

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BUREAU STAMP 1913-21

NO. W.S. 132

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 132

Witnesses

Michael Spillane, P.C.

Michael J. O'Sullivan
Identity

Members of Killarney Coy. I.V.

" I.R.B. (Michael Spillane - Centre)

Subject

I.V. Killarney 1913-1916.

Conditions, if any, stipulated by Witness

File No. S.786

Form BSM 2

ORIGINAL

BUREAU STAIRS MILEATA 1913-24
NO. W.S. 132

W.S.
132

JOINT STATEMENT OF MICHAEL SPILLANE, P.C.,
KILLARNEY, CO. KERRY AND MICHAEL J. O'SULLIVAN,
5, NEW STREET, KILLARNEY, CO. KERRY.

PERIOD: NOVEMBER, 1913, TO EASTER, 1916.

UNITS: KILLARNEY COMPANY AND KILLARNEY
BATTALION, I.V.
KILLARNEY I.R.B. CIRCLE.

On the 28th November, 1913, when a meeting of the Gaelic League was in progress in An Dún, High Street, Killarney, a stranger arrived and was met by An Seabhac (Mr. P. Sugrue) who was one of the Irish teachers at the Classes. The stranger was, we believe, a Donegal man, but we do not know his name. An Seabhac knew him and introduced him to those present. He said that he came on behalf of the Headquarters of the Irish Volunteers to ask that a Company be formed in Killarney. He said it was their object to have one formed in every town and village in Ireland.

There and then all present decided to join and the Company was formed. The following are the names of those present:-

Michael Spillane
Michael J. O'Sullivan
Sean O'Casey.
James Counihan
William D.F. O'Sullivan
Jack O'Shea
Michael F. (Honey) O'Donoghue
Pat O'Shea
Mossy O'Connor
Jerry Crowley
Christy Courtney
Jerry M. O'Sullivan
William Spillane
John Spillane
Denis Buckley
Pat Cronin
Tim O'Sullivan
Jack Murphy
Pato Horgan
Jeremiah Mangan
George McGee
Johnny Clifford
Denis O'Shea
Danis O'Sullivan
Teddy Lee
Con Ahern
John Mangan
Dan Mangan
Pat O'Connor
Willie McCarthy
John McCarthy
Dick Fitzgerald
Tim Lyne
Denis Lyne
Peter Gardiner
Ned Hegarty

There may have been a few others; there were about 40 altogether

At the time the Volunteers were started in Killarney no I.R.B. organisation existed in the district. Early in 1914, however, a small circle was organised, with the following members:-

Michael Spillane
Michael J. O'Sullivan
Pat O'Shea
Michael F. (Honey) O'Donoghue
Mossy O'Connor

Michael Spillane was centre. This circle did not make any active effort to control the Volunteer organisation, and had no instructions to do so. Our policy was to let the Volunteer organisation develop naturally, knowing that it included men of different political opinions.

No Chairman or Committee was appointed at the first meeting. At a meeting held soon afterwards, however, the following Officers and Committee were appointed:-

Michael Spillane: Chairman
William D.F. O'Sullivan: Treasurer
James Counihan: Secretary

Committee: Messrs. Michael J. O'Sullivan, An Seabhaic, Tadg Horgan, Sean O'Casey. This Committee had power of co-optation, but did not use it. No limit was put on their term of office, and, in fact, it continued until the middle of 1915, when the surrounding districts were organised and the area became a Battalion. From that point onwards the military organisation replaced the Committee and representatives of the Companies from the Battalion area attended meetings in Killarney. Meetings of the Committee were held as and when necessary, usually once a week or once every two weeks, as occasion arose.

During the Winter months after the start drills were held on two nights a week, and on another night a class for the instruction of Officers was held. Instruction was given by Sergeant John McGovern, an ex-serviceman who had been appointed drill instructor. In the Spring of 1914 the Officers visited the surrounding district Ballyhar, Fossa, Beaufort, Listry, Glenflesk, Firies, Muckross, Barraduff and Rathmore. Companies were formed in all these districts except Barraduff. The organisation grew apace and many new members joined up in Killarney following public parades by the original body. There was no sudden large influx of men into the Volunteers, but a steady increase in strength up to September, 1914.

In June, 1914, Killarney Company was about 120 strong, in August it was unchanged, at the end of 1914 strength had fallen to about 60, by the end of 1915 it was about 120, and at Easter, 1916, about 70.

The following Officers were elected soon after the formation of the Company:-

Michael Spillane: Captain.
Michael J. O'Sullivan: 1st Lieutenant.
Richard (Dick) Fitzgerald: 2nd Lieutenant.
Michael F. (Honey) O'Donoghue: Adjutant.

Section Commanders: Johnnie Clifford, Maurice Horgan,
Willie McCarthy, Sean O'Casey.

They continued in office until re-elected in May, 1915. The only change up to Easter, 1916, was that Pat O'Shea replaced O'Donoghue as Adjutant. Michael Spillane and Michael J. O'Sullivan acted as Commandant and Vice Commandant respectively of the Killarney Battalion after its formation in May, 1915, and up to Easter, 1916, as well as retaining their commands in Killarney Company.

In June, 1914, the Company had no arms except four miniature rifles (.22) for target practice. In August, 1914, on the occasion of the Oireachtas held at the Mansion, the Killarney Company held its first parade armed with rifles and bayonets. Those rifles and bayonets were got on loan from the Kalem Film Company who were shooting films in the neighbourhood at the time.

At Easter, 1916, the arms of the Company consisted of:-

- 52 Martini Enfield Single Shot rifles
- 3 Magazine Rifles
- 10 Shot Guns
- 15 Revolvers
- 1700 Rounds of .303 ammunition
- 500 Rounds of revolver ammunition
- 300 Ball cartridges
- 4 Miniature Rifles.

All the above arms had been purchased from the O'Rahilly, 40, Herbert Park, Dublin, in 1915, for £200. Michael Spillane, Michael J. O'Sullivan, An Seabhac and William F. O'Sullivan went to Dublin to effect the purchase of the armament. Arthur Hill went also to pass judgment on the purchases. On that occasion the O'Rahilly told the deputation there was no area he was more pleased with than East Kerry, because the area did not cost Headquarters a penny to organise or drill.

Early in September, 1914, some of the Killarney Volunteers asked that an election of Officers be held as the existing ones were elected when the number of Volunteers were small compared with the present figure. A group met the night before the election was to take place and selected themselves for the various positions. Eugene O'Sullivan, ex-M.P. for East Kerry, who was unseated on petition for intimidation, etc., some time before, visited all the self-selected Officers during the day that the election was to take place and marched them to the Volunteer Hall at High Street at the head of from 30 to 40 men, and more or less took the hall by storm. The Secretary, Jim Counihan (deceased) approached Michael Spillane (the existing Captain) to take the chair and Michael Spillane said, "I heard the Horgans and Company met the night before and appointed themselves last night as Officers". Counihan said, "Eugene O'Sullivan called on them to-day and they are all after withdrawing in his favour". Spillane said, "I do not want the job, but if they are in dread of Eugene O'Sullivan, I am not. If the majority of the men want me, I will act".

Michael Spillane was then proposed and seconded and he then took the chair. Eugene O'Sullivan protested and claimed it as his right, as Chairman of the Urban Council, to be appointed Captain of the Volunteers. Spillane replied, "I do not want the job but if the men want me, I will act". O'Sullivan replied, "I know that, and you would be surprised how much I know". Spillane said, pointing to a man in front, "That man told you". The man pointed out by Spillane admitted giving all information in connection with the Volunteers to Mr. O'Sullivan. Spillane replied, "You came here and want to associate with the men whose

secrets you are after betraying". Spillane then asked all who wanted him as Captain to go to the right of the hall. There were very few left for O'Sullivan and he left the hall, after pouring personal abuse at An Seabhac, with a good deal less followers than came with him. All the old existing officers were selected.

There were four live circles of the Irish Republican Brotherhood in the Killarney Company, and their influence in the Gaelic League and other Committees was most essential. As a result, we were able to take advantage of the Oireachtas in August, 1914, and have the Officers and men of the Volunteers in charge of the greatest week of music, song, and Volunteer parades even seen in Kerry. On the opening day - Sunday - thousands of people came from Dublin, Cork, Limerick, Waterford, Athlone, etc., About 16 bands, brass, fife and drum, and pipers, supplied music for thousands of Volunteers marching through the decorated streets of Killarney to the Western Demesne. On Wednesday, the 3rd day, the growing strength and ardour of the Volunteer forces in Kerry was apparent. Competitions in all forms of signalling and drill were held throughout the day in the demesne. Companies from Limerick, Cork, and all over Kerry competed. The thousands that lined the streets simply went mad when the Killarney Company marched out of An Dún, High Street, Killarney, fully armed with rifles, bayonets and ammunition led by Captain Michael Spillane, the son of an old Fenian. The twelve R.I.C. men at the Market Cross got dumbfounded and could not move. The Officers and men of the Volunteers were entitled to a good deal of credit for the outstanding success of the Oireachtas.

Some of the Volunteers wanted a split when they heard of other Companies. Captain M. Spillane always kept in mind that the Treasurer and Secretary were Redmondites and held over £200, which sum he did not want to lose. It was Spillane who asked that William D.F. O'Sullivan (the Treasurer) be appointed on the deputation to go to Dublin for the purchase of arms. The bulk of the Volunteers thought that everything was spoiled when William O'Sullivan was put on the party for the purchase of the arms, but Spillane knew best and managed to give "the slip" in Dublin to O'Sullivan and Arthur Hill while he and An Seabhac went to The O'Rahilly at 40, Herbert Park, Dublin, and arranged for the purchase of the guns and to have them removed to Whelans on the Quay on Monday morning where they were to take O'Sullivan and Hill and get them to pay for the guns under the impression that they were being purchased from Whelans. O'Sullivan paid over the £200 for the arms, as arranged, and got a receipt for same payment. Eventually the guns were delivered to Killarney to Mr. William O'Sullivan, consigned as Hardware, and afterwards Mr. O'Sullivan, who, although a Redmondite, was one of the staunchest supporters of the Volunteers and fought that we should have the guns, which we kept.

On Whit Sunday, 1915, Professor Eoin MacNeill presented the Colours to the Kerry Brigade, which were blessed by the Revd. Father Ferris. There was hardly a townland in Kerry that was not represented in the Volunteers that took part in the March Past in the old Sportsfield on the banks of the River Flesk, Killarney, under the command of Austin Stack and Company Captains. That day finished the recruiting campaign in Killarney for the British Army and raised the prestige of the Officers and men of the Killarney Company who carried out all the arrangements to make the day such a success.

Later the same year Tom O'Donnell, M.P., was the principal speaker at a recruiting meeting for the British Army in College Square, Killarney, surrounded by soldiers and R.I.C. The Volunteer Pipers' Band of Killarney, followed by Commandant Michael Spillane and Vice Commandant Michael J. O'Sullivan leading a fully armed Company, marched up and down through the recruiting meeting, and all present, except Military and Police, followed the Volunteers, and this finished all active recruiting in this area. They were never after able to get anyone to preside at their meetings, and the late Sir Morgan O'Connell warned the Lord Lieutenant that recruiting was finished by the liberty given to avowed pro-German and anti-recruiting Sinn Fein Volunteers of Killarney.

There were three ex-servicemen in the Company in the early stages, viz., Arthur Hill, Charlie Dyché and John McGovern. None of them was serving in the Company at Easter, 1916.

There was no actual split in the Killarney Company. There was a period of inactivity following the general Split in the organisation. We did not force the issue, as the Treasurer was a supporter of Redmond's and held the £200 which we wanted to use for the purchase of arms. The result of our waiting policy was that the fund was saved and the arms purchased for the Irish Volunteers. There was some reduction in strength when we actively resumed, but it was not serious.

All the big parades of the Kerry Volunteers were held in Killarney, but the Company took part in a parade at Caherciveen.

The active Companies in the Killarney Battalion area at Easter, 1916, were:-

Killarney,	Captain	Michael Spillane.
Rathmore,	"	Daniel Dennehy.
Listry,	"	Daniel J. Allman.
Ballyhar,	"	Timothy O'Leary.

In the Summer of 1915, Commandant Michael Spillane got orders from Austin Stack to inspect and report on the possibility of landing arms at Kenmare. He carried out the inspection with Vice Commandant Michael J. O'Sullivan and Adjutant Pat O'Shea and reported to Stack.

About the end of 1915 Alfred Cotton told Michael Spillane that the Rising would take place on St. Patrick's Day or at Easter, 1916.

On Holy Thursday, 20th April, 1916, a despatch carrier named Carroll, now dead, a native of North Kerry, arrived in Killarney from Dublin and gave Michael Spillane despatches to be delivered to His Lordship, Most Rev. Dr. Mangan, Bishop of Kerry. Carroll also had despatches for Austin Stack, Tralee. Carroll stated that they were very short of reliable men at headquarters to bring messages to the provinces, and that the train had been searched three times for him. Michael Spillane delivered the messages to the Bishop, but had no knowledge, then or afterwards, of their contents.

Austin Stack had sent a message to Killarney that day for someone to come to Tralee to see him. Michael J.

O'Sullivan went and took Carroll with him to Stack, to whom Carroll delivered his despatches. After Carroll left, O'Sullivan had a conference with Stack and Paddy Cahill. Stack then told O'Sullivan that a boat with arms was due to arrive in Fenit on Sunday morning and that a pilot had been arranged for at Leary's Island. He said the Rising was timed for Easter Sunday night. There was a long discussion on the questions of having a train in Fenit at the right time, the number of wagons that would be needed, the time it would take to unload the boat, the number of men necessary for the unloading, and similar matters. O'Sullivan understood that the arms were for distribution in Kerry, Cork, Limerick, Clare and Galway, and that the Kerry Brigade would be responsible for the safe delivery of the main portion of the cargo at Newcastlewest by rail, afterwards distributing portion of the cargo at Cork and Kerry. All Officers were to avoid arrest. The Killarney Battalion would not be engaged in the distribution of the arms. The orders for the Battalion were to cut the cable wires which ran from Valentia through Killarney at midnight on Easter Sunday night, then join forces with Castleisland, move towards Newcastle West and await further orders.

O'Sullivan asked Stack a number of questions about the arms and the boat. In reply Stack said he thought there would be a number of machine guns, but did not know if there would be men to man them. He said everything would be alright about the boat and that the train was to be commandeered. O'Sullivan finally asked if the orders were definite and specific and Stack said, "You come over again on Sunday morning". The conference lasted about two hours.

O'Sullivan arrived back in Killarney about 9.30 p.m. on the same night and went direct to the Volunteer Hall in High Street where Spillane was drilling the Killarney Company. He told Spillane the substance of his discussion with Stack and Cahill, and Spillane issued orders that no men were to leave town for the week-end.

After the parade was over An Seabhaic arrived. Spillane and O'Sullivan discussed the matter with him. Stack had given orders that everything was to be kept secret, but Spillane, O'Sullivan and An Seabhaic had always shared confidences. An Seabhaic was thinking of going to Dublin next day, and Spillane told him what Carroll had said about the shortage of reliable messengers in Dublin. An Seabhaic went to Dublin on Good Friday, passed through Killarney on his way to Tralee on Easter Saturday and returned to Killarney on Easter Sunday morning.

No orders were received on Friday or Saturday. Preparations were made for the mobilisation on Easter Sunday night. Volunteers were ordered to stand by and not leave the town, to see that their arms were in perfect order, and to be ready to parade at short notice with 24 hours rations. It was decided that the Listry Company would cut the cables on the Killorglin-Killarney Road, and that the Killarney Company would break up the instruments in the Killarney Post Office. Stack had given no instructions as to what action was to be taken against the police.

The following is a list of the men who were standing by for mobilisation on Sunday:-

Michael Spillane
Michael J. O'Sullivan
An Seabhac
Dick Fitzgerald
Pat O'Shea
Seán O'Casey
John Randles
Moss O'Connor
Pat O'Connor
Jim (Jumbo) O'Connor
Jeremiah Crowley
Johnny Clifford
Denis O'Shea
Tim McGillicuddy
William McCarthy
Jack Murphy
Maurice Horgan
Pato Horgan
Thade Sugrue
Jeremiah Coffey
John Spillane
Con Ahern
Eugene McCarthy
Con Murphy
Bill O'Leary
Jack Hartnett
Tadg Kerrisk
Jeremiah M. O'Sullivan
Diarmuid Brosnan
Eddie Doyle
George McGee
"Congo" O'Leary
Frank Hugh O'Donnell
John Mangan
Willie Horgan
Denis O'Sullivan
Dinnie O'Sullivan
John Murphy
Jim Galvin
Joe Willis
Daniel O'Connor
Matt Courtney
Tom Hill
Billy O'Brien
Christy Courtney
Denis Lyne
Tim Lyne
Tim O'Sullivan
Roger McCarthy
Michael Tagney
Bill Ahern
John McCarthy
Denis Buckley

When An Seabhac arrived back in Killarney from Tralee on Easter Sunday morning he went to the Volunteer Hall, met Michael Spillane and informed him that he had been speaking to Monteith in Tralee, and that he had delivered to Monteith orders from G.H.Q. Monteith said to An Seabhac that he could not understand why headquarters put him in Kerry where he did not know an inch of the ground or a single man. The arms and

ammunition were at the bottom of the ocean, and what ammunition was on hands would hardly suffice to give a round per head.

Also on Easter Sunday morning, as previously arranged with Austin Stack, Michael J. O'Sullivan cycled to Tralee. His instructions from Michael Spillane were to remain in Tralee until 5 p.m. and then return to Killarney with final orders. In Tralee Michael J. O'Sullivan was asked by Paddy Cahill if he would be willing to take Monteith with him to Killarney, as it was a more mountainous district where he could be more easily hidden. O'Sullivan agreed, but later in the day this was changed and it was decided that Monteith would march out to Ballymacelligott in the midst of the Ballymacelligott Company when the men were returning to their own area.

About 3.30 p.m. on Easter Sunday Pierce McCann, Cashel, arrived in Killarney in his own car and gave McNeill's cancellation order to Michael Spillane verbally. McCann and Spillane were old friends; both had been at the Officers' Training Camp in Athlone in the previous September. Richard Fitzgerald, Lieutenant in Killarney Company, was at that Camp also. On enquiry by Spillane as to how he had received the cancellation order, McCann said that he had received it from The O'Rahilly who was on his way to Limerick to deliver a similar order there. McCann asked Spillane to send the order on to Tralee, and to make sure it arrived there before 5 p.m. Spillane sent James Galvin, a member of the Killarney Company and a native of Tralee, to Tralee with the order.

Michael Spillane then issued the cancellation order to the Companies under his command in the Killarney Battalion area, viz. Rathmore, Ballyhar, Listry and Killarney. This stopped all mobilisation in the area on Easter Sunday.

Michael J. O'Sullivan returned to Killarney from Tralee about 6.30 p.m. on Easter Sunday. He informed Michael Spillane of the different happenings in Tralee and told him that the cancellation order had been received while he was there. Spillane told O'Sullivan of McCann's visit during his absence, how McCann had got stranded without petrol, and that five gallons were supplied to him without a permit by John Thompson, Garage Owner, Killarney.

An Seabhac had remained in Killarney all day on Sunday, and on Monday he went to Caherciveen. Pat O'Shea and Jerry Sullivan went to Cork on Monday, but came back that night without any additional information.

On Easter Tuesday evening, about 7.30 p.m., Liam Scully, a native of Glenbeigh; arrived from Brigade Headquarters, Tralee, with orders to go out at midnight. Michael Spillane was preparing despatches in accordance with this order to send to Rathmore, Listry and Ballyhar when Scully returned and said not to send them out as further orders were coming. We do not know the explanation of this, but doubt if Scully could have got in touch with Tralee in the short time that elapsed between his first and second visit. Kathleen O'Sullivan had arrived in Killarney from Caherciveen looking for information or instructions Michael Spillane had given her, for Diarmuid O'Connell & An Seabhac Caherciveen, the order given by Scully, and she was about to leave when Scully returned and cancelled it.

About an hour later Con Brosnan, a native of Tralee, brought a despatch from there. It was, "Did Cork act, or will Cork act?" Paddy Cahill was anxious to get Cork, Kerry and Limerick out together. That despatch was carried by Jerry Coffey, Killarney, to Dan Dennehy, Captain of the Rathmore Company. Coffey was ordered not to leave Rathmore until the message was sent to Millstreet. Coffey reported back, saying that John Linehan, Rathmore, had carried the despatch and delivered it to Carmody and Twomey, Millstreet.

On Wednesday morning a despatch rider named Jack O'Leary from Tralee arrived to Michael Spillane enquiring of the whereabouts of Con Brosnan, and if Michael Spillane had got the despatch entrusted to Brosnan on the previous day. Spillane told O'Leary that he had ordered Brosnan to go to bed at Spicer's, Killarney, as he was completely worn out and was suffering from a disability to his eye. He informed O'Leary that Brosnan had delivered the despatch, that it had been sent on to Millstreet, but that no answer had been received from Cork. No reply was received from Cork to that despatch as far as we know.

Considerable tension had developed in Kerry from Good Friday onwards. In Killarney all cars were commandeered by the police and no petrol could be sold without a permit from them. This was one result of Casement's landing at Banna, the disaster at Ballykissane Pier, Killorglin, where the car ran into the Laune, and the breaking down of the second car on that mission two miles outside Killarney, near Laccabane. All this caused a state of unrest and made the police very active and alert. Michael Spillane spoke to Jimmie French on the street and asked him why his car had been commandeered. A policeman named O'Keefe called French and asked him what Spillane was saying to him.

We had orders to evade arrest. This, with the unrest and uncertainty which prevailed, placed Killarney in what may be termed a state of seige and gave an air of war to the place. All were keyed up, and the police being on the qui vive created in Killarney a state that did not exist in hardly any other part of the country. The Officers were doing their best to keep everything up to pitch and have their men ready to go out, but all the orders, one cancelling another, caused undue worry and uncertainty. The shooting of two policemen by Jimmie Riordan at Firies on Easter Saturday added to the tension and to the alertness of the police. Every Volunteer was a marked man. To carry out orders, which were carried out, was extremely difficult, but, in spite of this, everything was ready and a state of preparedness existed to the last detail. All orders were carried out conscientiously.

On the 4th May, 1916, the Very Revd. P.J. Fitzgerald, Adm., V.F., called on Commandant M. Spillane and asked him to get his men to take their guns to the Barracks (New Hotel at the Railway) as the Connaught Rangers had arrived from Dublin "mad for fight". Spillane asked Fr. Fitzgerald what were his terms and he replied that he had none. Spillane refused to ask the men to take their guns to the Barracks and told Fr. Fitzgerald that the men of Kerry could fight as well as the men of Dublin. If he was prepared that the Military would allow the men to hand in their arms at the Presbytery at a convenient time that night, Michael Spillane would ask the men to do so. Fr. Fitzgerald went away and returned later and they (the Military) agreed to the terms. Late that night about 20

worthless guns and revolvers were deposited at the Presbytery, the Volunteers retaining the best of the arms and the bulk of the ammunition which was placed in hiding. Eventually those guns and ammunition were used in 1920-1921 by the Active Service Unit. The Military entered the Presbytery by the demesne and took possession of the guns and ammunition handed over and left again by the same way, so that very few people in town were aware of what took place.

On May 7th or 8th, 1916, Commandant M. Spillane, Vice Commandant Michael J. O'Sullivan, Adjutant Pat O'Shea, Lieutenant Dick Fitzgerald and Willie Horgan were arrested by the R.I.C., under Sergeant Deasy, and Military, under Captain Robinson of the Connaught Rangers. They were taken to the R.I.C. Barracks and removed the following morning to the Military Barracks at the Railway New Hotel. The morning after all were removed to the Victoria Barracks Military Prison, Cork. Tom Kent was shot a couple of hours before the Killarney prisoners arrived. His brother David was brought in wounded a few days after. Tomás MacCurtain and a great deal of men from West Cork were there. All were in solitary confinement for the first week. For the next week an hour's exercise was given. Then 46 prisoners were taken to the Richmond Barracks, Dublin, in which were included the Killarney men, and put into No. 3 and 4 rooms of M. Block - 24 men in each room. The men decided to appoint a leader who would speak and act on their behalf. Tomás MacCurtain was chosen as leader for No. 3 and Michael Spillane, Killarney, was chosen as leader for No. 4 room. After ten or twelve days Spillane was changed to No. 1 room and again appointed leader of that room. This room had about twenty young fellows from Galway, aged from about 16 to 18 years, and also there were Larry Redmond of Ringsend, Dublin, John J. Dunne, Dublin, and young O'Leary of Wexford. An Officer of the Sherwood Foresters called to all rooms asking if there were any complaints. Spillane made several complaints and the Officer said, "I never called here but you had complaints". Spillane replied, "Is not that what you came for, it is terrible if a man with diarrhoea is not allowed to go to the lavatory. One of the men asked several times last night and was refused. In the end he soiled his blanket and used the mug he had for tea". Spillane and the Officer parted in bad friends. About an hour after an Officer, who, I learned, was a Dublin Doctor, called. Spillane asked him for a bucket for sanitary purposes and a towel and a piece of soap and brush to clean the room where 24 men had to spend all day and night. He said, "What can I do - remember you are prisoners". Spillane replied, "Would you forget you were a prisoner if you had to use the mug you drink out of and soil the blanket you sleep on. Come in and see the blanket this young fellow has to sleep on and the mug he is supposed to drink out of and just tell the people how we are treated and we will not complain". A couple of hours later a Sergeant called and asked Spillane to "fall in" four men who would march to the stores under an armed escort. We got all we demanded, including shirts. On the way back to No. 1 room Spillane said to the Sergeant there was not much good in putting on a clean shirt on a body covered with vermin. He agreed and said he would do his best and called later and told Spillane to fall in 12 men for a bath. After taking the baths Spillane ordered the men to wash their dirty shirts in the baths, which contained a

good deal of Jeyes Fluid. A couple of days later Spillane was changed to L. Block and was again chosen as leader of No. 3 room. At this time nearly all the rooms were becoming vacant as the prisoners were being deported, and those remaining were for Courtmartial. Some of those were: Austin Stack, Con Collins, Seán MacEntee, Michael J. O'Connor. A few days after a nice, friendly Officer of the Sherwood Forresters asked Michael Spillane if there was anyone who would give him a character. Spillane said that he thought William Martin, J.P., of Killarney, who differed from him in religion and politics, a truthful and honest man, and that he (Michael Spillane) would abide by what he said, would supply the reference. Sergeant French and others of the P.I.C. from Killarney arrived to give evidence against Spillane. A couple of days after, the few that were left were having their 20 minutes exercise when an Officer of the Sherwood Foresters told Spillane "fall out". The Officer produced a letter and said to Spillane, "You ought to be proud", and gave him Mr. Martin's character to read. This is what was said in Mr. Martin's letter: "If I had been asked to pick out the most exemplary man in Killarney, I would pick out Mr. Michael Spillane. Yours, Wm. Martin J.P."

The following evening a party for deportation were picked and marched to the North Wall under an escort of the Dublin Fusiliers, and thousands lined the streets and gave the prisoners a great send off. The next morning the prisoners found themselves in Knutsford Prison and after about three weeks they were transferred to Frongoch.

SIGNED Michael Spillane P. C.
Michael J. Sullivan
 DATE: 26th 6th '48

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
 BUREAU STAIRS MILITARY 1913-21
 No. W.S. 132

WITNESS: Patrick Carroll