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ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS.

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 1,077

Witness

Thomas McNamara,
Mountshannon,
Co. Clare.

Identity.

Section Commander Mountshannon Company
Irish Volunteers, Co. Clare, 1917 - ;
2nd Lieut. same Company 1920 - ;
1st Lieut. do. 1921.
Subject.

Mountshannon Company Irish Volunteers,
Co. Clare, 1917-1921.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil

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ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BURD STAIRS MILEATA 1913-21

No. W.S. 1077

STATEMENT BY THOMAS McNAMARA,

Mountshannon, Co. Clare,

formerly 1st Lieutenant D. Company, 4th Battalion,

East Clare Brigade.

I was born on 8th February, 1901, on the farm of which I am the present owner. I went to school at Mountshannon National Schools and left when I had passed the 6th standard.

My connection with the movement to secure Irish independence began about July 1917 when a company of Irish Volunteers was formed in Mountshannon by Dr. James Brennan, a cousin of Michael Brennan who afterwards became O/C of the East Clare Brigade. The meeting at which it was decided to form this company was held after Mass in the local chapel yard with the approval and support of the Parish Priest, Fr. Clune, an ardent Sinn Féiner. About thirty men joined on that day, and a few evenings later Michael Brennan himself came to the village of Mountshannon and swore in the company. The first officers were: Michael Clery, Captain; Paddy McInerney, 1st Lt., and Charley Turner, 2nd Lt. I was appointed Section Commander of No. 4 Section.

The company met regularly for drill in Delaney's field outside the village on Sundays and on one week night. We were taught squad and company drill and extended order drill by the Captain, Michael Clery. He received special training in drill instruction at the battalion headquarters, which was then in Scariff.

Along with drilling the Mountshannon Company in its

initial stages took an active part in the East Clare by-election, in which the Sinn Féin candidate, Mr. de Valera, was first known to the people as "The Spaniard" or "The man with the strange name". Our company provided protection for his meetings, collected funds to fight the election, canvassed voters and on polling day drove voters to the booths and provided personating agents.

Early in 1918 the county was faced with the threat of conscription. To meet this and as there were no firearms at the disposal of the Volunteers, the company received orders that each man should provide himself with a pike. Since the inception of the company a levy of twopence per week was collected from each Volunteer, and out of this fund handles for the pikes were paid for. Actually the timber - ash - was cut by ourselves and then shaped into rough handles at local saw mills. The furnishing of the handle had to be done also by the Volunteer himself or by a colleague who was handy at this work. The pike head, which was bayonet shaped, was forged for us by the local blacksmith, Patrick Lyons, from the pins of slide rakes. Special training was given in the use of these pikes on the lines of bayonet exercises, but as soon as the conscription threat passed these pikes were discarded and they were never thought of afterwards as being of any military value.

During portion of the period while the conscription threat existed the Mountshannon Irish Volunteers, on official orders, became involved in land trouble which for generations had been a headache for the R.I.C. authorities in County Clare. In many districts large tracts of land had been cleared of the tenants in order

to make ranches for people of the landlord class, who were mostly absentees and who used the lands solely for grazing purposes. The descendants and friends of the evicted tenants never gave up the idea of recovering the farms from which they had been ejected and a continuous agitation was carried on to get the ranches divided. The British government sided with the ranch owners and used the R.I.C. to suppress the popular demand. As a result, perhaps, the R.I.C. as a body were more detested in Clare than in any other county in Ireland.

In the Scariff district a man called Dr. Sampson owned large ranches in different districts. About February 1918 our company got orders to march to Bodyke and join there the Volunteers from other companies who had driven the cattle off Dr. Sampson's lands in the O'Callaghan's Mills area to the owner's home in Moynoe, Scariff. There was nearly a full company mobilisation in compliance with this order, and we marched to Bodyke which is about 4 miles from Scariff. We met hundreds of Volunteers from all the surrounding companies driving the cattle before them. At Scariff Bridge the leading section of the Volunteers received word that three R.I.C. armed with carbines were positioned alongside the National Bank about a hundred yards away on the road to Mountshannon. These men were after coming in from O'Gonolloe R.I.C. station to reinforce the Scariff peelers. I was one of those who were in the vanguard of the party and we decided among ourselves to disarm the police. As soon as the bank was reached we rushed the police. One of them tried to make off on his bike and as he did so I grabbed his carbine and pulled it from him, at the same time knocking him to the ground. I gave this gun to Joe Tuohy of Feakle.

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Other Volunteers disarmed a second policeman but the third man got away with his gun. He managed to get his back to the wall and fired a number of shots which caused the crowd to scatter. All the Volunteers who were involved in the rushing of the police were from areas outside O'Gonelloe and were not known to the police in question. This was probably the reason why no arrests were made after this incident.

Though the formation of the Mountshannon Irish Volunteers occurred about the same time as the public drilling began in July or August 1917 and we drilled constantly in public from that time to the end of February 1918, no arrests were made in the district for public drilling in that period. For this I give credit to the local R.I.C. Sergeant named Blennerhasset. He was a Protestant and a peaceable type of man.

As a consequence of the widespread disturbances throughout County Clare following the cattle drives by the Volunteers, the British government declared the entire county a special military area. Large forces of military were drafted into the county and the R.I.C. were also reinforced. A detachment of 50 soldiers occupied the Market House in Mountshannon. These troops mounted guard on the roads leading into the village and movement to and from the place was very much restricted. For example, a person wishing to go to Scariff from Mountshannon had to get a permit from the R.I.C. Sergeant in the latter place. All vehicles and cars approaching Mountshannon were held up and examined. Fairs were prohibited in the towns and villages and had to be held in by-roads. Even the Bishop of Killaloe was not excepted from military interference.

He came to administer Confirmation in Whitegate at that time and the military held up his coach, refusing to remove the ropes which they had erected across more than half the road and thus compelling the coach to pass through a narrow passage kept open for cars and which was then badly from traffic. For a while the Volunteers had to be careful about drilling activities and though we mobilised as regularly as ever we drilled in more out of the way places. From the spring until the end of 1918, apart from drilling, things were otherwise quiet.

In the beginning of 1919 there was a reorganisation of the Volunteers in Clare. Up till that time there was only one brigade in the whole county, but it was then divided into three brigades, East, Mid and West. Mountshannon was in the East Clare Brigade, forming one of the companies of the 4th Battalion. The Battalion Commandant was Seán O'Halloran. This arrangement lasted up to the Truce. The first steps were taken by the company soon after this reorganisation to acquire firearms. Shotguns owned by the local people were collected and stored in a company dump. These guns were given up voluntarily by the owners, who were all sympathisers of ours. Altogether we gathered about eight serviceable shotguns and 50 cartridges. The cartridges were reloaded with home-made slugs, about five or six of which were put into each cartridge. The dump was built in a wide stone wall and was more or less a kind of a gullet running through it. The sides were built to a height of about two feet, covered on top with a sheet of corrugated iron and then finished off with stones to the same height as the rest of the wall. Access could be had by removing stones from either end. It was bone dry and it was never

discovered by the enemy.

I think it was in the summer of 1919 that a party comprised of the Company Captain, Michael Clery, the 1st Lt., Patk. McInerney, the 2nd Lt. Charley Turner, William McNamara, myself and another Volunteer from the company named Ned Grace, cycled to within a mile and a half of Woodford in Co. Galway to disarm an R.I.C. patrol of two men who usually came out from a police hut in Clooncone to a small village called Gurteeny. We arrived at the place selected for the attack about half-past one in the afternoon and hid our bikes in a wood and then waited for the police. I cannot remember the name of the townland in which this wood was situated as I don't know that district. From our position we had a good view of the road for about three quarters of a mile on each side. Between three and four o'clock one policeman came along. Clery and McInerney got out on the road and walked towards the policeman and when they had gone some distance past him they retraced their steps. When he was approaching where myself and the other three of the party were concealed, Turner and myself jumped out in front of him and ordered him to put up his hands. He complied at once and we searched him. The poor man was unarmed and had nothing on him only two empty bottles which he was taking to the public-house to get filled with porter. We brought him into the wood and held him for about two hours thinking that perhaps the regular patrol might come along, but it did not. It was close on seven o'clock when we let him go and we cycled back home without incident. We had four revolvers with us on that occasion, one of which was supplied by the Battalion Commandant, one was the

private property of Ned Grace and the other two were rusty old things that had been picked up somewhere that I'm not sure about. Being strangers in the locality we wore no masks.

As time went on the strength of the Mountshannon Company increased very much and by the commencement of 1920 it had a membership of about 150 men. Drilling continued but the district otherwise was inactive. Early in that year the R.I.C. vacated the two posts held by them in the company area, Mountshannon and Whitegate, and there then was no barracks between Scariff and the County Galway, a stretch of about 12 or 13 miles.

On Holy Saturday night 1920 the vacated barracks in Mountshannon and Whitegate were destroyed by the Mountshannon Company, which was divided into two sections for the purpose. The Whitegate operation was carried out under the command of the Company Captain, Michael Clery, while the Mountshannon building was knocked to the ground by the section under the 1st Lt., Patrick McInerney. I assisted in the latter job, which had to be done by the use of picks and crowbars as it was situated between two dwelling houses and we did not wish to run the risk of burning them as would have arisen if we set fire to the barracks.

Some time after the destruction of the R.I.C. barracks in Whitegate orders came to the Mountshannon Company to dismantle the telephone in Whitegate Post Office. The 1st Lieutenant of the company, Paddy McInerney, and myself were instructed by the captain to attend to this order. McInerney only was armed and he had a .45 revolver. The Postmaster, Mr. Coppithorne, was a Protestant and a

loyalist, and it may have been the case that he was suspected of using the phone to supply information to the authorities. As neither McInerney nor myself knew anything about the mechanism of telephones we requested the Postmaster to remove the vital parts of the switchboard for us. He refused and then McInerney produced the revolver. This did the trick. The Postmaster did the dismantling and handed us over the parts which we wanted and gave us an assurance that the installation was rendered ineffective.

McInerney and myself were just about to mount our bikes outside Whitegate to cycle home when a shot rang out. I'm not sure to this day what exactly happened, but I think that McInerney, who still had the revolver in his hand, was in the act of putting it into the holster when he accidentally discharged the shot. At any rate he was badly wounded in the leg. I got a horse and side-car from Tom Hayes in Whitegate in which he was driven to the house of David Minogue, Mountshannon. There he was treated by the local medical officer, Dr. Gerald O'Riordan, who was sympathetic to us. Dr. O'Riordan insisted that it was a case for hospital treatment and the patient was at once shifted to Scariff hospital where he remained for some months until the hospital, which was then part of the Workhouse buildings, was destroyed by the I.R.A. in June 1921. The patients were removed to the local national school and among them was McInerney. He was in the school only a few days when the British troops raided the place and took him prisoner. He was conveyed to Limerick and placed in the military hospital there, where, according to what he told me afterwards, he was well treated and received skilled medical attention from a Dr. Devane.

On 2nd June, 1920, under the Company Captain,- Michael Clery, Tom McInerney, Martin Minogue, Charles Turner and myself left Mountshannon approaching nightfall and went across the country to Cappabane where we joined up with men from the Feakle area. Michael Clery had a rifle and the remainder who came from Mountshannon had shotguns. At that time I did not know many of the Feakle Volunteers nor was I familiar with the district.

We were led into Feakle and put into a position in front of the R.I.C. barracks. Sometime after darkness we got orders to fire on the building. At the time several of the barrack windows were lighted and until the lights were extinguished they were our targets. After about ten or fifteen minutes we were ordered to retire which we did, making our way home through Kilberron.

I do not think that there was any serious intention to capture the barracks on that night. I believe there was an attack planned on another R.I.C. station, probably Sixmilebridge, on the same night, and our activity was designed to confuse the R.I.C. and military forces so that they might come to the relief of Feakle instead of Sixmilebridge.

The next engagement in which I was concerned was the attack on Scariff R.I.C. barracks on 18th September, 1920. Twelve men from the Mountshannon Company participated. They included the Company Captain,- Michael Clery, Charles Turner, Ned Grace, Jim Carroll, Paddy Mungivan, William McNamara, Martin and Mick Minogue. All were armed with shotguns, except Clery who had a rifle. We left Mountshannon around 3 o'clock in the evening and went on to Cappabane, where we reported to Tom Bleach

who was then an officer of the 4th Battalion. He took us to the Scariff chapel, which we reached about half-past four. We remained there until round 6 o'clock when we were shifted through the back of the village into two houses, Roger's and Conway's, which overlooked the R.I.C. barracks but about 60 or 70 yards distant. I was placed at one of the windows on the upper storey of Roger's, and instructions were given to us not to start firing until we heard a signal which, I think, was to be a whistle blast.

As we were waiting for the signal we could see eight or nine R.I.C. and Tans at the front of the barracks and Duggan's public-house next door. Some of them were sitting on seats and others were talking in groups. Martin McNamara, Kilkishen, was in charge in our position and I think he was the only man among us who had a rifle.

It was part of the plan of attack to send in a party of men through Duggan's backyard to hold up or shoot any of the police who might be drinking in that public-house. When that party had made entrance there the men in our position and in another position at Duggan's drapery shop just diagonally across the street from the front of the barracks, would open fire on any of the enemy who might be trying to rush into the barracks. About 8 o'clock a single shot rang out. This alerted the police in front of the barracks and they all made a rush towards that building. Simultaneously we fired on them. The O/C of the I.R.A. party, Michael Brennan, happened to be outside Duggan's drapery shop at the time and he also fired on the police, two of whom were wounded. The firing went on till midnight when Brennan came into Roger's house

and ordered us to cease fire and disperse to our own districts.

Afterwards I learned that the single shot fired before the police rushed towards the barracks was accidentally discharged by one of the party which had been detailed to enter the rear of Duggan's pub. While the firing at the barracks was in progress our men took possession of Maloney's on the other side of the barracks and from the roof of that building broke a hole on the roof of the barracks through which they flung a number of bombs that were after being received from G.H.Q. These bombs failed to explode though several of them were used. I was led to understand that high hopes were held of the power and effectiveness of the bombs and that the O/C had expected that they would enable him to demolish the barracks or cause the garrison to surrender when they saw the result of the first few explosions. The only casualties in the attack were the two policemen who were wounded in the front of the barracks just as the shooting started.

In the course of the week after the attack Scariff R.I.C. barracks was vacated and all the men involved in the operation who lived in that area were advised to go "on the run". In order to provide ourselves with some place to sleep at night the Mountshannon Company built four dug-outs. The biggest was in a limekiln on Pat Noonan's farm at Sillernane. We cleared out the interior of the kiln and made a roof of galvanised iron supported on poles cut from trees in the locality. On top of the galvanised iron were placed sheets of timber cut in the local sawmills and over the timber were put sods so well fitted into one another that it

would be very difficult to detect anything underneath. Entrance to the dug-out was obtained through the eye of the limekiln, into which was stuffed a furze bush that in addition to reducing the draught allowed ventilation and helped to throw off suspicion as to what was inside. The interior of the dug-out when finished was about 11 feet square and $6\frac{1}{2}$ feet high.

The other three dug-outs were not so commodious. One was situated in the townland of Derrycon and the other in Middle Lyon near the Company Captain's house, while the third in Bohatch dug into the side of the mountain. All the dug-outs were equipped with mattresses and bed clothes which we procured from our own homes.

In my case at any rate, there must have been good reason for advising me to "go on the run" after the Scariff attack because my home became the target for frequent raids by Auxiliaries, R.I.C., Black and Tans and military from Killaloe and Tulla. Though I slept away at night I always came there during the daytime when I was in the vicinity. On one occasion, 22nd September, 1920, while I was at home having my dinner the place was raided by a big force of military and R.I.C. led by Sergeant Brennan who had been stationed in Scariff and whose name was afterwards coupled with the shooting of four I.R.A. men on Killaloe Bridge. One lorry drew up at the gate about ten yards from the house, and as the occupants were coming off I heard them and got out the back door and into a field at the rere. Hearing them going into the house I crawled along by a fence into another field about 150 yards from the house. In that field I found myself confronted by two soldiers who ordered me to put up my hands. I doubled back and got over the fence

and running as hard as I could under cover got outside the cordon. The soldiers fired as I was getting to the fence, but though I could hear their bullets whistling round me I was not hit.

All the others who went "on the run" with me took precautions against being captured and were very careful about their movements, except three young Volunteers from Scariff. They were carefree and gay and availed of every opportunity of enjoying themselves. Unfortunately, in the times that were in it, such a life in the case of men who were "wanted" carried considerable risks, at dances particularly. The average Volunteer took the view that there was not much point of "going on the run" if while "on his keeping" he exposed himself to the risk of having his whereabouts made known to the general public even if 99% of the people were friendly and helpful. There was always the danger of the enemy spy living quietly among the people.

After going "on the run" these young men came to stay in Whitegate, taking up quarters in a disused building near the canal dock. They drove around the countryside quite openly in a pony and trap and made it known from their movements where they were staying. Ultimately the place was raided on 14th November, 1920, by a party of Auxiliaries from Killaloe who landed secretly from a boat and took them prisoners. Two nights after they were shot dead on the bridge at Killaloe along with another man whose home was adjacent to the buildings in which the men were captured. The names of the three Volunteers in question were: Martin Gildea, Alfred Rodgers and Michael ("Brod") McMahon, while the fourth man was Michael Egan.

There is no doubt whatever that these unfortunate men were betrayed to the enemy by someone living in the locality. Because of another happening I am convinced that there was a spy or spies there at the time, though it baffled our intelligence staff to find out the source of the leakage of such information. The other incident was an unsuccessful attempt by military and R.I.C. from Tulla to surprise our men in the dug-out at Bohatch, Mountshannon, on the morning of 4th April, 1921, which I shall refer to later on.

In connection with spies, I was involved in an incident soon after the murders of the men on Killaloe Bridge which often since caused me to wonder if all were sound within our own ranks at the time. The Company Captain, Michael Clery, instructed myself, Charles Turner, Joe Nugent, Pat Halloran and Donal Minogue to report to John Dillon, Caherhurlley, and Jackie Ryan, Killane, then O/C of 3rd Battalion East Clare Brigade. We reported as instructed and learned that our job was to shoot a man named Cahill in Killaloe said to be a spy. The seven of us were on our way into Killaloe when a despatch rider overtook us outside Kilbane with orders from the Brigade Intelligence Officer, Pat Duggan, Scariff, saying that the order to execute Cahill was cancelled. I never learned who gave the orders to shoot this man in the first instance or what evidence there was to justify the order, but it is still a mystery to me why, if he was guilty, he was not executed.

I believe it was in February 1921 when myself and a few other men from Mountshannon under orders proceeded to Cooleen Bridge, midway between Scariff and Feakle,

where we joined a concentration of about 30 men from all over the East Clare Brigade to attack a party of R.I.C. and Black and Tans next day. We stayed in houses about the place that night, and very early next morning all of us attended Mass and received Holy Communion in the home of Dr. Clune, a local priest home on holidays. After breakfast we marched to Ayle on the Tulla-Feakle road and took up positions there. We had our journey for nothing because after waiting all day the enemy did not show up.

In the month of March 1921 men from 4th and 6th Battalions occupied the village of Feakle from about half-past seven until ten o'clock one night in the hope of attacking a police patrol which often came out through the village between these hours. The patrol did not come out. A search of the public-houses was made approaching ten o'clock for any R.I.C. or Tans who might be in drinking, but again none was found. The Captain of the Mountshannon Company - Michael Clery, Charles Turner, Martin and Mick Minogue, Tom McInerney and myself made up the contingent which our company sent for this operation, of which, I believe, Matty McGrath, then O/C of the 6th Battalion, was in charge. All the Mountshannon men occupied the one position, a cowhouse at the corner of the crossroads which from the centre of the village leads to Tulla and is about 40 or 50 yards from the barracks.

When the search of the pubs disclosed that none of the enemy was outside the barracks that night, it was decided that those who were armed with rifles should snipe the building. I had only a shotgun and I fired no shot. After sniping for about five minutes we withdrew from the village, but the garrison in the barracks kept up

a return fire until the small hours of the morning. This action by the enemy was what we wanted - keep him alerted in his strongholds and thus weaken morale, and cause him to waste ammunition in needless firing.

Early in April 1921 the Brigade O/C with a column of about 35 men arrived in the Mountshannon area for the purpose of attacking an enemy patrol of ten or eleven lorries which then were coming into the district almost daily making raids and searches. The column was joined by eight or nine of the local company equipped with shotguns and about twenty others unarmoured who acted as scouts. Most of the column had rifles. It was billeted in the houses in Mountshannon and in the area out as far as Killatiera.

At 3 a.m. or so next morning the scouts reported the approach of military from Tulla, having observed the lights of the lorries in the distance. The column was aroused and headed for the mountains between Mountshannon and the Galway border towards Bohatch expecting a big round-up. At Bohatch we halted and soon saw the military using flash lamps heading straight for one of the dug-outs. They were then about 1,000 yards away. A difference of opinion arose at this stage between the Brigade O/C and Joe Clancy, one of the most prominent men in the column, as to whether we should open an attack at that point or try to lure the enemy further into the mountain. Clancy was in favour of the latter course, pointing out that if the military had an armoured car they could, by driving it along a by-road behind us, cut off our retreat. The Brigade O/C, however, gave orders to the men armed with rifles to open fire, which they did. The military

retreated and the only fire to which we were subjected was from the troops who had remained on the lorries at the roadside.

Expecting further reinforcements arriving to assist the enemy our party moved further into the mountains and held a line there for a few hours. Nothing happened, and led by men from the Feakle country we got into Lough Graney district. There we rested until next day when the column disbanded and went back to their own areas.

We lost a great chance on this occasion in my opinion. Had we held our fire that morning and allowed the enemy to go further into the mountains we would then have been able to ascertain their strength and cut them off from the lorries, of which there were only two. The military party at whom we fired only numbered about twenty men.

I'm not sure whether it was before or after the Mountshannon operation that I formed one of a group of men from the East Clare Brigade that went into Galway to stir up things there with a view to making a drive towards reorganising the Volunteers in the southern part of that county. The movement had melted away there apart from a few men in each district who were doing their best to carry on. The Brigade O/C, Michael Brennan, was in charge of our group. I would say he had between 30 and 35 men with him armed with rifles and shotguns.

Having crossed into Galway from the Derrybrien side of Clare we marched to within a few miles of Loughrea and put up at Dalystown House near Alt. A dozen or so

of the local men were with us. Next morning we got into positions round this house to attack a lorry of Tans or military which was expected to come out from Loughrea to Woodford. About 11 o'clock scouts reported that military and police were moving from Loughrea on foot through the fields, obviously trying to surround us.

It was a particularly dangerous locality from our point of view as there were strong military garrisons in Woodford, Portumna, Gort and Athenry which could with the use of fast transport throw a cordon round us in an hour or two. Besides, the civilian population was most unreliable, more from fear of the British than hostility towards us. In the latter connection it may be well to recall an incident that happened only that morning. One of our men, Michael Lillis (Miko), Flagmount, was put into a house owned by a farmer. After being there for some time the farmer told him (Lillis) that he had 2 horses and four cows in the outhouses which he was anxious to look after and begged permission to be allowed to do so. Lillis, being a farmer's son himself, understood the man's anxiety and thought he would come back to the house on completing this errand. He allowed the farmer out but the latter did not return and there was no trace of him about the place when Lillis left. Lillis told me what had happened as we were moving back towards the Clare border that day. He was convinced that the farmer had gone into Loughrea to warn the enemy of our presence in the district.

On seeing the threat which was developing by the approach of the military and Tans our O/C called up the local men and, aided by their knowledge of the county he led us back by the route which we had come on the

previous day to Derrybrien where we put up for the night. At 8 o'clock next morning the men from Scariff and Mountshannon were instructed to disperse to their own areas.

I believe it was in June 1921 that David Reynolds, Tadhg Donovan and two other Corkmen came into our part of the country. I think they had been invited by the Brigade O/C to act as column leaders and instructors. In conjunction with Seán O'Halloran, O/C 4th Battalion, they prepared ambushes between Scariff and Mountshannon on three occasions, but each time the enemy did not put in an appearance. The last time on which this was done was a few days before the Truce.

During the period from the end of November 1920 to the Truce the Mountshannon Company, which covered a large area, were engaged almost nightly in blocking roads and cutting trenches on the roads leading from Scariff to the bounds of Co. Galway. As a consequence of this form of activity the roads, including the by-roads, were only traversable by pedestrians. Very strong exception to this type of activity was taken by the enemy, especially Sergeant Brennan, who also seemed to have taken a particular dislike to me and my people. He threatened my father on several occasions that if I did not surrender he would shoot him. On 17th or 18th April, 1921, a bridge on a back road to Woodford and about 200 yards from my home was knocked by our company. I took a hand in its knocking.

On 21st April, 1921, a big round-up of the Mountshannon parish took place. Enemy troops from Woodford and Killaloe took part in the operation

in which a couple of hundred troops participated. They were comprised of Auxiliaries, military, Black and Tans and R.I.C. I was in hiding in a wood in Derrycon with three other Volunteers that day.

About one o'clock a neighbour of mine who had been rounded up and released brought me the news that my home and its contents had been burned by the enemy. On my return there that evening I found my father sitting on a stone outside the ruins. He told me that Sergeant Brennan was among those who took part in the burning and that the rere portion of the house was in flames before any of my family were actually out of it. In addition to my father and mother four of my sisters were living there, and they all had to run out of the place in the attire which they were wearing. It was a long thatched house, built for generations, and readily took to the flames.

After the wounding of the 1st Lieutenant, Patrick McInerney, in April 1920, he was replaced by the 2nd Lieutenant, Charles Turner, and I was appointed 2nd Lieutenant of our company. About April or May 1921 the Company Captain was promoted to the Brigade Staff. Turner then became Company Captain and I was given the post of 1st Lieutenant.

Signed: Thomas McNamara
(Thomas McNamara)
Date: 2.2.55

Witness: D. Griffin
(D. Griffin)
(Investigator)

