

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BURO STAIRÉ MILEATA 1913-21

No. W.S. 1.640

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS.

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 1640.

Witness

James Doyle,
Kilmore,
Bandon,
Co. Cork.

Identity.

O/C, Kilpatrick Coy., Bandon Battn., Cork III Bde.
Member of Brigade Flying Column.

Subject.

Kilpatrick Coy., Bandon Battn., Cork 111 Bde.,
I.R.A., 1913-'21.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil.

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STATEMENT BY JAMES DOYLE

Kilmore, Bandon, Co. Cork.

I was born at my present address in February 1898. My parents were farmers. I was educated at Castlelack National School and Bandon Technical School until I was about 16 years of age when I left to work on the home farm.

I joined Kilpatrick Company of the Irish Volunteers when it was first organised towards the end of 1913. The strength of the unit was about a dozen. Some of the founder members were: Bob Walsh, John Lordan, Michael Lordan, Dan Lordan, Jerh. Healy, Wm. Coveney, John Coniffe, William McDonnell, John and Michael Doyle, James Doyle (witness). Bob Walsh was elected to take charge of the unit. The unit was attached to Cork Brigade.

The only type of training carried on by us was close order foot drill. Training was usually carried out at night and on Sunday evenings in the fields in the area.

There was no change in the strength of the unit until about the spring of 1915, when the membership increased to about 20. Bob Walsh was still in charge. There was no change in officers until after Easter Week 1916. The training during 1915 and early 1916 included arms drill with wooden guns. The only arms held by the unit prior to 1916 consisted of a few shotguns and a number of croppy pikes.

On Easter Sunday 1916, 12 men from Kilpatrick Company went to Macroom. They assembled in Bandon about 9 a.m. and marched with the representatives of the other units and sections in the area to Macroom. The strength of the combined force was in the neighbourhood of 80. Tom Hales was in charge. When we reached Macroom we met the representatives from other areas in West Cork and Mid-Cork as well as a strong

contingent from Cork city. All sections paraded under their own officers in the Square, Macroom. The parade was addressed by Tomas MacCurtain (O/C. Cork Brigade, Irish Volunteers) whose speech was of short duration. At the conclusion of the address the officers of the assembled units held a consultation and the parade was dismissed - all units being instructed to return to their home areas and to await further instructions. The men from our unit (Kilpatrick) reached home early on Easter Monday morning after marching through the night. The parade was then dismissed and we were ordered to "stand to" and await orders. All members met regularly during Easter Week but no further orders were received.

As far as I can recollect, the names of some of the men who went to Macroom on Easter Sunday were: Mike Riordan, Tim Riordan, John Doyle, Jerh. Healy and Jerome O'Donovan.

During the first week in May 1916, the O/C. (Bob Walsh) and Wm. McDonnell, (Castlelack, were arrested by a raiding party of military and R.I.C. They were removed to Cork and later to Frongoch internment camp in Wales, where they were held for something over three months before being released. During this period the members of the unit (Kilpatrick) continued to meet at intervals and the Volunteer organisation in the area was kept intact. Following the general release of internees about Christmas 1916, there was increased interest in Volunteer activities and a scheme of reorganisation was soon in progress throughout the area.

The strength of Kilpatrick Company increased to about 25 in the spring of 1917. The officers at this time were: O/C. Denis Lordan; 1st Lieut. James Doyle (witness); 2nd Lieut. Michael Riordan.

Beyond normal training in close order foot drill and occasional route marches, there was no activity in 1917. The strength of the Volunteer organisation in the Bandon area was, however, growing apace and units were being organised in nearly every parish. In view of the progress being made, it was decided to organise the district on a battalion basis early in 1918. At this time, there were companies of varying strength in Bandon, Ballinadee, Kilbrittain, Kilpatrick, Tinkers Cross, Newcestown, Crosspound, Innishannon, Gaggin and Clogagh. These companies were organised as Bandon Battalion, Cork Brigade. As far as I can recollect, the officers of the battalion were: O/C. Tom Hales; Vice O/C. Patrick Dwyer; Adjutant Hugh Thornton; Q.M. (I cannot recollect).

When the threat of conscription loomed up in the early part of 1918 there was a large increase in membership - the strength reaching about 50. There was no change in the company officers at this time. During this period all members of the unit were engaged at one time or another in collecting all available arms not already held by Volunteers. About 25 shotguns, one Lee-Enfield rifle and one .22 rifle were collected in these raids. The total armament of the Kilpatrick Company at this period consisted of about 30 shotguns together with the two rifles mentioned above.

Five or six men from the company - I cannot recollect their names - went to Waterford in March 1918 to carry out protection duty for Sinn Féin supporters in a by-election in which the candidates were: Dr. Vincent White (Sinn Féin) and Major Willie Redmond (Irish Parliamentary Party). The Redmondite supporters were composed in a large part of the relatives of soldiers serving in the British army in France and they were violently opposed to the Sinn Féin policy.

Training as usual continued throughout 1918. It was, however, becoming more advanced. Occasionally at weekends,

adjoining companies and sometimes the whole battalion would assemble for manoeuvres in which the units engaged in skirmishing, moving across country under cover and suchlike activities.

There was no activity in the area in connection with the general election in December 1918, as the Sinn Fein candidate was returned unopposed. However, about a dozen men again went to Waterford city to engage in protection duty as on the occasion of the by-election in the previous March.

Early in 1919, Cork Brigade, which embraced the whole county, was divided into three brigades, as follows: Cork City and Mid Cork (No. 1 Brigade); North Cork (No. 2 Brigade) and West Cork (No. 3 Brigade). Our battalion (Bandon) now became the 1st Battalion of Cork III Brigade. The battalions in the brigade were: Bandon (1st), Clonakilty (2nd), Dunmanway (3rd), Smibbereen (4), Bantry (5th) and Castletownbere (6th). The latter battalion was later (March 1920) divided into two - Castletownbere (6th) and Schull (7th) battalions. The first officers of Cork III Brigade were, I think: O/C. Tom Hales; Vice O/C. (Cannot recollect); Adjutant Liam Deasy; Q.M. Pat Harte.

Beyond this organisational change there was no alteration in the position and normal activities in training and parades continued. However, we were all becoming more alive to the military nature of our activities and every opportunity was availed of to increase our store of information and arms. With a view to increasing the efficiency of the organisation the brigade staff arranged to hold a training camp at Glandore in August 1919. As far as I can recollect, our company (Kilpatrick) was not represented at this camp.

There was increased training activity following the camp

at Glandore and all units were visited by one or other of the battalion officers who had undergone training there. The training schedule now became more advanced and selected men from each unit were trained as scouts, signallers and engineers. The occasional manoeuvres at weekends gave the new trainees an opportunity of putting the information gleaned in these courses of training into practice. All such combined operations were usually carried out under the supervision of one or other of the battalion officers. Every aspect of training was being intensified at this time with a view to preparing as many men as possible for the engagements which were in prospect in the early part of 1920.

The first major activity in which I took part was an attack on Farnivane R.I.C. barracks towards the end of February 1920. Prior to the attack, a meeting to arrange for the operation was held at Hurley's, Lauragh, Bandon. It was attended by the battalion officers and the O/Cs. of the companies in Bandon Battalion which were situated north of the Bandon river (Kilpatrick, Crosspound, Tinkers Cross, Newcestown) With Frank Hurley (O/C. Tinkers Cross) and John Jordan (O/C. Newcestown) I was deputed to select the assembly point for the units to take part in the attack. We selected the position and all units were duly notified. On the night of the attack I led the men from Crosspound and Kilpatrick to the appointed spot which we reached about 11 p.m. Through some unforeseen circumstances, the men from Tinkers Cross and Newcestown assembled at a different point. After waiting for about two hours, having, in the meantime, got in touch with Hurley's, Lauragh, and ascertained that the others (Tinkers Cross and Newcestown) had proceeded towards Farnivane about 10 p.m., our party decided to withdraw.

We were withdrawing towards our home area when we made contact with the men from Tinkers Cross. We were now within

about two fields of the barracks. A shotgun was, at this stage, discharged accidentally by some member of the combined party. This put the garrison on the alert. However, after a short discussion, it was decided to go ahead with the attack. The combined party was now divided into sections and took up positions around the barrack, under cover of the wall of a farmyard at the rear and behind a low bank and hedge in front. Fire was opened on the building by all sections and a few bombs were thrown, but after an exchange of fire lasting about 30 minutes all sections were withdrawn as there was no prospect of capturing the building. The strength of the attacking party was about 20. I was one of a party of three who were in position at the front of the building. Another member of this party was Jack Corkery. We were all armed with rifles. Tom Hales (Brigade O/C.) was in charge of this operation.

On Sunday, 2nd May 1921, I was one of a party of seven (two rifles and five shotguns) who took up an ambush position to await a patrol of R.I.C. from Farnivane barracks. The five shotgun-men were in a position behind a roadside fence at a crossroads about 300 yards from the barrack on the road to Farnivane church. Armed with a rifle I took up a position behind a fence about 100 yards from the enemy post so that I could prevent any of the other occupants leaving when they heard the attack on the patrol. Dick Hurley, also armed with a rifle, was in position behind the roadside fence between crossroads and the church so that, should any of the patrol get through the party of shotgun-men at the Cross, he was in a position to deal with them. We were all in position about 8 a.m. although the patrol was not expected to be operating until after 10 a.m. About 10.15 a.m. one member of the garrison left the barrack. He passed by my position on the way to the crossroads where he was fired on by the shotgun-men. He dashed away towards the church to be again fired on.

Dick Hurley whose rifle misfired. The R.I.C. man continued his dash in the direction of the church while Dick Hurley went on to the roadway to fire at him, but all his ammunition was ineffective. As the R.I.C. man had now made good his escape, we all withdrew to our home area. Some of the shotgun-men were: Donal Mahoney and John Brien.

Towards the end of July 1920, two men from my company (Kilpatrick) - Michael Doyle and John Coveney - were detailed for protection duty at the home of Sean Buckley (Brigade I.O.). A section of military made its appearance in the vicinity and our guard opened fire. The enemy suffered one casualty - Lance Corporal Maddox - killed. Our men withdrew having no casualties.

About this time the Brigade O/C. (Tom Hales) and Brigade Q.M. (Pat Harte) were captured by the enemy. They were replaced on the brigade staff by Charlie Hurley and Dick Barrett respectively. Charlie Hurley, who had been Vice O/C. Bandon Battalion, was now replaced by John Lordan (O/C., Newcestown Coy.) The officers of the Brigade and Bandon Battalion now were:

<u>Brigade.</u>		<u>Bandon Battalion.</u>	
O/C.	Charlie Hurley	O/C.	Sean Hales.
V.O/C.	Ted O'Sullivan	V.O/C.	John Lordan
Adjt.	Liam Deasy	Adjt.	Jim O'Mahoney
Q.M.	Dick Barrett	Q.M.	Tadhg Sullivan

About this period it was customary for a military cycle patrol to travel from Bandon via Innishannon and Brinny back to Bandon. About daybreak on 29th August 1920, an ambush party drawn from Kilbrittain, Timoleague, Crosspound, Kilpatrick Tinkers Cross and Gaggin Companies took up a position at both sides of Brinny Bridge on the eastern side of the road. Two men were placed in position some distance west of the road to deal with any members of the patrol who might take cover at that side of the road during the engagement, should it take place. The strength of the party was about 30, all armed -

We were still in position about 3 p.m. when our men west of the road were surprised by an enemy party which opened fire on them. These two men escaped and made contact with my section on the eastern side of the road but north of the bridge. The party south of the bridge were next engaged by the enemy and in an exchange of fire Lieut. Tim Fitzgerald was killed. As it was now obvious that the enemy were aware of our position and were endeavouring to surround us, all sections were withdrawn from the position without further casualties. Sean Hales (Battalion O/C.) and Tadhg Sullivan (Battalion Q.M.) were in charge of this operation. Some of those who made up the ambush party on this occasion were: Frank Neville, Paddy Leary (Crosspound Coy.), Con Lehane, Jim Hartnett, (Timoleague Coy.), John Doyle, Michael Doyle, Wm. Coveney, Jim Doyle (witness - Kilpatrick Coy.), John Shea (Tinkers Cross). The enemy force removed the body of Tim Fitzgerald to Bandon military barracks where it was claimed next day by his relatives. He was buried within 400 yards of this enemy post with full military honours.

Towards the end of September 1920, a training camp for representatives in Bandon Battalion from companies north of the Bandon river was set up at Ballymurphy. I attended this camp as O/C. Kilpatrick Company which was also represented by John Crowley, 1st Lieut. and Mike Riordan, 2nd Lieutenant. The officers of the following companies also took part in this camp: Crosspound, Tinkers Cross, Quarries Cross, Newcestown. The duration of the camp was one week during which those in attendance underwent an intensive course of training in the care and use of arms, extended order drill, the use of cover. There was also a series of lectures on various subjects of a military nature. This camp at Ballymurphy had been preceded by a camp run on similar lines for the companies south of the Bandon which had been held at

Clonbuig in Kilbrittain Company area. Tom Barry, who had only recently been appointed brigade training officer, was in charge of both camps.

On completion of the training at Ballymurphy, all men returned to their home areas. Towards the end of the first week in October 1920, we were all mobilised again and, under the new column O/C. (Tom Barry), we moved into Dunmanway battalion area where we took up ambush positions at Fanlobbus, about three miles from Dunmanway on the Ballineen road. The strength of the column was about 40 men, representative of all companies in Bandon Battalion. Tom Barry (column O/C.) was in charge. Sean Hales (O/C. Bandon Battalion) and Liam Deasy (Brigade Adjutant) were also present. Although we remained in the position all day, there was no appearance by the enemy. We withdrew from the position about 4 p.m. and moved into billets in the district. I think that this abortive operation took place on the first Thursday in October 1920.

We remained in this area until Saturday evening when we travelled back to Newcestown where we arrived between 9 and 10 p.m. Sean Hales (O/C. Bandon Battalion) was in charge on the return journey as the column O/C. (Tom Barry) and Brigade Adjt. (Liam Deasy) had moved off to seek further ambush sites. When we arrived in Newcestown we were billeted in two farmers' houses (Corcoran's and Lordan's) for refreshments. The O/C. (Sean Hales) and Battalion Adjutant (Jim O'Mahoney) went into the village (Newcestown) where they went into a shop. They had only done so when two lorry loads of British military drove into the village and halted in the square. Some of the enemy party entered the shop in which Sean Hales and Jim O'Mahoney were but they went away again without comment. Immediately the enemy party left the shop, Sean Hales and O'Mahoney dashed back to Corcoran's where I was having tea with about a dozen others.

Our party was mobilised immediately and word was sent to the section at Lordan's to proceed to Newcestown. Our party moved at the double back towards the village. Before we got within half a mile of the village we saw the lights of the lorries approaching. We dashed across the roadside fence behind which we took cover. We were extended over a distance of about 100 yards. When the leading lorry entered the ambush position it was fired on by the men on the flank at which it entered. It ran along for a short distance and collided with the fence on our side of the road. It was now fired on by the men in the immediate vicinity at point blank range. Meanwhile, the second lorry had halted outside the ambush position and I moved in its direction under cover of the fence. As I reached the corner of the field in which the remainder of our force was operating, I heard the sound of people getting over the fence from the roadway into the adjoining field. I realised immediately that they must be the occupants of the second lorry and I reported accordingly to the O/C. (Sean Hales) who was a short distance from me. On his instructions, I withdrew with Con Sullivan (Innishannon) and Bob Fitzgerald to the rear of our position until we were one field behind the men on the roadside fence. Having reached our new position we listened for and heard the sound of enemy movements in the next field. We opened fire in the direction of the sounds and the enemy party replied. After an exchange of fire lasting a few minutes the enemy withdrew in the direction of the road.

Our O/C. (Sean Hales) now reached our position and took the three of us (Bob Fitzgerald, Con Sullivan and myself) across the road about 200 yards on the Newcestown (west) side of the ambush position. The lamps on the lorries on the road were still lighting and it was impossible to see any of the enemy in the surrounding darkness. Sean Hales now instructed Bob Fitzgerald to go into Newcestown to John Lordan for some

bombs. As he had not returned in a short time I was sent after him. On my way I met a local scout who informed me that Bob Fitzgerald had gone into the village. I then returned with the scout to my old position, but before I reached it, the enemy lorries had driven off. It was ascertained later that the enemy had suffered some casualties, one officer being killed and several other ranks wounded. We had no casualties.

When the enemy had retired, our party moved to Green Hill in Newcestown area where we remained next day and until early on Monday morning - the attack at Newcestown took place on Saturday night. We remained in the area as we expected the enemy forces to return to the district for reprisals. As they had not put in an appearance by Monday morning, we moved before daybreak to Crosspound area where we disbanded. All men now returned to their home areas.

On return to my home area (Kilpatrick) I carried out normal training of my unit. The men were now becoming really interested and were keen to learn how to handle the rifle and smallarms. I was engaged in this work until, I think, the evening of 25th October 1920, when I received instructions to report to the column with two other men from my unit. I reported to the column O/C. (Tom Barry) in Crosspound area on the evening of 25th October. I was accompanied by John Crowley (1st Lt. Kilpatrick Coy.) and my brother John Doyle. At Crosspound we found a number of men from other companies assembled. On the morning of 26th October 1920, we moved into position at Toureen on the main Cork-Bandon road about 8 miles from Bandon. We took up our positions about 6 a.m. The strength of the column was about 30. All were armed with rifles

The column was now divided into four sections. Two sections of about eight men each were allocated to flanking positions east and west of the main position. I was a member of the section on the eastern flank of which Liam Deasy was in charge.

We were extended behind a fence about 150 yards east of the main position which was at the gate of Roberts' farmyard. I was in position behind a fence about 60 yards from the road. The main attacking party consisted of ten riflemen under the column O/C. (Tom Barry). The Brigade O/C. (Charlie Hurley) with, I think, Peter Monahan, was placed about 60/70 yards east of the main position. He was behind the roadside fence in the garden attached to the farmhouse directly opposite the spot where a mine had been laid in the road. This party was to explode the mine under the leading lorry of the expected convoy. Sean Hales's flanking section to the west was approximately 150 yards from the main position.

The convoy which we were expecting was to be composed of two or three lorries. The leading lorry was to be allowed to pass through the western flank and by the main body to be dealt with by the mine. The second lorry was to be attacked by the main body under Tom Barry, while if there was a third lorry, it would be the responsibility of the section on the western flank under Sean Hales. Our section on the eastern flank was to deal with any enemy force which broke through the main position.

The leading lorry in the convoy of two drove into the ambush position from the west about 8 a.m. It was allowed to pass on to the mine, but this failed to explode and the lorry passed on to our position rather unexpectedly. We opened fire on this lorry but, in a matter of a minute or two, it had speeded out of range and driven hurriedly on towards Cork. The second lorry was fired on by the main attacking party at the gate of the farmyard. It crashed into the roadside fence and, after an exchange of fire, the occupants surrendered. The main party now collected the arms and equipment from the enemy prisoners and - all sections being called in - the lorry

was set on fire. The booty consisted of some 12 or 14 rifles with a large supply of ammunition. The enemy casualties were one officer killed and several other ranks wounded. Our casualties were nil. We now moved across country to Ballinadee crossing the Bandon river at Kilmacsimon Quay before noon. We remained in this area until next day.

Within a day or two while we were still in the vicinity of Brandon, we moved into the town about 9 p.m. to attack a curfew patrol which patrolled the town during curfew hours. We took up positions in various parts of the town about 9.30 p.m. but, although we remained in our positions until close on midnight, there was no appearance by the enemy. We now returned to Kilbrittain area where we remained in billets until next day when we were dismissed and returned to our home areas.

At this stage, my unit (Kilpatrick), as well as all other companies in the area, was engaged in intensive training as well as in the collection of the Arms Fund levy. There was a considerable number of hostile residents in our area and the collection of the levy necessitated the seizure of stock from them to the value of £450 at this period.

On 1st December 1920, representatives from Kilpatrick, Quarries Cross, Crosspound and Newcestown Companies to the number of about 30 took up ambush positions at Clashanimud, on the old Cork-Bandon road, about daybreak. Liam Deasy (Brigade Adjutant) was in charge. The party was armed with 14 or 15 with rifles and the remainder with shotguns. We were in position behind the roadside fence and in Quinn's farmyard. We were extended over a distance of about 100 yards. Although we remained in position throughout the day, the expected enemy convoy did not put in an appearance. We withdrew to billets about 4 p.m. We occupied the same position throughout next day, but our wait for the enemy was in vain,

so we again retired to billets where we remained next day until about midday when we again moved into the same ambush site. We were about to withdraw as darkness set in when we heard the sound of lorries approaching. In a short time six lorries of Tans, R.I.C. and military passed through the position. We immediately opened fire, but the convoy, which was rather too strong for our party, passed on for some distance before halting. The occupants of the lorries now left their transport and continued to fire indiscriminately for about five minutes before boarding their lorries and driving off towards Bandon. We had no casualties but it was later rumoured that several of the enemy had been wounded. We now returned to our billets in Crowhill where we were dismissed and ordered to return to our home areas. The men from Kilpatrick who took part in this operation were: John Doyle, Michael Doyle, John Crowley and James Doyle (witness). All were armed with rifles.

During the remainder of the year 1920, the main activities in the area consisted of the cutting of enemy lines of communication by trenching roads and demolishing bridges. This work engaged the wholetime service of the majority of the members of the company at this period. I was engaged in organising and assisting in this work until I rejoined the brigade column early in February in Castletown-Kinneigh area.

The column was now moving around this district until the night of February 9th when we moved into Skibbereen to search the town for enemy forces. About a dozen men moved into the town while the remainder of the column took up ambush positions on the approach roads. This operation is described in Tom Barry's book "Guerilla Days in Ireland", chapter 14. The details recorded are, as far as I can remember, substantially correct.

On the night following the occupation of Skibbereen the column was in the vicinity of Drimoleague where we billeted next day. During the course of the day a large mine was constructed by Peter Monahan and some others. The column O/C. (Tom Barry) was driven into Drimoleague to inspect the layout of the R.I.C. barracks there by a member of the local Cumann na mBan.

Towards midnight on 11th February sections of the column led by local scouts were led into positions at the rear and in front of the barracks. I was a member of a section to the number of about ten under Sean Hales which took up a position behind a low fence about 30 yards from the building. All were armed with rifles. Another section was detailed to carry the mine into the village and to lay it against the wall of the barrack. This party travelled nearly a mile in their stockinged feet carrying the large mine, referred to above, on a trestle. When they reached the barrack they laid the mine on the barbed wire entanglements which lay between the boundary wall and the wall of the building. When the mine was exploded there was a deafening roar and fire was immediately opened on the building by our section at the rear and also the section covering the front. The garrison returned the fire and sent up Verey lights. The mine did no effective damage to the building. Intermittent fire was continued for about ten minutes and, as there was no prospect of taking the building, the signal to withdraw was given. All sections now withdrew to Castledonovan area where we arrived about daybreak. The column moved into billets. Sentries and outposts were posted. We had hardly turned into our billets when sentries reported the approach of a lorry load of enemy troops. The enemy approached to within about quarter of a mile of our billets when they turned round and left the area. As there appeared to be a danger that a round-up was

being attempted, the column was withdrawn to the top of a hill in the district where we remained throughout the day until all danger of encirclement by the enemy had passed.

The column was moving round the area for some days following the attack on Drimoleague without contacting any enemy force. We were in the neighbourhood of Bandon on the evening of 23rd February when it was announced that we were to attack a military curfew/^{patrol} in town that night. The column was divided into a number of sections which were to approach the town from different directions. I was a member of a section of 9 or 10 men under Sean Hales which approached the town from the north. We took up a position on Convent Hill, about 200 yards from the military barracks. It was now about 9 p.m. Some other members of this section were: Pete Kearney, Denis O'Brien and, I think, Con Flynn. The main body of the column under Tom Barry (column O/C.) had moved away to the east from which direction they were to enter the town. Our duty was to endeavour to confine the enemy forces in the military barracks within this post when the main body had opened the attack on the curfew patrol. When the shooting broke out in the centre of the town our section opened fire on the enemy post. The garrison replied with heavy rifle fire and machine gun fire. Our section continued to fire an odd shot for about 20 minutes in order to keep the enemy occupied. At the end of this period we withdrew to the north where we billeted in the Kilpatrick area.

The column continued to move around the area until March 16th 1921, when we were in the neighbourhood of Tuogh in Crosspound company area. Early on the morning of St. Patrick's Day (March 17th) we moved into ambush positions at Shippool on the Innishannon-Kinsale road about 7 miles from Kinsale. The strength of the column was now about 90. All were armed with rifles. We took up our positions behind a wall bounding the

road and were extended over a distance of about 400/500 yards. I was a member of No. 1 section under Sean Hales. The strength of this section was about a dozen men; two of them were Jack Corkery and Dan Corcoran (Newcestown). We remained in position throughout St. Patrick's Day, but the expected enemy force did not turn up, so we withdrew at dusk to billets in Skough in Innishannon Company area. We remained in billets until about 9 p.m. on 18th March 1921, when we moved to Crossbarry area where we went into billets about 1 a.m. on the morning of 19th March. We were all warned that we were to remain in billets and on the alert as there were large enemy forces moving in the area. Sentries were posted and the men of the local units were operating as scouts. About 3 a.m. all sections were alerted, ordered to 'stand-to' and await orders as the presence of the enemy forces had been confirmed. Arrangements were now made by the column O/C. (Tom Barry) and other brigade officers that ^{would} take up ambush positions on the old Cork-Bandon road just west of the village of Crossbarry.

The column at this time had been divided into seven sections under selected section commanders as follows: No. 1 section (Sean Hales); No. 2 (John Lordan); No. 3 (Peter Kearney); No. 4 (Mick Crowley); No. 5 (Denis Lordan); No. 6 (Tom Kelleher); No. 7 (Christy O'Connell). Each section was composed of about a dozen or so riflemen. All sections were allocated to positions extending from east to west north of the road at the site selected. They were extended over a distance of about 500 yards on the main front - sections 1 to 4 while the sections under Denis Lordan (No. 5) and Christy O'Connell (No. 7) occupied flanking positions to the west and east respectively of the main position. The section under Tom Kelleher (No. 6) occupied a position on high ground to the

rear of the main body to cover off any possible attack from the north.

I was a member of Sean Hales's section (No. 1) which was allocated to a position at the western end of the main body. The sections under John Lordan, Peter Kearney and Mick Crowley were extended along the main front to the east. Our section was under cover of the roadside fence while the others had somewhat similar cover in Harold's and Beasley's farmyards and along the road to the east. All sections were in position about 6 a.m. by which time two mines had been laid in the road - one at the extreme eastern end of the position and the other between the positions occupied by our section under Sean Hales and that of John Lordan on our left flank. Everything was now in order and we lay in our positions to await the next move by the enemy. Some members of Sean Hales's section on this occasion were: Jack Corkery, Bob Hales, Denis O'Brien and Jim Doyle (witness).

Except for the distant rumble of enemy transport, all was quiet until about 8 a.m. when the leading lorry in the enemy convoy moved into the ambush position and had only passed our section when it halted. The second and third lorries in the convoy halted at the same time. There was a distance of about 25-30 yards between each lorry. From our position we were unable to observe whether the other lorries in the convoy halted at the same time. Immediately the leading lorry halted, our section, as well as the section on our left, opened fire on the occupants of the three lorries within view. The occupants who were not killed or wounded by the opening fire sprang from the lorries, dashed across the fence on the opposite side of the road and made off, apparently across country to the south, because we saw no further trace of them. The occupants of the other lorries in the convoy must have also decamped because, except for a few shots exchanged with

Christy O'Connell's section on our western flank, there was no further activity by the enemy at our end of the position at this stage. I should have mentioned that, just as the shooting began, Florrie Begley - a member of the brigade staff - began to play marching tunes on the bagpipes. He was to the rear of the centre of the main position in Harold's or Beasley's farmyard where the column O/C. and other brigade officers had set up their H.Q. Another incident which occurred in our vicinity was the escape of a prisoner who was being conveyed by the enemy forces in the leading lorry. When firing opened he jumped from the lorry and scrambled over the roadside fence into our position shouting that he was a prisoner. As there was no reply from the enemy after the initial burst of fire - their forces having decamped - our section together with those of Mick Crowley, John Lordan and Peter Kearney were moved on to the roadway by the column O/C. (Tom Barry). All arms and equipment left behind by the enemy, which included a number of rifles, a Lewis gun and a large supply of ammunition, were collected. The two leading lorries in the convoy were then set on fire.

While we were collecting the spoils on the road shooting suddenly broke out on the eastern flank and with the other sections on the road we withdrew up a boreen leading to the north at the extreme western end of the position. We had travelled some distance along this boreen to the top of the hill when a party of enemy troops was seen to the east. The O/C. (Tom Barry) now ordered the assembled force to line the fence of the boreen and to open fire on this party. After about three rounds had been fired by each man, the enemy party disappeared. We continued to withdraw until we reached Cross-pound where we were joined by all the other sections of the column. A check up on our men now revealed that we had lost three men (Peter Monahan, Con Daly and Jerh. O'Leary who had

been killed), while two men (Dan Corcoran and Jim Crowley) were seriously wounded. While the wounded men were being attended to by Dr. Con Lucey and Eugene Callanan, it was observed that a few men who had been engaged on outpost duty had not reported back. I was now instructed by the column O/C. (Tom Barry) to remain behind to pick up these men as I had a good knowledge of the area. I was accompanied on this mission by Mick Crowley and Peter Kearney. When we had been scouting around for about half an hour I observed a couple of men crossing a fence about 400 yards away. Thinking that they were some members of our outpost party, I got on to a fence and waved to them to advance in my direction. Within a minute or two, five or six other men made their appearance at the same spot and we then realised that the party we were waving to were members of the enemy force who had apparently lost their way. We now withdrew back a field from the roadway on which we were and travelled under cover of the fence in the direction taken by the main body of the column as it withdrew. As we moved along I observed a small enemy force travelling along the road. I signalled their position to Peter Kearney and Mick Crowley who were behind me. I then opened fire on the enemy, who jumped over the fence only to come under fire from Peter and Mick. This enemy section now withdrew hurriedly and we continued on our way to pick up the column as we had now made contact with the missing outposts. The column now withdrew to Scart where we halted for some time. We later moved on to Gurraneireigh where we went into billets in the early morning of 20th March 1921. During the withdrawal of the column from Crossbarry the members of the rearguard were: Peter Kearney, Mick Crowley and Jim Doyle (witness).

We were billeted in Gurraneireigh on the night of 20th March (I think) when news came through that the Brigade O/C.

(Charlie Hurley) had been killed in Crossbarry area on the morning of 19th March 1921. He had been billeted in Forde's in Ballyhandle area when it was surrounded by a strong force of enemy troops. He tried to fight his way through the encircling ring, but was killed in the attempt. His body was taken into Bandon by the military where it was placed in the morgue. In a day or two it was taken from the morgue by some members of Cumann na mBan and removed to the church in Clogagh. It was decided to give the Brigade O/C. (Charlie Hurley) a military funeral, so the whole column moved off on the evening of March 21st to Ahiohill where we billeted that night and next day. We marched that night to Clogagh which we reached about 2 a.m. next morning. The local priest was called and the coffin containing the body of our O/C. was carried on the shoulders of his comrades to the graveside. When the grave had been closed, the column O/C. (Tom Barry) delivered a short oration and a firing party, of which I was a member, fired three volleys over the grave.

The column now moved into Clonakilty battalion area until the end of the month without making contact with any enemy forces. We were in the vicinity of Benduff on 30th March 1921, when there was a heavy fall of snow. We were confined to billets all day. About 9 p.m. we were paraded and informed that it was proposed to attack Rösscarbery R.I.C. barracks that night. The column was now divided into a number of sections of varying strength. Some sections were allocated to cutting lines of communication and holding approach roads. The main attacking party was divided into sections as follows:

1. A section to lay a mine at the door of the barrack.
2. A small-arms section to rush the breach.
3. A section armed with rifles to follow on.

I was a member of the section at 2. Some other members of this section were: Con Flynn, Bob Hales. I cannot recollect

the names of the others. The mine-laying party were, I think, Denis Lordan, Mick Crowley, Peter Kearney, Jack Corkery, Tom Kelleher, Christy O'Connell, Ted Sullivan. Tom Barry (column O/C) was in charge. The strength of each section was about eight men.

The barracks was a strongly fortified building at the eastern end of the village. It was surrounded by barbed wire entanglements except for a passage leading from the roadway to the door of the building. The column moved to the vicinity of Rosscarbery where we arrived about midnight. On the outskirts of the village the men in the main attacking party removed their boots and moved in their stockinged feet to a position at the gable of the post office, about 30 yards from the barrack. The mine-laying party - led by Tom Barry - took the mine to the door of the barrack and laid it there. They dashed back to our position and we all threw ourselves on the ground to await the explosion. Within a matter of seconds there was a loud explosion. The mine-laying and small arms section dashed towards the barrack followed by the riflemen. We now found that the explosion had not done as much damage to the door of the barrack as was expected. The riflemen now opened fire on the building to protect our party while we were examining the breach in the barrack wall. As there was no hope of getting into the building, it was decided to set it on fire. Supplies of paraffin and petrol were obtained and poured by Tom Barry (column O/C.) through the breach in the doorway. Lighted torches were now hurled into the breach and the hall and stairway were soon on fire. We were still collecting supplies of paraffin and it was being fed to the fire by Tom Barry and Mick Crowley while the riflemen were continuing to attack. Several calls to surrender were shouted to the garrison during lulls in the firing, but there was no response. Fighting continued until about 4 a.m.

when the garrison were forced to evacuate the burning building. However, we captured no booty, as the enemy threw their arms into the fire before evacuating. Two members of the garrison were killed and nine were wounded. We had no casualties. It was now about 5 a.m. All outposts and covering parties were called in. We were now assembled on the Square and after a short delay we moved away to billets in Rossmore area.

On the night following the attack on Rosscarbery, we marched to Newcestown district via Murragh Bridge. We rested here for a couple of days when we moved to Quarries Cross area where about half the column was disbanded. I continued to serve with the column and we were moving around the area throughout April and early May without making contact with the enemy. We were, however, helping to train the men in the various companies in whose areas we billeted so that, at this stage, there was no scarcity of trained men.

When the general order for the shoot-up of enemy forces on sight, fixed for 14th May 1921, took place, I was awaiting transport at Finnis on the Bandon-Macroon road, about three miles from the former town. The transport, through unforeseen circumstances, failed to turn up, so I missed the action on that day.

During the remainder of the period to the Truce the members of the column were moving around the area and harassing enemy forces when met in suitable strength. The activities of a large enemy column - to the number of about 400 - under Major Percival, which was operating in the district with field kitchens and travelling across country - moving often at night - was too strong to be engaged as a body by the forces available. This enemy force adopted ruses of all kinds to trap our forces or individual members thereof. On one occasion towards the end of June 1921, Percival moved,

with his column, into Kilpatrick area about nightfall. He compelled the local schoolteacher (Miss Mary Walsh) to give him the keys of the school into which he locked about 30 of his men. He took up a position in the teacher's residence himself and ordered the remainder of his force to move on to Bandon. In this way, he hoped he would be able to pounce unexpectedly on some of the local I.R.A. men or perhaps on a section of the column which might move into the area on the assumption that the whole of his (Major Percival's) column had withdrawn to Bandon. The trick did not work on this occasion, but, having questioned the teacher as to the whereabouts of my home and getting no information, he proceeded to carry out a series of raids in the district next morning during the course of which he did actually raid my home where he arrested a workman - Con Murphy and my brother Jerry.

The officers of Kilpatrick Company from 1915 to the Truce were, as far as I can recollect,

1915-1916	O/C. Bob Walsh
1917-1919	O/C. Denis Lordan 1/Lt. Jim Doyle (witness) 2/Lt. Mike Riordan.
Dec. 1919-1921	O/C. Jim Doyle (witness) 1/Lt. John Crowley 2/Lt. Mike Riordan

My rank at the Truce: O/C. Kilpatrick Company,
Bandon Battalion, Cork III Bde.

The strength of the company at this time was about 78.

Signed: James Doyle

Date: 21st June 1954

Witness: P. J. Donnell