalion Quartermaster Martin Nevin) proceeded from Benmore across the fields to the rear of the barrack carrying with us four tins of petrol and a ladder which we took from Michael Mitchell's of Dunsandle without his permission. We left the stuff in a big meadow at the rear of the barrack and went to the old Protestant Church on the Kiltulla/Loughrea road where all the attack party were to be assembled. It was then about 11.30 p.m. and dark. The Bookeen R.I.C. barrack I should have already said was situated on the Kiltulla/Loughrea road one mile from Kiltulla. The Gardai now occupy the reconstructed building on the same site.

There seemed to be no officer in full command. As far as I remember Gilbert Morrissey, O/C., Athenry Battalion, was in charge of the riflemen. Patrick Callannan "The Hare" was in charge of the explosives party and Laurence Burke, O/C., Loughrea Battalion, took charge of the Loughrea Battalion officers and Volunteers. We all waited about half-an-hour for the arrival of the gelignite which was to be delivered at the Old Protestant Church a quarter of a mile from the barrack. I do not know who was to bring it but when it had not

arrived a good while after the appointed time there was talk of disbanding. After a discussion between the Battalion Officers it was decided to proceed with the attack. I never afterwards heard why the gelignite did not turn up or if I did I have it forgotten.

The shotgun men were placed on the side of the road nearest the barrack. The range would be about thirty yards. The riflemen were placed on the other side of the road to the left and right of the position occupied by the men with shotguns. There was a man or two at the north gable, that is the gable on the Kiltulla side. I cannot remember if anybody was in position facing the south gable. There were two men with shotguns at the rear of the barrack to cover the back door which was the only exit, and a small loophole in the upper storey at a range of less than ten yards. Also at the rear were Patrick Coy later Quartermaster, South East Galway Brigade, Edward Burke, Captain Killimor, Daly Company, Athenry Battalion, Martin Nevin, Quartermaster, Loughrea Battalion and myself.

Patrick Callanan, "The Hare", came to the rear to say that all men at front of the barrack were in position and ready for the attack. We then placed the ladder against the rear wall and roof. The ladder was very long and it was at such a slope that some of the top rungs rested on the slates of the roof. Captain Burke climbed the ladder on to the slates. Patrick Coy climbed up after him and handed him the hammer. I had rags soaked in petrol or maybe paraffin oil. I had tied them to the handle of a spade to make a torch. It did not take Burke more than a minute to break a hole in the roof. Immediately Burke and Coy mounted the ladder I handed the torch to "The Hare" and mounted the ladder carrying a bucket-full of petrol. I handed the bucket to Coy. He handed it on to Burke who poured it through the hole in the roof. "The Hare" had by this time lighted the torch on the ground. He handed the burning torch to me.

I passed it to Coy. Coy passed it to Burke who put it through the hole in the roof. There was very little explosion and it took a quarter of an hour for the flames to appear. We all got off the ladder and took cover behind the wall of the back-yard five yards or so from the rear wall of the building.

The R.I.C. seemed to be slow in taking action. It was a good while before they fired through the roof after which the flames seemed to get brighter. Very lights went up. It was my first experience of them and I was surprised how brilliantly they lit up the surroundings for a radius maybe up to three hundred yards or so. I think our party at the front opened fire on the windows about the same time as the R.I.C. commenced to fire. The firing by the I.R.A. was heavy and continuous except for an odd lull when we shouted at the R.I.C. to surrender and come out. All the attacking party shouted at the same time but there was no reply. I think the R.I.C. fired very little but I can't say with any certainty as I was at the rear from which the R.I.C. fired no shot at all. I heard afterwards that the steel shutters of the front windows were pierced by bullets from a Mauser rifle, and that may account for what I thought was a small volume of fire from the R.I.C.

About two hours after the commencement of the attack all attacking force withdrew on hearing that Cavalry were approaching from the direction of Athenry. This was a false alarm. The roof had not fully caved in at this time but I thought that all the R.I.C. must have been burned in the building. I and the others with me at the back of the barrack did not return as we thought there was nothing further to be done. I arrived home at about 4 a.m. across the fields. On the way home I saw people going to the Athenry sheep fair.

There are one or two other items concerning the attack that are clear in my memory. When fire was opened by our riflemen across the road Volunteer Patrick Kelly, who had been in position opposite the

northern gable, came to the rear of the building. He told me that he was nearly hit by the fire from our own men across the road. I also remember that in fact there was no cessation of fire from the Volunteers during the attack up to the time of the alarm about the approach of the Cavalry from Athenry. It is my belief that if complete command had been in the hands of one officer who could have given a 'Cease Fire' order for the purpose of parleying with the garrison, the R.I.C. would have surrendered. They did not, owing to the continuous fire, get an opportunity to surrender and I think they were too much afraid to attempt leaving the building with hands up. I heard afterwards that they escaped from the burning building to an outhouse in the back-yard of the barrack when the I.R.A. withdrew at the time of the Cavalry alarm.

New Inn R.I.C. Barrack was evacuated shortly after the attack on Bookeen. It was destroyed by the New Inn Company and some of my Company a day or two after its evacuation. The garrison of one Sergeant and six Constables moved to Lord Ashtown's house at Woodlawn. They and about fourteen other R.I.C. men put up in Lord Ashtown's house as a protection party for Lord Ashtown. On Sundays they were in the habit of going to 11 o'clock Mass in New Inn Parish Church. Captain Peter Griffin of New Inn Company asked me to take their bicycles while they were at Mass. That was in August 1920. I and six of my Company went one Sunday in August and took the seven bicycles. The R.I.C. searched the countryside for the bicycles but did not find them. After that the R.I.C. at Woodlawn went to Mass to Kilconnell.

About September, 1920, thirty to forty tins of petrol were brought by night in a cart to my Company area. It was brought by Michael McQuade, afterwards Battalion Intelligence Officer, Loughrea Battalion, Lieutenant Patrick O'Regan and Volunteer Patrick Lally both of Loughrea Company. Lieutenant Timothy Nevin took charge of it.

Four tins of it were given to Volunteer John Nevin to compensate him for the petrol he had given when Bokeen R.I.C. barracks was attacked.

Later on the same men from Loughrea brought Liam Mellow's motorcycle. It was looked after by Lieutenant Timothy Nevin. Incidentally I remember that "Baby" Duggan and Edward Burke, Officers mid-Galway Brigade, came to me and asked me to hand over the bicycle to them. I refused and it was taken to the Workhouse, Loughrea. I do not know what became of it afterwards. This bicycle had been bought for Mellows by the Galway Volunteers and I believe the Mid-Galway men had subscribed the bulk of the money for its purchase.

In December, 1920, we got seven extra recruits for our Company.

Their names were :-

Thomas Raftery)	
Francis Spellman,)	
Nicholas Fahy,)	from Carramore, Bullaun.
John Carty,)	
Michael Callanan,)	Ballyara, Bullaun,
John Flannery,)	Ballykeeran, "
William Corcoran,)	Radford, Kiltulla.

About December, 1920 we laid an ambush for R.I.C. who travelled occasionally by lorry from Woodlawn to Loughrea. About ten of them always travelled by night. They did the journey once a week. One Sunday in December when we thought they were about due for a journey I and nine others took up ambush positions at Furoe Wood between Benmore and Bullaun. Eight were armed with shotguns, one with a Lee Enfield rifle and one with a Webley .45 revolver. My brother Volunteer John Healy had the rifle and Volunteer Patrick Lally of Loughrea Company had the revolver. He was supposed to be a good shot with a revolver. All the men were from my own Company except Volunteer Lally and Volunteer Michael McQuade who were from Loughrea. We remained in

ambush from 7 p.m. to 5 a.m. but the R.I.C. did not turn up. We had no mine or grenades. We hoped to bring the lorry to a stop by shooting the driver.

Before I finish with the year 1920 there is one item that may be of interest. It occurred in the month of September or October. Volunteer Michael "Occles" Hogan of Kilrickle Company asked me to go to Egan's house, Limehill in the Leitrim Company area to question James Egan about a statement he was supposed to have made to the effect that a girl from Limehill had given information to the R.I.C. Hogan told me that an ambush had been prepared for an R.I.C. party between Leitrim and Loughrea. The party went from Tynagh to Loughrea and they were to be attacked at a place called "the Fingerboard" on their return journey. It had been said by James Egan that the girl warned the R.I.C. who returned by another road. I did not succeed in interviewing Egan who left his own house while his mother was entertaining me to tea. The matter ended there as far as I am concerned. I believe there was no further investigation and that the matter was dropped. I cannot now remember the girl's name.

In February, 1921, I and some members of my Company, including Lieutenant Timothy Nevin and 2nd. Lieutenant Thomas Deely, carried out a raid for arms at the house of John D. Lowry of Carramore, New Inn. It was outside the Company area but as I got information from a young girl working in Lowry's that there were two revolvers in the house I carried out the raid without acquainting New Inn Company. Lowry was upstairs, probably in bed, when we carried out the raid. When he came down we told him that we had information that he had arms in the house, that we belonged to the I.R.A. and that any arms he had should be in our possession. He said he would surrender no arms to us. We had to use force to hold him while the house was being searched. We found two revolvers, a short Webley and a .38 calibre

revolver. We got twenty rounds for the webley and ten for the other gun. Later Captain Edward Burke, in whose area the house was situated demanded the revolvers and ammunition, but I refused to hand them over. I heard nothing further about it.

From then to the Truce there was no operation that I can remember. The usual parades were held further away from roads. The R.I.C. made some night raids in the area. On one occasion they broke open the lock-up public house of Luke J. Glynn in Bullaun and helped themselves to the drink in the bar. They then went at about 2 a.m. and beat up Volunteer John Finnerty and his father who was then an old man. They visited only houses from which a member of the family was in the I.R.A. and beat any men, young or old, they found.

There was a good deal of organisation work about April of 1921 or maybe May. Laurence Kelly of Kilnadeema Company was made O/C. of Galway South-East Brigade which was then formed for the first time. Patrick Coy was Vice O/C. of the Brigade for a time and then became Brigade Quartermaster. Seamus Reilly, Captain of Tynagh Company, then became Vice Brigade O/C., and John Glynn became Brigade Adjutant.

I remember the Parish Court in Bullaun. The Justices were Michael Cooney, an aged man, who belonged to Sinn Fein, Francis Cahalan who was also a member of the Sinn Club and myself. The Court Clerk was Volunteer Michael Nevin. The first case that came before the Court was a dispute between Patrick Daniels and Patrick Ward two farmers and next-door neighbours from Ballyara, Bullaun. The dispute concerned dry turf. Daniels alleged that Ward had stolen a load of turf from him. The time was about September 1920. The Court sat in a barn belonging to William Burke of Bullaun. The three Justices and the Clerk were present. The disputants came of their own accord. They had been advised by the Volunteers to bring their dispute before the Court. They were not sworn. Daniels was awarded ten shillings compensation for the load of turf which Ward had to pay along with a

further ten shillings costs. He paid the money in a day or two.

I remember another case of a man arrested by the Republican Police near Bullaun for being drunk and disorderly. He was fined thirty shillings which he paid about three weeks afterwards. He had to be threatened with arrest before he paid the fine.

The only other case I can recall was that of a man from Attymon who had been drinking in Loughrea and came to Mr. Luke Glynn's public house in Bullaun where he had more drink. The shop assistant, John Lyons, tried to eject him. He struck Lyons with a pint tumbler and cut his head. The man was arrested by the Republican Police and brought before the Court which was specially convened for his case. He was fined five pounds or a month's imprisonment in default, getting a week in which to pay the fine. He did not pay within the week and was arrested and imprisoned in Ballydonnellan Castle in Cappatagle Parish. He was held there for a week after which he was moved on to Tynagh. After three days in Tynagh the fine was paid and he was released.

The Republican Police were very active and efficient. They were :-

Volunteer Thomas Raftery, Sergeant,

Volunteer Francis Spellman,

Volunteer John Carty,

Volunteer Michael Callanan.

The Republican Police Sergeant Thomas Raftery later served in the Garda Siotchana and is now retired on pension.

There was a small number of the Cumann na mBan in my Company area. It was not until 1921 that they were organised. They did a little cooking for men 'on the run' and occasionally carried dispatches. Their Captain was Delia Cooney of Ballyara now Mrs. Callanan of Ballymana near Craughwell. The other members I can recall were :-

Mary Duane, Benmore, now Mrs. Nevin, Benmore,
 Kathleen Finnerty, Ballymurray, now in America,
 Mary Raftery now Mrs. Griffin, Ballyfa, New Inn, and
 Susan Ryan, Curramore, Loughrea, now
 Mrs. Finn, living in Australia.

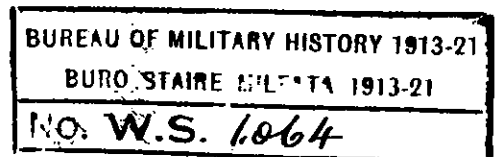
I cannot say that I knew of even one friendly member of the R.I.C. during this period. The local people were very loyal to the I.R.A. in my area. We were always welcome to meals at any time of the day or night. They would go to any amount of trouble to help us and I would like to conclude this statement by saying that we were deeply indebted to them for the way they stood by us right through the struggle.

Appended to this Statement are :-

- (1) List of names of Officers and Volunteers who participated in the Bookeen R.I.C. barrack attack, marked "A", and
- (2) Names of candidates elected to Loughrea Rural District Council, Local Elections, 1920, marked "B".

Signed: Michael Healy
 (Michael Healy)
 Date: 15th January, 1955
 15th January, 1955.

Witness: Con Moynihan
 (Con Moynihan)



BOOKEEN R.I.C. BARRACK ATTACK.

Names of participating Officers and Volunteers:

Kilnadeema Company, Loughrea Battalion.

- Laurence Kelly afterwards O/C., East Galway Brigade.
- Laurence Burke " " Loughrea Battalion.
- Patrick Mahoney " Captain, Kilnadeema Company.
- Thomas Fahy, Volunteer.
- Dominick Shields " "
- Thomas Mahon " "
- John Kelly " "
- Martin Murray " "
- Patrick Kelly " "

Closetoken Company, Loughrea Battalion.

- Patrick Connaughton afterwards Company Captain.
- Michael Keogh, Volunteer.
- Thomas Tierney, 2/Lieutenant.
- Patrick Coy, Company Captain afterwards Q.M. South-East Galway Brigade.

Craughwell Company, Athenry Battalion.

- Gilbert Morrissey, O/C., Athenry Battalion.
- Patrick Callanan "The Hare", Rank not known.
- John Rooney " "
- John Morrissey " "
- Michael Rooney " "
- John Maloney " "
- Anthony Fahy " "
- Jeremiah Deely " "

Kilconiron Company, Athenry Battalion.

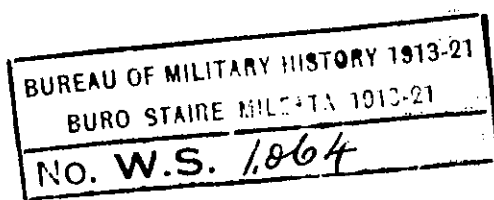
- Patrick Kennedy Rank not known.
- Thomas Kennedy " "
- Daniel Kerrins " "

Killimor Daly Company, Athenry Battalion.

Edward Burke, Company Captain.
 Hubert Dillea, 2/Lieutenant.
 Michael Hanlon, 1st Lieutenant.

Leitrim Company, Loughrea Battalion.

Patrick Leahy, Volunteer.
 John Leahy, Volunteer.
 Michael Grace, Rank not known.



Local Elections 1920.

Names of Candidates elected to Loughrea Rural
District Council.

Stephen Jordan, Athenry, Battalion Adjutant, I.R.A.
 James Barrett, " " Quartermaster "
 Michael Hession, " Volunteer "
 Michael Healy, " Volunteer "
 John Rooney, Craughwell, Volunteer "
 Michael Conway " " "
 Daniel Kerrins, Kilconiron, Battalion Officer "
 Patrick Coy, Closetoken, Brigade Staff Officer I.R.A.
 Michael Healy, Bullaun, Company Captain "
 Martin Murray, New Inn " " "
 Edward Burke, Killimor, Daly " " "
 Thomas Cornican, Gurteen " " "
 John Murphy, Tighquinn " " "
 James Flynn, Loughrea, Battalion Staff Officer "
 Daniel Corry " Volunteer "
 Michael Buckley, Kilchreest, Company Captain "
 Michael Power, Kilnadeema, Volunteer "
 James Kelly " " "
 John Darcy " " "
 Thomas Burke, Kilmeen, Company Captain "
 Patrick Gannon, Kilrickle, Volunteer "
 Francis Finnerty, Leitrim, " "
 Thomas Downey, Ballinakill " "
 Raymond Hennessy, Woodford, Lieutenant "
 John Hickey " Volunteer "
 John Dolan Abbey, Lieutenant "
 Peter Gilligan, Derrybrien, Volunteer "
 Laurence Burke, Kilnadeema, Battalion O/C. "

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
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