

W.S. 1,361

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21  
BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21  
NO. W.S. 1,361

ROINN  COSANTA.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.  
STATEMENT BY WITNESS.

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 1,361

Witness

Commandant Gerald Davis,  
Faussagh House,  
Finglas Road,  
Dublin.

Identity.

General H.Q. Organiser,  
Athlone Brigade I.R.A.

Subject.

Irish Volunteer activities, Roscommon-Athlone,  
and 'C' Company 3rd Battalion Dublin Brigade,  
1917-1921.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil

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STATEMENT BY COMMANDANT GERAID DAVISArmy Medical CorpsFaussagh House, Finglas Road, Dublin.

After leaving school in 1917 I went to the Kilrooskey area in South Roscommon where I lived for some time. While in Kilrooskey I joined the local company of the Irish Volunteers. Pat Madden, now deceased, was the captain of the Kilrooskey Company at this time. He later became battalion commandant in that area. The strength of the company varied from time to time, being very strong during the conscription crisis period, but dwindling to much smaller numbers when the crisis was over. There were a couple of rifles - service pattern - in the company, and a few shotguns. They had a fine type of sporting rifle which had belonged to a cousin of mine who had been killed in France during the war. This man was Larry Davis.

In the autumn of 1917 I went to Dublin and started to study medicine at the National University there. In the university I met some other students who, like myself, were anxious to join some unit of the Volunteers. One night, two of us went to Brunswick St., now Pearse St., where the Volunteers had a place where they used to meet. There was quite a big number of men there, but we knew none of them. They were all apparently Dublin men. There was a chap there called Andy Cooney and he advised us to join C/Company of the 3rd Battalion, Dublin Brigade, as there was a number of medical students in that unit.

C/Company met in a Hall in York St. Paddy Flanagan was captain of this company when we joined it. Five others joined up with me on that night - all medical students except one

who was an accountant. We were all pretty big specimens of manhood and some of the members of the company, at least, suspected that we were detectives from Dublin Castle. I think the Hall was known as 55 York St. We met there one night per week for drill and other military instruction. This was the only activity at this time.

In 1918, Pat Madden - the captain of my original company in Roscommon - came to work in Dublin and I was instrumental in having him taken into C/Company. I remember I had my first medical examination in 1918 and, on account of this, I had got excused from attending company parades in order to concentrate on my studies. I was very lucky in this, because 55 York St. was raided one night by detectives and police while a parade was being held there, and a number of the Volunteers were arrested, including Pat Madden, Andy Cooney and another medical student who was not doing an examination that term. The arrested men were tried for illegal drilling and given a short term of imprisonment.

There was not very much to record for the years 1918 and 1919. When I went home on holidays at Christmas, Easter and summer, I always made contact with the local company of Volunteers and, on returning to Dublin, to continue my studies I again contacted C/Company, 3rd Battalion. During the 1918 General Election we were on duty at various places in the city during meetings and on polling day at the polling booths. This was a sort of police work. We were also on duty at the Mansion House when the first Dáil met there early in 1919. In 1919 we had to take an oath of allegiance to the Dáil as the Government of the Irish Republic. As far as I know, all our men took this oath.

During the Easter period of 1920, there were a number of vacated R.I.C. barracks burned in Co. Roscommon. I was at the burning of the barracks in Athleague, which was carried out without incident. Nearly all the vacated R.I.C. Barracks were burned or otherwise destroyed on Easter Saturday night of that year. This was carried out on an order from G.H.Q. and was a fine demonstration of the effectiveness and organisation of the Volunteer force. Other than this, there was not much activity in Roscommon or Dublin either at this time.

Around this time, or perhaps earlier, there were a lot of ex-British soldiers - Irishmen who had served in the British army during the Great War - living around our area in Roscommon. These men felt a bit out of things. They were at home and a lot of people were inclined to look upon them as spies or agents for the British forces. Pat Madden, after his release from imprisonment, went back to Roscommon. He believed that if he could induce such men to join the I.R.A. they would be very useful, as they were trained in the use of arms at least. He was rather good at getting in touch with such men and succeeded in getting quite a few of them to join up. His confidence in them was not misplaced, as these men gave a good account of themselves afterwards and, particularly so, at the ambush at Scramogue.

I think it was in the summer of 1920 when I was home in Roscommon that the first real act of hostility took place. We were informed that two R.I.C. men, armed with rifles, would be proceeding to Roscommon/<sup>Town</sup> from Lanesboro for duty at the Courthouse there, while the Court was in session. We planned to hold up these two police and deprive them of their rifles. A few of us mobilised and proceeded to a place called Moneen which is on the main Lanesboro-Roscommon road, near Cloontuskert

We took up position alongside the main road and when the policemen came along on cycles we called on them to halt. They did not halt, but instead, increased their speed; so we opened fire on them. One policeman immediately fell from his cycle; he had been killed outright. The other man jumped from his cycle and unslung his rifle and made for some cover, but after a few moments he came out and surrendered. We secured two rifles and a small amount of ammunition which we took away with us. We did not take the cycles. Pat Madden, Frank Simmons, Luke Duffy, Henry Compton and I made up the ambushing party. We had a couple of rifles and two or three shotguns and a few revolvers. We allowed the policemen who surrendered to go free when we had secured the arms.

There was some great activity by enemy forces of military and R.I.C. around the neighbourhood of the ambush after this and they burned a house belonging to an uncle of mine which was unoccupied at this time. They made no arrests, however, which was strange, as it was the wellknown policy of the R.I.C. always to arrest someone when incidents took place. At this time there was no local police barracks near Moneen as the barracks at Beechwood had been burned down by our men when the R.I.C. had evacuated.

Another incident took place - an abortive one - in the summer of 1920. The military had a guard on the railway station at Castlerea. Dan O'Rourke, who was the Brigade O/C., lived in the Castlerea area. It was planned to surprise and capture this guard. A number of us went by car to Ballymoe, which is a small town on the Roscommon-Galway border. At Ballymoe we held up the train for Castlerea and got aboard it. Our intention was to alight from the train when it stopped at the platform at Castlerea station with guns drawn and to

hold up the sentry and rush the guardroom. Some distance out from Castlerea the train was held up by a red lamp having been placed on the line and we were now informed that the guard had been heavily reinforced and that the town and station were swarming with police and military. It looked as if they had been informed of our intentions and were waiting for us, so there was nothing we could do but disperse, having our journey for nothing.

I also took part in an attempt to capture Frenchpark Barracks. When we arrived there we found that the garrison were alerted and awaiting us and opened fire on us as soon as we arrived. In any case, we had no explosives which would be essential for the capture of this place. The attacking party were selected men from the brigade area.

I came back to the University in Dublin at the end of the summer vacation. I think it was some time before Christmas of that year that Volunteer patrols were organised in the city to ambush lorries on the streets. Although our company had many patrols out they did not have any luck. We patrolled the streets, armed with revolvers and bombs, but up to Christmas, we had not made any contact.

I was home again in Roscommon for the Christmas vacation. Pat Madden was now the commandant of the battalion in the Ballagh area which was on the borders of Longford, and this battalion was the only really active one in the South Roscommon Brigade area.

On the twelfth night (January 6th 1921) we went into the small town of Lanesboro which held a large force of R.I.C. and Tans and the barracks there had been strongly fortified. The barracks there commanded the important bridge

crossing the Shannon on the road to Roscommon and was, therefore, an important strategic position for the enemy. As well as being well fortified with barbed wire, steel sheets and sandbags, the garrison in the barracks also had machine guns in position.

We had been informed that a part of the garrison went every night to a publichouse on the Longford side of the town where they drank until closing time, and it was our intention to ambush this party when they came out of the publichouse at closing time. We had got in touch with the Volunteers on the Longford side of the Shannon and they had agreed to assist by having a party in position at their end of the town. About 15 of us with shotguns and a few revolvers crossed the Shannon in boats on the south side of Lanesboro and took up position almost at the gable end of the police barracks, thus putting ourselves between the barracks and the publichouse where the Tans used to go drinking. We particularly carried shotguns on account of their deadly effect at short range and did not bring any rifles. Meanwhile, the Longford men had positioned themselves on their - the Longford - end of the street and from their position they would be able to fire down the street and prevent the Tans retreating in that direction. We would thus have the Tans in a bottleneck between our two forces. We were to open fire on them when they came out of the house at closing time.

We learned that the Tans were in the house all right, but, although we waited in position until nearly morning, they never came out, so our attempt was a failure once again, and we had to withdraw without effecting anything. We afterwards learned that the Tans had left the publichouse by the

back door of the premises and had gone into hiding. They were apparently warned that we were waiting for them.

When I resumed my studies in Dublin, I made contact again with C/Company. There were the usual street patrols going on. On one occasion a Volunteer named Murphy and I encountered a lorry of soldiers at Portobello Bridge. Murphy had a bomb and I had a revolver. It was my duty to cover Murphy while he was throwing his bomb. Murphy threw the bomb at the lorry and the soldiers opened fire on us immediately. - I do not know if he succeeded in getting the bomb into the lorry as, needless to say, we did not wait to see the results. The bomb exploded all right.

Before that, I would like to mention that on Bloody Sunday, 21st November 1920, our company was mobilised to take part in this affair. A number of us had been detailed to meet at a certain place in Mount St. (I think it was). I was at this time residing in Cabra Park on the north side of the city and, as this was well outside my company area, it was very inconvenient for me. I got up on that Sunday morning and proceeded to the mobilisation point. On my way down through the city I almost ran into a round-up. Enemy cordons had been placed across the streets and everyone was being held up and searched. To avoid this round-up, which now was a regular feature of city life, I had to travel by devious routes to Mount St. with the result that I was late in arriving and took no part in the operations of that day. There was a number of our company living outside the company area and we often had difficulty in making contact with our comrades.

A short time after the shootings on Bloody Sunday, a couple of Volunteer pals of mine and I were detailed to shoot another student named Sullivan or O'Sullivan who lived in a



hostel in Lower Hatch St. We were told that this man was a spy for the British forces. Armed with revolvers, we proceeded to the hostel and knocked on the door which was opened by the porter. We informed him that we wanted to see O'Sullivan and inquired for the number of his room which he gave us. We left one man with the porter at the door to ensure that it was kept open to facilitate us in our exit from the place, and proceeded to Sullivan's room. We knocked on the door but could get no reply and we then burst it in. We found the room deserted. The occupant had apparently packed all his belongings and taken his departure. We left the premises and reported the matter to our superiors. I do not know if the man was ever got afterwards. Again we suspected that O'Sullivan had been tipped off that he was for the high jump.

One night, another medical student named Jack Egan and I were on a tram. I had a revolver and a hand grenade on me and he had the same. The tram was held up at Doyle's corner by an enemy search party. We got off the tram after a few moments and walked off and the searchers never bothered about us.

About January 1921, or perhaps a bit earlier, Headquarters asked for Volunteers to go down the country as organisers. They especially asked for university students, so Andy Cooney, Tom Burke and I volunteered. We were National University students. Tom Lawless and Louis Darcy, who were students in the College of Surgeons, also volunteered. Darcy had a peculiar history. His people were very pro-British and he was thrown out of his home when his people discovered his activities. Darcy was the first man to go to the country. He was a Galway man and he was sent to Galway. On his way down he was taken out of the train at Oranmore

by a party of Black and Tans and shot dead on the road, outside Galway.

Those of us from C/Company who volunteered to go to the country as organisers were interviewed by Dick Mulcahy and Oscar Traynor. We were instructed to attend a series of lectures in a building somewhere near Amiens St. Amongst those who lectured us were Ernie O'Malley, Emmet Dalton, his brother, Charlie Dalton, "Ginger" O'Connell and Rory O'Connor. Mick O'Hanlon, another student, had also volunteered, but he was a bit later than myself. I remember in that class at the lectures we had the late Colonel Seamus O'Higgins and Peadar O'Donnell.

As well as organisation, the lectures covered guerilla warfare, engineering, the construction of land mines and the use of arms and so forth. Rory O'Connor lectured on engineering. The whole course involved about a week's lectures. We were now sent to Dermot Hegarty, the Director of Organisation who fixed us up with some cash and instructed us as to the areas we were to go to and who were to contact on getting there. I was detailed to proceed to the Athlone Brigade area and to contact a man named Dixon in Athlone. Mr. Dixon was a solicitor in Athlone. He is now prominent in legal circles in this country. Mr. Dixon was a contact man for the organisation but was not a member of the I.R.A., as far as I know.

I think it would be some time in March - around St. Patrick's Day - that I proceeded by train to Athlone. I had with me a bag containing a lot of documents of different kinds. On the journey down, the train was held up by military and Black and Tans at Moate and everybody was ordered out on the platform and to take their luggage with them. I did not take my bag with me, but left it on top of the luggage rack in the

compartment and hoped for the best. I was not feeling too happy. We were lined up on the platform and questioned in turn by a military officer - a big bluff Englishman. There were two priests before me and the officer was quite nice to them. Then my turn came. He asked my name, which I told him, and my occupation, to which I answered "medical student". He then said : "Go back to your carriage". As I went towards the carriage, I saw another officer looking into it but I proceeded on and nothing happened. One passenger was causing a bit of excitement which diverted their attention. He had a card and was rubbing out something on it. Eventually they let him go also. I was looking out the window of the carriage when a Black and Tan came towards me and, leaning over confidentially, asked me quietly: "Are you a soldier on leave?" I said "No". He then asked if I was an R.I.C. man on leave, to which I again answered in the negative. Then he said: "All right" and went off. I sat back in my seat much relieved, but I noticed that my fellow passengers were not inclined to talk to me after my little confidential chat with the Tan. They probably suspected I was also a Black and Tan or something like that.

I arrived in Athlone without further incident and went to a small private hotel there. During the evening the R.I.C. came into the hotel and questioned the owners about some stranger that they believed was staying there. I thought for a brief period that I was the person they were looking for, but apparently not. There was a Head Constable named St. John from Roscommon staying in the hotel. He was a bad type. He and his family were all Protestants in religion. I made up to him and we became rather friendly. The Black and Tans were in the habit of calling in there every night. They asked me to have a drink with them, which I did, but I

was not too happy in their company.

The next day I got in touch with Mr. Dixon and then discovered that the local Volunteers were suspicious of me and my association with the Black and Tans. Dixon promised to get me in touch with the proper quarters within a few days, Every night I was out drinking with the Black and Tans and they were not such a bad crowd at all and I got on all right with them. I kept my mouth shut and listened sympathetically to them. I remember there was a Cockney Tan amongst them who was really a very funny individual.

Mr. Dixon got me in contact, as promised. Con Costello had succeeded Seamus O'Mara as Brigade O/C. at this time and he accepted me. It would appear that the arrangements made by our Headquarters in Dublin were not so efficient as I thought was the case and Brigade O/C. had no knowledge that I was coming. I could do nothing at the time when I was in the hotel in Athlone about mixing with the Black and Tans, and I thought it was good policy to do so.

When I eventually got in touch with the Volunteers, I was very happy to leave Athlone. I left in a horse and cart with a farmer. I clubbed up with a chap called George Adamson. He was Vice Brigade O/C. and had served in the British army during the previous or first world war. He was a fine type of man, well built, a good athlete and a very good fellow all round. Unfortunately, he was killed in the civil war in 1922.

There was no real active service unit or flying column in the brigade area at this time. The brigade organisation was in a pretty bad state. There had been a brigade column organised in the area and they had carried out a few ambushes and had lost a few men killed. Following the intense

activity after those incidents, the column had got scattered and disorganised. The Athlone area was a very difficult one to operate in. The country is generally flat and boggy and there are no mountains. Athlone was always a strong enemy garrison centre and the people in the town were none too friendly disposed towards us. I suppose this applied to all garrison towns. The people in the country, however, were generally all right and, with occasional exceptions, could be relied upon.

When I got in touch with the Volunteers, and especially Adamson, I was feeling better. The first thing I did was to organise patrols around the town of Athlone in an effort to ambush the Tans. The enemy were not contacted, however, except on one occasion by Adamson and me. On this occasion there were two Tans who had two girls with them a short distance outside the town. We did not get the best of the encounter. The Tans and girls were in a farmyard when we approached. We held up the first Tan and disarmed him and Adamson stood guard on him while I went in search of the other. This Tan was behind a clamp of turf. I shouted: "Hands up" at him, but he fired at me and then cleared off as I fired at him. I had a Colt revolver, but the ammunition I had was not the right type and this did not assist in accurate shooting. I hit him in the thigh with one of my shots but did not do him much harm.

I now heard Adamson shouting and, on looking around, observed him on the ground with the Tan on top of him. The Tan was a powerful big Englishman and he had George down and had taken the gun off him and shot him through the chest. I now fired at this Tan and shot him through the back. The other Tan now came back and I fired at him, but missed him.

I now helped Adamson to his feet and we both got away. Adamson had lost his gun, but I had retained mine and we had missed collecting the two guns belonging to the Tans also which we had hoped to do. Adamson was badly wounded in the chest and I was wounded in the fleshy portion of my arm. I managed to get Adamson across the Shannon to a friendly house where we got medical attention and he made a quick recovery. My arm went septic for a while, but eventually got all right. After this incident we lay out, or rested, for a while.

After consultation with the Brigade O/C. when I was fit again, I decided to go to the Drumraney area and to try and get some activity under way there. This decision was taken on a Sunday night and the following morning there was a big round up of the area where we were staying which was in a house near the Shannon. It was the Brigade O/C. who gave us the warning that the Tans were all around the place. I had the Colt revolver, but I had only three rounds for it. Adamson had no arms and neither had the other man, Dowling, who was also with us. By the time we got out of the house they were practically upon us. We made a dash for the Shannon and, fortunately, there was a row boat at the bank and we three jumped into it. Dowling and I took the oars and proceeded to row in the direction of Athlone. This was a lake part of the river and there was an island between us and the other shore. We rowed along keeping fairly near the bank. When we were gone a couple of hundred yards a bunch of the Tans arrived at the bank which we had left. They looked at us for a while and then started to fire at us. I shouted at Dowling to row like hell. I don't know what happened, but when he started to pull hard, he pulled the boat into the bank. Apparently he was not keeping in rhythm with me.

We had to leave the boat and wade through the river up to our waists and get on to the same bank as the Tans were on. There was a slight rise in the ground here which obscured us from their view temporarily. When we had crawled up on to the river bank, they could see us and they again started firing at us. We ran for about a mile across the flat country with no cover, but the Tans had now given up the chase and we got away safely. Adamson was not in too good form after his recent illness, but he had been a cross-country runner in his earlier years and this stood to him now.

After this round-up, I left Adamson and proceeded to Drumraney with a Volunteer named Casey. Having contacted <sup>O/C.</sup> Dick Birthles/of the battalion in that area, and later killed during the civil war, we proceeded to try and carry out some operations in that area. There was a village called Ballymore with a barracks housing a garrison of R.I.C. and Tans in that area. A patrol from this barracks came out nightly and patrolled the area. A Battalion Council meeting was called and plans were made to ambush this patrol, but, unfortunately, on the night before the ambush was fixed to take place, there was a big round-up in the area by the enemy forces and I was caught. The whole area around where we were staying was surrounded. Casey was also caught, but was not held by them. He was a country-man and looked the part, whereas probably I did not. I had dumped my gun before I was captured, as I only had three rounds for it, and that was of no use. I was detained and brought to the military barracks in Athlone.

I was now a prisoner of the military and found them to be quite decent fellows; they did not ill-treat me. I was not put in a cell. They had a couple of rooms where suspects were kept and I was put in there. Periodic identifications

of the prisoners held in these rooms were carried out. On one such parade I was identified by a Tan - one of the fellows that I and Adamson had the shooting affair with when we found them with the girls. I was immediately placed in a cell and charged with attempted murder, levying war and so forth. Within a short period I was brought before a courtmartial, found guilty and sentenced to penal servitude for life.

I found the military in Athlone very decent. The first night that I was in a cell there, a military policeman - Sergeant Brown - came to my cell and asked me did I want anything. I told him I wanted something from the canteen. He went there and brought me back tea. I offered to pay him for the tea but he would not take anything. He was an Englishman. There was a prisoner named Pat Mullooly there at this time. He had been identified as one of the men who had been in the ambush at Scramogue. He succeeded in getting admitted to hospital and escaped from there.

After a while in Athlone I was shifted to Mountjoy Jail, Dublin. When I arrived there things were pretty bad. We were guarded by Auxiliaries and Black and Tan police. Sean MacEoin was a prisoner there at this time. The ordinary warders went around the cells, but the Black and Tans and Auxiliaries did the guarding. Some of them were very obnoxious, but one or two were decent fellows. We expected to be shifted to Dartmoor Prison in England, but shortly after our arrival, the Truce came into force and this held up our departure. When the Truce came into force, conditions in Mountjoy became more normal in the jail and we were allowed to receive cigarettes and parcels, and even visits were allowed.

I and the other long-term men who should have been moved



to England did not have to don prison garb. This would be issued to us when we got there, but a number of short-term prisoners who were to complete their sentences in Mountjoy were dressed in prison clothes. Among the prisoners was Paddy Rigney, who was serving a 15-year sentence, and a chap called Troy from South Co. Dublin, who was afterwards an usher in the Dáil. The prisoners in the prison clothes used to go around the cells taking away slops and suchlike. One of those, Leo Fitzgerald, was serving a three or four-year sentence. This man's father had been the Chief Warden in Mountjoy at one time and he knew the prison topography very well. I think he got in touch with Rigney and told him that he knew the prison and prison routine inside out, so to speak, and that if a certain number of us wanted to escape he could help us, as he wanted to escape himself. Paddy Rigney approached me and three other prisoners - O'Brien, Smith and Keegan - and we agreed to chance it. Fitzgerald said that only a limited number could try it.

We now started making arrangements to escape. We were allowed visitors at the time, and on those visits it was arranged that a few guns would be smuggled into us by women. The women called to visit us and, as there was only a warden on duty with us during visits, we succeeded in getting in a few guns. I got one gun on a visit and Fitzgerald hid this for me. The Auxiliary Company who were guarding the prison at the time wore "Tam-o-Shanter" caps with a badge made of cloth, half green and half yellow. The women made five of these caps for us outside and smuggled them in also. Fitzgerald told us that at the opportune moment he would let us know. I should state that at this period we were allowed certain freedom within our particular portion or flight of the prison and were only locked in our cells at night time.

We could mix with each other during certain hours and up to 6 o'clock in the evenings. This privilege was allowed, I think, on account of the Truce.

On the night of 11th November 1921, the Auxiliaries were pretty well all drunk, as they were celebrating Armistice Day, and Fitzgerald sent word to us that this was our chance. It was certainly after 6 o'clock, as it was dark, but we were still not locked up. We met in a cell and put on our trench coats and put our caps in our pockets. We also had our guns. Fitzgerald was familiar with the prison layout and he led us down to the basement where there was an old warder on duty. We held him up, took his keys, bundled him into a cell and locked him up. At the end of the corridor there was a door and one of the keys fitted it and we opened it and passed through. Outside the door was one of those depressed areas with steps leading up to the road which lay between the prison wall and the wing of the prison we had left. This road led to the main entrance to the prison.

The old warder we had locked in the cell was kicking up a terrific noise and, by the time we got to this depressed or sunken area outside the door, the alarm had gone. Up on the road there was a crowd of Auxiliaries, pretty drunk, and as they now knew about the escape, we thought it was all up. We crouched down in this sunken area where they could not see us. We could hear them being given instructions such as: "You go that way" and "You go this way". When they departed we came up, now wearing our Auxiliary caps and walked down normally towards the prison entrance. We must have resembled Auxiliaries all right as, when we approached the inner of the main gates, a soldier who was on sentry there saluted us and let us through. Inside this was the main door in the prison

wall and here there was a warder on duty on the inside. There was no going back for us now, so we had to take our chance and trust to our luck. We suspected that there was an Auxiliary or Black and Tan on duty with the warder, as there usually was, and, not seeing one, we suspected that he was in the lavatory close by, and two of us went in there, but there was no one there. We came out, but the warder would not open the main door to let us out, stating that he could not when the alarm was gone. We did not want to start a scene with the sentry looking on and another up on the parapet of the prison with a machine gun, so we continued to argue with the warder on the gate. While doing so, the chief warder arrived and shouted at the warder on the gate: "Hold these men; they are escaping prisoners". The fat was in the fire now and we had no option but to stick up the chief warder with our guns. The soldier must have thought we were Auxiliaries, as he did nothing but just looked on. Fitzgerald now seized a key that the chief warder had and put it in the lock and opened the gate and we all walked through and up the avenue leading to the prison and into the city and freedom.

The whole lot of us got clear away into the city. We had no money or anything. We went into a public house and told the bar tender there that we were just after escaping from Mountjoy and had no money. This man gave us a drink and some money. We paid him back afterwards and found that he was a Roscommon man.


When I went to Athlone the column had got scattered. A man named Tormey had been O/C. of the column. He was killed before I arrived there. After I was arrested there was an ambush outside Athlone in which a General Lambert from the military barracks there was killed. There were very good

young men in the Athlone Brigade area but it was a very hard area to operate.

I was arrested about the middle of May 1921. There was a man called O'Brien who worked in the Post Office in Athlone who was supposed to be rendering very valuable service as regards intelligence, but otherwise I have no knowledge of how the system worked in the area. It was not in my line just then.

While I was in the area there was a man named Johnston shot for being a spy for the British forces. He was a Protestant. I was not actually concerned in the affair, but what I heard - I don't think there was any doubt about his guilt. I was told that he fought like a tiger for his life when he was collared. Another man had been shot as a spy before I arrived in the area, but I have no knowledge of the circumstances of that case.

As far as I know, the only thing that was done in the way of making munitions in the area was the filling of shot-gun cartridges with home made slugs and the construction of some concrete road mines and the making of bombs from cart-wheel boxes and metal piping.

Signed: 

(G. Davis)

Date: 2/3/56

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Witness 

Commandant.

(Matthew Barry)

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