

W.S. 1.243

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BURO STAIRÉ MILÉTA 1913-21

NO. W.S. 1243

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS.

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 1.243.....

Witness

Thomas O'Carroll,
Drangan,
Thurles,
Co. Tipperary.

Identity.

Adjutant, 7th Battalion,
Third Tipperary Brigade.

Subject.

Irish Volunteer activities,
Drangan, Co. Tipperary, 1914-1921.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil

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ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BURO STAIRS MILE, 1913-21, 243
No. W.S. 1243

STATEMENT BY MR. THOMAS J. O'CARROLL,

Drangan, Thurles, Co. Tipperary.

(Adjutant, 3rd Battalion, 3rd Tipperary Brigade.)

I was born in Drangan in the year 1897. My father owned the drapery establishment in Drangan which I subsequently inherited from him and which I still possess. I attended school in Drangan until I was about 16 years of age when I went to Thurles to serve my apprenticeship to the drapery trade.

It was in Thurles in the year 1914 that I first joined the Irish Volunteers. I cannot now recall any incident in Thurles in connection with the 'split' in the Volunteer movement which occurred later on in that year beyond the fact that those with whom I was associated remained members of the Irish Volunteers as distinct from the National Volunteers or "Redmondites" as they were called. The company officers were Michael Eustace and James Kennedy. Kennedy later became Town Clerk in Thurles. Subsequently, James Leahy, who in the years 1919, 1920 and 1921, was Brigade commandant of the 2nd Tipperary Brigade, became O/C. of the company. We had no arms at the time but each member paid a weekly subscription of 3d into an arms fund. We were also invited to equip ourselves with water-bottles and belts.

As far as I am aware, there was no Volunteer activity in Thurles at the time of the Rising in Dublin in 1916; certainly no incident of note with which I was concerned. The swing-over of popular sympathy to the side of the Volunteers and Sinn Fein after the Rising led to increased interest in the Gaelic League and its activities, and, in company with other members of the Volunteers, I attended Irish language classes in Thurles. There was little Volunteer activity in training then or in the

following year of 1917, but through meeting at Irish language classes, ceillis, aeriochts, etc., in all of which the Volunteers were prominent, we more or less kept together.

Towards the end of September 1917, on the night following the day of Thomas Ashe's funeral, a big parade or demonstration was held in Thurles. This was, I believe, held in connection with the national protest against the manner of his death. I marched with the Volunteers, all of whom wore black crepe armlets on which the national colours were displayed. This was the first public parade of the Volunteer company in Thurles since before the Rising of 1916. The R.I.C. made no effort to interfere with or to prevent this parade.

During the conscription crisis in the late Spring and early Summer of 1918 we had a big influx of recruits into the Volunteer company. Parades and training were then held publicly almost every night at the Racecourse, Thurles. When the conscription threat was over, this intensive interest in parades and training passed out with it. Many of those who joined during the crisis now drifted away and, by the end of 1918, except for whatever assistance we gave to the Sinn Fein candidates during the General Election at that time, I might say there were no activities.

Having completed my apprenticeship in Thurles, I returned to Drangan in 1919 and started to assist my father and mother in the family business. There was a Volunteer unit or company then in existence in Drangan and I joined it. The O/C. was a man named Thomas Donovan, or Tommy Donovan, as he was generally called. He was a native of New Birmingham, Co. Tipperary, but he lived with his aunt in Drangan. He had served a prison sentence for some political offence and at the time of my return to Drangan he was looked upon as the local Volunteer

organiser. There were no arms in the company in 1919 and, except for the weekly parades or meetings, there were no activities. As a matter of fact, I might say that it was not until after the capture of Drangan R.I.C. Barracks in June 1920, that anything in the nature of activities commenced in this district.

Up to the time the 7th Battalion was formed in July 1920, Drangan - for Volunteer purposes - came under Mullinahone, and I believe that the Volunteer officers in Mullinahone were contemplating an attack on Drangan barracks. The actual plans for the attack were, however, prepared by Nicholas Moroney and the late Sean Treacy, then brigade vice-commandant. The strength of the garrison in the barracks at the time was one sergeant (Sergeant Sullivan), 8 R.I.C. men and 1 Black and Tan named King. Although I was then a lieutenant in the Drangan company and, although I lived about 60 yards from the barracks on the opposite side of the street, I had no actual part in the attack. This was in accordance with Volunteer policy which at the time rarely permitted local men to take an open or public part in activities in their own area where they would be easily identified.

The attack on Drangan barracks commenced at about 10 or 10.30 p.m. on the night of June 3rd 1920, and continued until the police surrendered at daybreak on the morning of the 4th. When the Volunteers were moving into position, Sergeant Sullivan was attracted by the sounds of dogs barking and he came out of the barracks to investigate. He was immediately taken prisoner and detained in a disused house until after the surrender of the remainder of the garrison. In addition to rifle and shotgun fire, the attacking party also used mud bombs which were slung on to the roof of the barracks. I should have

brigade to the new battalion and to organise or re-organise companies where necessary. When the organisation of the battalion was completed it consisted of seven companies as follow:

<u>Designation</u>	<u>Area or district</u>	<u>Company captain</u>
A/Coy.	Drangan	Nicholas Moroney
B/Coy.	Ballingarry	John McGrath
C/Coy.	Cloneen	Pierce Dillon
D/Coy.	Killusty	Denis Meaney
E/Coy.	Moyglass	Sean Hayes
F/Coy.	Laffan's Bridge	Michael Corcoran
G/Coy.	Killenaule	William Murphy

At this time, too, the Mullinahone company was transferred to the Kilkenny Brigade and became B/Company, 7th (or Callan) Battalion of that brigade.

Towards the end of August or early in September 1920, the companies collected any shotguns and shotgun ammunition held by private persons such as farmers, in their areas. These guns were retained by the companies and were the only arms which they possessed. The brigade quartermaster provided arms for the battalion officers. Tommy Donovan was given a "Peter the Painter" (German Mauser automatic pistol) and a Colt .55 automatic revolver. I got a Belgian pattern revolver which fired .45 ammunition, and Denis Sadlier had or was supplied with a rifle.

Also in September 1920, due to persistent raids on my home by the R.I.C. and British military, I was forced to go on the run. There were a number of other men, all members of the various companies, on the run about this time and we generally stayed or billeted at a place called "The Ranch". Here from amongst the men on the run we formed a battalion active service unit. The strength of the A.S.U. was 14 and Tommy Donovan, the battalion commandant, took charge of it. Denis Sadlier, the battalion vice commandant, and myself, were also members. We were armed with some of the shotguns which had

collected earlier and, in addition, Donovan, Sadlier and myself had the arms which were supplied by the brigade.

Our first object was to try and get some rifles and, with this object in view, we tried a number of ruses, all without ~~success~~ ^{success}, to get a party of British soldiers out from either Killenaule or Mullinahone and to disarm them. For instance, there was an 'emergency' man (a man who occupied a farm from which people had been evicted) named Boyle living in the district. On a few occasions we had some of his hay burned in the hope that when he went into either Killenaule or Mullinahone to complain to the military, the latter would come out to investigate. Meanwhile, the A.S.U. divided into two parties and occupied ambush positions at Horan's Cross on the Prospect Road and at Brian's Cross on the Mullinahone road. As I said, these plans met with no success for on the only occasion the military did come out to investigate, they came by a roundabout way via the Willford road on which we had no ambush laid for them.

Again to entice the military out from Mullinahone, we held up the mail car on the road between Cloneen and Mullinahone and, after taking the mails, we allowed the mail car to proceed to Mullinahone. We then occupied an ambush position at Mullindubord Cross to await the military. After some time, one of our scouts reported that the military had come out in lorries but that they had taken what was known as the 'back' road. This left us in grave danger of being outflanked by the military, so we had to evacuate our position and retreat up the slopes of Slievenamon. On this occasion it looked as if they had got prior information of our position, but I have no idea how such information could have been brought in to them.

Shortly after this, in an effort to lure the R.I.C. men or some of them out of Ballinure R.I.C. Barracks, Paddy Ryan of Fethard and myself held up the postman on his way to Ballinure at a point about one mile from that village. Our plans on this occasion were that while Ryan and myself were holding up the postman the remainder of the A.S.U. would occupy an ambush position between Ballinure and the point where the postman was held up, to ambush the R.I.C. if they came out to investigate. Leaving Ryan in charge of the postman in an old vacant house, I went back along the road to ensure that the position had been taken up before allowing the postman to proceed into the village, but there was no sign of our men. I waited for quite a while but, for some reason best known to themselves, they did not come near the ambush position.

Returning to the empty house I sorted the letters in the postman's bag and took those which were addressed to the R.I.C. sergeant in Ballinure. Ryan and I then cycled to Mrs. Gleeson's publichouse at Dualla. On our way we were warned of the approach of a party of British military by a Mrs. Looby whose two sons were shot while in the custody of British forces. We had just sufficient time to get over the wall at the side of the road and lie flat while the troops were passing. Arriving at Gleeson's, Mrs. Gleeson offered to make some tea for us and it was only then that I got an opportunity to examine the letters to the R.I.C. sergeant. One contained a copy of the 'Hue and Cry'. It was the first copy of it that I had seen. I sent it on to the Brigade H.Q. and the brigade adjutant, in a note acknowledging its receipt, mentioned that it was the first copy which they at Brigade H.Q. had received or seen. The other letter was from the District Inspector of R.I.C. at Cashel advising the sergeant of the presence of a party of I.R.A. men on the hill over Ballinure.

About this time, i.e. October 1920, the officer in charge of the British forces stationed in Killenaule was a Lieutenant Hueton. He let it be known that if either himself or any of his men were ever attacked, he would bring out a party of British forces and burn down the village of Drangan. We had information that in company with a sergeant he was in the habit of frequenting Connell's publichouse in Killenaule at night time. A member of the Moyglass company, the late Michael Burke of Knockforla, had been arrested by Hueton and was then undergoing a prolonged hunger-strike in Cork. We were daily expecting to hear of Michael Burke's death.

At a Battalion Council meeting which was held in the barn of Mrs. Kennedy's farmhouse at Silverfort near Moyglass on Sunday, 31st October 1920, it was decided to challenge Hueton's threat and the following plans were drawn up:-

- (1) Denis Sadlier, the Battalion Vice-Commandant, to take a party of 5 or 6 members of the A.S.U. into Killenaule that night to raid Connell's premises and to shoot Hueton. Scouts from the Killenaule Company to keep in contact with Sadlier and his party and to let them know when Hueton and his friend the sergeant had left the barracks and gone to Connell's publichouse.
- (2) I to go to Drangan to mobilise the local unit and to make preparations to deal with the British forces if and when they came to the village to carry out their threat. In this I was to be assisted by Sean Hayes and his company.
- (3) Tommy Donovan, the Battalion Commandant, to go to Hayden's of Parson's Hill (between Drangan and Killenaule) where Hayes and myself were to report back to him that night, and where Sadlier and his party were also to report on their return from Killenaule. All would then go to Drangan for what we termed the "Defence of Drangan".

Sean Hayes joined me that evening in Drangan and, having made our plans for the night, we went to Hayden's to report to Donovan at about 8 or 9 p.m. Donovan was not there.

Thinking that he might be at King's of St. John's Town, we went on there. The house was in darkness but, in answer to our knocking, Mrs. King opened the door. She asked me in rather frightened tones what had happened and, as I paused rather surprised, she added: "Tommy Donovan is dead. He was shot tonight in Killenaule". This was a bit of a shock to Hayes and myself.

Subsequently, I learned that before leaving for Killenaule Sadlier had some difference of opinion with Donovan about the plans for when they got to Killenaule. Donovan decided to go with them. In Killenaule they failed to contact the scouts (if the scouts were ever put out) and, after waiting for some time, Sadlier was of the opinion that the job should be called off for that night. Taking two members of the party with him (Paddy Ryan of Fethard and Pat Clancy of Ballyuskey) Donovan went up the street and knocked at the door of Connell's public-house. After some hesitation, Mrs. Connell admitted them. Lieutenant Hueton and the sergeant were not there. Donovan and his two men then left the publichouse and took up a position on the opposite side of the street and, shortly afterwards, Hueton and the sergeant left the barracks and came down the street in the direction of Connell's. Donovan then made the mistake of crossing the street in the bright moonlight in front of them. He was wearing a trench coat which, I suppose, helped to give him away if he was not known. The sergeant shot him while he (Donovan) was still in the act of getting his Colt automatic out of his pocket. I also learned at the time that Donovan was not dead when he was brought into the barracks and that in the barracks Lieutenant Hueton fired a shot at him which proved fatal.

The threat to come out to burn Drangan did not materialise

on that night or on any other night.

Patrick Clancy, one of the two men who accompanied Donovan to Connell's publichouse in Killenaule was wounded on that occasion. He was sent to friends of his at Garryricken, near Callan, to recuperate. He was a Lieutenant in 'A' (Drangan) Company. When he was all right I sent him a dispatch to report to a company parade. I attended the parade after which Clancy mentioned that he was anxious to visit his people at Ballyuskey. He was armed with a police carbine which, against my advice, he insisted on bring^{ing} with him. He was accompanied on his way home to Ballyuskey by two unarmed members of the company, Joseph Byrne and James Maloney.

It so happened that on this particular night, 18th Novr. 1920, a patrol of military left Killenaule to meet a patrol from Mullinahone at Drangan. The patrol from Killenaule was attracted by a youngster who was flashing a flash lamp in the yard of Hickey's house at New Line, Newtown, Drangan. Some of the patrol surrounded the house, while the remainder took up a position on the road. It was dark at the time and Clancy and his two pals walked straight into the party on the road. Clancy had the carbine slung over his shoulder and when he received the order to put his hands up he had no chance either to use it or dispose of it. An officer named Lieutenant Lichfield, who was in Hickey's Yard investigating the flashing of the lights, was brought on the scene by one of the N.C.Os. Lichfield walked straight up to Clancy and shot him dead on the road. Byrne and Maloney were taken prisoner and they were detained in custody until the general release after the signing of the Treaty in December 1921.

No one was appointed as Battalion Commandant in Donovan's place until the following May. Denis Sadlier, the Vice-Comdt.,

acted as commandant until he was transferred to the 5th Battalion in March 1921.

In a pocket book which Donovan had on him at the time of his death the British forces got my name and address and they made several raids to arrest me. They did not arrest two namesakes of mine, one in Killenaule and the other in Cloonagoose. I am sure they were satisfied that they had the Thomas O'Carroll they were looking for, my namesake from Cloonagoose was sent to Spike Island where he was held a prisoner until the general release after the signing of the Treaty in December 1921.

In December 1920, with four or five other members of the A.S.U. I went into the Kilkenny Brigade area and we joined up with a column of the 7th Battalion of the Kilkenny Brigade. James Leahy of Poulnacapple was in charge of this column with Eamon Aylward of Callan (now living in Waterford) as second-in-command. On 20th December 1920, we lay in ambush at Nine Mile House for an expected patrol of British troops. Towards evening a cycling patrol did come along, but when within sight of the ambush position they turned around and cycled away again in the direction from which they had come.

After this incident at Nine Mile House, I spent some time with Leahy's column in South Co. Kilkenny. On one occasion the column was divided into two parties and we occupied two ambush positions; one party of which I was in charge took up a position on the Piltown-Owing road, and the other with Eamon Aylward in charge occupied a position on the Piltown-Fiddown road. Our information was that a patrol of R.I.C. men patrolled either road each day. On this particular day the patrol did not come either road. Later that evening we got information that a big round-up was in progress in the

area and I imagine that it was on account of the round-up that the patrol did not come out. With luck and with the assistance of some local guides, we managed to get outside the ring of British troops without coming into contact with them. Shortly afterwards I returned to my own battalion area.

In February 1921, Cloneen Creamery, where James Morris (whom I have previously referred to as Q.M. of the battalion) worked was raided by British troops and Morris was arrested. In his pocketbook was found an invoice of one of my father's billheads for three pairs of boots which had been supplied to the battalion. The invoice was made out to the quartermaster 7th Battalion, 3rd Tipperary Brigade, and it was to have a sequel for me which I will refer to later on in this statement.

On Sunday evening, the 6th March 1921, I attended a Battalion Council meeting which was held in an old disused stable at Knockroe. There had been an arms fund collection in the battalion area shortly before and the company officers were handing in the money collected at this meeting. The officers from the Ballingarry Company had not arrived and we hung on for a considerable time so that they would not be disappointed if they came. Meanwhile, our principal scout, who was posted on a nearby hill, left his post and came into the stable. As the meeting was almost over we took no notice of him. There were 12 officers including myself and Denis Sadlier at the meeting. Of the 12, I think only Sadlier, myself and perhaps one or two others were armed.

At length it was decided to wait no longer and I called the meeting to attention and was about to give the order 'Dismiss' when someone remarked "Look outside". Glancing through what had once been a window, I saw the steel helmets

of British troops advancing in extended order towards the old stable. There was only one exit through the doorway and that was facing the oncoming soldiers.

I was more than familiar with the countryside around Knockroe and I felt that if we could reach a fox covert through which ran a ravine some short distance to the rear of the stable, we would have a good chance of escaping. There was no time for any discussion, so, telling them to follow me, I rushed out the door and reached some cover provided by a low wall to the right of the stable. Six or seven of the party, including Sadlier, followed me. From the cover of the wall, Sadlier fired a few shots at the soldiers, which made them take cover for a few moments at least. We succeeded in getting around the stable and, under fire from the troops, we managed to reach the fox covert and eventually the ravine. Here Sadlier parted from us and went away on his own. While picking my steps through the ravine I had the misfortune to be knocked down into thick slimy mud by one of my own party. I was covered with it almost up to the neck and it left me almost powerless to move. I discarded my overcoat and dragged myself through some high grass and furze in an effort to remove the mud. In addition to rifle fire, the troops were now firing rifle grenades into the covert. Leaving the ravine, I had to cross an open space which was under fire from another small party of 3 or 4 troops, but by running diagonally I succeeded in joining the others safely, and we made our way across country to Cloneen. There I discovered that a bullet had ripped through my coat at the shoulder.

To revert to the remaining members of the party at the stable. Two of them, Martin Clancy of Drangan and Denis Croke of Laffan's Bridge, turned left when they came out the doorway.

They had got about 150 yards from the stable when they came directly under the fire of the British troops. Clancy fell wounded at the side of a ditch and when the soldiers came up to him they shot him dead. Denis Croke was wounded and captured. Patrick Hackett of Drangan was riddled with Lewis gun fire and died on the side of a hill directly opposite to and about 100 yards from the stable. Apparently he ran straight towards the soldiers. Richard Fleming of Moyglass remained in the stable and was killed there by a grenade which the soldiers flung into the stable.

The following is a list of the names of those who were present in the stable at Knockroe when the British troops came on the scene:

Denis Sadlier	V/Commandant of the battalion
Thomas O'Carroll	Myself, battalion adjutant
Edward Grace	A/Coy. Drangan
Martin Clancy	do. (killed)
Patrick Hackett	do. do.
Michael St. John	do.
Richard Fleming	E/Coy. Moyglass (killed)
Maurice Walsh	do. (captured)
William Ahessy	C/Coy. Cloneen
Denis Croke	F/Coy. Laffan's Bridge (wounded and captured)
Sean Walsh	E/Coy. Moyglass (later commandant of the battalion).
Joseph Farrell	B/Coy. Ballingarry (The scout who came into the stable just before the meeting ended).

From Cloneen I sent a girl to Drangan to get what news she could of what had happened to those who did not follow me to the covert. She brought back the news that Denis Sadlier had also been killed, but next day he turned up safe and sound at Doran's of Glenaskeough where we were resting. It was immediately after this incident at Knockroe that he was transferred to the 5th Battalion and I was then the only battalion officer left in the 7th Battalion.

Next day two Volunteers from Drangan searched the covert. They found my overcoat where I had hidden it and beside it lay

a grenade from which the pin had not been drawn. As our party were not armed with grenades, this one must have been fired by one of the British troops and in his haste he neglected to draw the pin.

On 16th March 1921, being in a bad way for a pair of boots, I went home to get a pair. Before entering Drangan I took the precaution of hiding the knapsack in which I carried the battalion papers. I got a pair of boots in our own shop and was in the act of fitting them on in the kitchen when a fully armed British soldier walked in. He just looked at me and went out again, but returned accompanied by an officer whom we always referred to as the 'foxy' officer from Mullinahone. The officer asked me if my name was Carroll and I replied that it was. He told me that in the absence of my father he was placing me under arrest and told the soldier to take me out and put me in the tender which was stopped down the street. I knew that the only thing of an incriminating nature which I had on me was some small dispatch envelopes which were in my pocket book. On my way out through the shop I paused at the counter to speak to my mother and, at the same time, I slipped the pocket book to a lady customer who was present.

I was brought to the military post in Mullinahone and detained there for some days. A company officer named Michael Walsh, who was with me at the meeting in Knockroe, was brought in as a prisoner while I was there. He was put in the same room with me, but at no time did we give any indication that we recognised each other.

A colonel of the British army visited the military post at Mullinahone and I was taken to the guard-room to be interviewed by him. He asked me if my name was John Carroll and I replied that it was. He then produced the invoice which

was captured on Morris, the battalion quartermaster, and asked if the handwriting on it was mine. I agreed it was. He then made some reference to a proclamation prohibiting the sale of goods to the I.R.A. and that it was a serious offence. I replied that there was little option if armed men came into the shop but to give them what they wanted. He just remarked "that's all" and the interview ended.

Tied on the back of a double-turreted armoured car I was brought from Mullinahone to the military barracks in Tipperary Town. Here, at every available opportunity, I kicked up a shindy to be released, maintaining that I was an innocent man and that I was being detained in the wrong. Despite my protests I was taken out on convoys as a hostage. When taken out as a hostage I was always handcuffed in a lorry. One soldier with a drawn revolver was detailed to sit beside me. In my presence he was given orders that in the event of ^{the} ~~a~~ lorry or convoy being attacked or ambushed he was to shoot me immediately. On these trips we left Tipperary Town at 9 a.m. and travelled to Ballinure, Killenaule, Mullinahone, Fethard and arrived back in Tipperary town late at night. During the day I was not given either food or drink and when we got back to the military barracks the only refreshments I got were some cold tea and bread and margarine which my fellow prisoners kept for me.

Once in Mullinahone a Mrs. Ryan, seeing my plight in the lorry, approached with some tea for me. One of the officers, Lieutenant Lichfield, already mentioned as the officer who shot Patrick Clancy, pointed his gun at her and ordered her away at once. I was not permitted to accept the cup of tea.

James Morris, the battalion quartermaster, was also a prisoner there at that time. We were both tried by a military

Court on the same day. I was charged with having supplied goods to the I.R.A. Asked if I had anything to say in my defence I repeated my remarks to the colonel in Mullinahone that there was no option but to supply the goods if armed men came into the shop and demanded them. I was fined £25 or three months in jail and was given 10 days in which to pay the fine. On the charge of being a member of an illegal organisation and of being in possession of the invoice, Morris was fined £50 or six months imprisonment and was given 30 days in which to pay the fine.

Next morning a sergeant called my name and told me I was for the road, meaning that I was being released. It is about half a mile from the military barracks into the town of Tipperary. As I walked along, I noticed that I was being followed by two military policemen who cycled slowly close behind me. As we entered the town the military policemen continued to cycle slowly behind me and I became convinced that they were watching to see where I would go. It chanced to be market day, carts were lined along both sides of the street, and there was quite a lot of traffic about. Taking advantage of a particularly thick patch of traffic, and while the military police were still on their bicycles on the street, I doubled back along the sidewalk, crossed the street behind them and entered the house of a Mrs. Bourke whom I knew.

Mrs. Bourke's sister took me upstairs and put me in a room with large bay windows. She told me that if I heard footsteps on the stairs to step in behind the heavy window curtains. Shortly afterwards I did hear heavy footsteps and, acting on her advice, I hid behind the curtains. I heard the door of the room being opened and closed again. Soon Mrs. Bourke made her appearance. She told me that the house had

just been raided and that the military were looking for the man who had been released from the barracks that morning. Mrs. Bourke arranged with a hackney car driver who lived next door to her to take me to Moyglass. I left Tipperary town at 5 a.m. next morning in the hackney car and reached Moyglass without incident. Needless to remark, I had no intention of paying the fine. When the ten days were up, a party of military called to my father's shop to collect it. When the £25 was not forthcoming, they seized and took away a quantity of South African field boots which were in stock in the shop at the time.

During the period of my imprisonment from March to May 1921, there was no battalion officer available in the 7th Battalion. As already mentioned, Tommy Donovan, the battalion commandant, had been killed in Killenaule; Denis Sadlier, the vice-commandant, had been transferred to the 5th Battalion, and James Morris, the battalion quartermaster, had been arrested in February 1921. At the time of my own arrest, I was arranging for the holding of a Battalion Council meeting to have these three vacancies filled.

On my return to Moyglass after my release from Tipperary military barracks, I learned that arrangements had been made to hold a Battalion Council meeting in Tobin's house in Lismoynam on the following Sunday. At Tobin's I met Seamus Robinson, the brigade commandant, and had a long discussion with him. Robinson went to the room where the company officers were assembled and inquired about the object of the meeting. On being told that it was to elect four battalion officers, Robinson remarked: "You only need three, the adjutant is here. I have just been speaking to him in the yard". He then called me and told me to take charge of the meeting. At this meeting the following appointments were made:-

Battalion commandant	- Sean Walsh, Coolenuse, Fethard
" v/commandant	Sean Hayes, Moyglass (now of Thurles)
" quartermaster	Harry Bushe, Drangan (now of Clonmel).

Although there was continuous activity of one kind or another until the Truce was declared on 11th July 1921, I can only recall one other incident of particular note. This was when a small party of Volunteers ambushed Sergeant Brady and a constable of the R.I.C. from Mullinahone at a place called Lower Crohane, about four miles from Mullinahone. I was in the Crohane district at the time and a scout reported that Brady and the constable were cycling in the neighbourhood. As a result of this report, a few Volunteers took up a position at Lower Crohane and fired on them when they came along. The constable escaped unhit and got safely away. When the Volunteers went out on to the road, Sergeant Brady was lying in the ditch. He may have been wounded, but he was certainly pretending to be dead. One Volunteer then fired another shot at him which hit him in the mouth or neck, and he was left for dead on the roadside. Brady was, however, far from dead. He was a man of great physical strength and courage and he managed to make his way back to Mullinahone. He is still alive and is now the proprietor of a publichouse in Clonmel.

I was staying at Kennedy's of Silverfort near Moyglass when the Truce came into operation on 11th July 1921. There were quite a number of us there at the time and we had been notified of the Truce by Brigade Headquarters. To celebrate the cessation of hostilities, the local members of Cumann na mBan arranged a dance in Moyglass for that night. As it was still early in the day, we got a few horses and traps and drove to Drangan. On our way we met a British

armoured car and a lorry of troops. It was then about 1 p.m., or about one hour after the Truce had come into operation. I was in the first car and wondered for the moment what action the British troops would take. However, saying to myself that the Truce must be on, I made no effort to conceal the rifles and equipment which we had with us. When the armoured car came alongside, the soldiers on it saluted smartly as did those on the lorry as they too passed by. We returned their salute and continued on our way to Drangan.

Signed: Thomas O'Keefe

Date: 12/9/55

Witness: J. Grace

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BURO STAIRS MILEATA 1913-21
NO. W.S. 1243