

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BURO STAIRÉ MILÉATA 1913-21
No. W.S. 161

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 161.....

Witness

Donal O'Hannigan

Identity

Comdt. I.V. 1917-1921. Special emissary
to G.H.Q. I.R.A.

Subject

- (a) I.R.B. 1909
- (b) I.V. from 1913.
- (c) Gun-running Howth and Kilcool
- (d) The Rising 1916. Dundalk area.

Conditions, if any, stipulated by Witness

Nil

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Form BSM 2

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1013-21

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When I was about 18 years old I remember Sean McDermott staying in our house. He came on the invitation of my brother, Jim, who at that time held strong national views. On the Sunday following his coming he addressed a large demonstration at Kilclooney Wood. This would be the 40th anniversary of the death of Peter O'Neill Crowley. I learned later that Sean was on a two-fold mission; he was organising the I.R.B. in the south of Ireland. Early in 1909 I came to Dublin where I met McDermott and he introduced me to all the notable persons in Irish Ireland circles at that time. My brother, Donnchadh, was managing a market gardening business for the Count and Countess Markievicz at Belcamp near Raheny, Co. Dublin. I worked and lived there for some months. The Fianna Boy Scouts used to camp there during weekends.

The principal activities at this time ^{were to} ~~was~~ the posting up of anti-enlisting posters and destroying all British recruiting posters which were usually exhibited outside the R.I.C. Barracks. On many occasions all the members of the R.I.C. of Santry and Raheny Stations spent several hours nightly trying to catch us in the act of posting up the leaflets, leaving only the Orderly in the Barracks. They would return to find the windows and doors of the barracks plastered with our literature. I was initiated into the I.R.B. and was also a member of the Fianna and the McHale Branch of the Gaelic League. At the instance of Tom Clarke and Sean McDermott I took up employment as Land Steward in the estate of the O'Moore's near Maryboro. Having organised a circle of the I.R.B. there I returned to Dublin and secured employment in Guinness's Brewery. I rejoined the "Teeling" circle of the I.R.B. at 41 Parnell Sq. Michael Crowley was the Centre. In 1911 the Mangan Centre was formed and I transferred to it. Centre of this Branch was George Ervine. Other members included Frank Fahy (treasurer) and Sean T. O'Kelly (Secretary). I recruited a number

of men from the Brewery into the I.R.B. We paid a subscription of 1/- per month towards expenses, rentals etc. About 1912 we started purchasing arms, generally revolvers.

Liam Mellows, Con Colbert, Paddy Ryan, Paddy and Garry Holohan, Sean Heuston and others used to meet at 41 Parnell Sq. and undergo drill and instruction in arms. We got some revolvers through Michael O'Hanrahan in 1912. They were .38. Early in 1912 I got a commission from McDermott and Tom Clarke. During weekends I would proceed to the country and in some new area start a circle of the I.R.B. I usually recruited two or three members initially. McDermott or Mellows or some other members would follow me up and later and increase the membership. In Naas we had about seven members. In Maryboro, Kells, Mitchelstown, Ballylanders, Galbally and other areas, centres were formed in this way. I also visited Cork on I.R.B. business.

During 1910-1911, at the instance of the executive of the I.R.B. the Wolfe Tone Clubs were organised in different parts of the city. Meetings were held weekly. Someone would read a paper or deliver a lecture, usually on military tactics. A discussion would follow. Members possessing a knowledge of Irish were encouraged to use it. The objects for which the Clubs were formed - to enlist the younger people and prepare them for the more advanced movements - were not fulfilled, as at that time one seemed to meet the same people at every Gaelic function. I and a few others founded the Bulfin Gaelic Football Club. Fourteen members of that club took part in the Rebellion, three being killed. During training in football an Irish spirit was infused into the men and all members joined C/Coy. 4th Battn. at the inception of the Volunteers.

On the formation of the Volunteers all members of the I.R.B. + were instructed to join and thereby improve their military knowledge. We were also instructed to get control of the volunteers as far as possible. I joined at the Rotunda on the first night. I was posted to C/Coy. 4th Battn. I transferred to B/Coy. 4th Battn. after

about three weeks, this being the weaker Company. At first we used to drill in Camden Row and later we drilled at Larkfield, Kimmage. Eamon Ceannt was O/C. of the Battn. Cathal Brugha was Vice-Comdt. and Seamus Murphy was Adjutant. George Ervine was Capt. of B/Coy. T. McCarthy, C/Coy.; Ted Kelly, D/Coy. and William Byrne Capt. of A/Coy. Jas. Kenny was Battalion Quartermaster. William Cosgrave was 1st Lieut. B/Coy. Garry Byrne was 1st Lieut. of C/Coy.

We took no oath on joining the Volunteers. We completed a registration form and were issued with membership cards. A subscription of about 3d per week was paid by each Volunteer to a fund for the purchase of arms, equipment and so forth. This fund was also augmented from the proceeds of dances and concerts and such things which were organised for that purpose. I had a Service Lee Enfield rifle and a .45 Colt revolver which I got from O'Hanrahan. We did our drills with dummy rifles. We got together a number of shotguns which were collected from various sources. Our instructors were British Army reservists, the best being a Sgt. Whelan and Sergt. Major Merry. Both of these men were called up when the Great War started. I was one of a number selected for special instruction. This was an officers' class. We did nearly every night on Volunteer work. We were able to pick up an occasional rifle, mainly from the soldiers coming home on leave who brought their rifles with them. B/Coy. had only about 24 or 25 men. The Battalion was about 800 strong approximately.

On the Sunday of the Howth Gun-running we paraded at Kimmage and marched to Croydon Park where we were joined by the other Bns. of the Dublin Brigade in the city. From there we marched to Howth being joined en route at Raheny by the 5th Bn. (Fingal). I knew we were going gun running that day as Clarke had told me beforehand. On arrival at Howth my section was detailed to hold the entrance to the pier and prevent military, police or coastguards from getting on to the pier or quay. We were subsequently relieved by the 5th Bn. and proceeded down the pier. We filed past the boat which was tied up to the pier and as each man passed he was handed

a rifle, but no ammunition. The rifles were what afterwards came to be known as "Howth Mausers".

Some police, coastguards and navy men tried to get on to the pier but were not allowed. On the completion of the distribution of the arms, the ammunition was loaded on to the scout carts of the Fianna and the Brigade reformed and marched back towards the city. On our way we met three tram loads of police going towards Howth. As we were the 4th Bn. we were in the rear of the parade.

On reaching a point on the city side of Raheny and near Donnycarney the Brigade halted. We could not see what was the matter, or reason for the halt. Information soon spread amongst the ranks that the British military were holding or blocking the road with fixed bayonets. Some of us moved up to the front of the parade and found a fight on. The soldiers were trying to use their bayonets and the volunteers were using the butts of their rifles. The soldiers withdrew about 15 yards and we reformed ranks. De Valera, Ceannt, Larry Kettle and other high volunteer officers approached the military officers. De Valera returned and told us that the Military were going to open fire to secure our rifles. He said to keep the front ranks intact and to get away the rear formations with their rifles. The rear of the Brigade broke up and got away across country with their rifles. We had two ranks across the road facing the military and police. After some time De Valera gave us an order to disperse and we got away into the fields leaving nothing on the road in front of the military, much to their surprise. We picked up a number of rifles which had been discarded. On De Valera's suggestion I took all the men of my Company and C/Coy. and headed in the direction of Finglas across country. Near Finglas I decided to go into the city and get some transport. By this time there were stories reaching us from civilian sources that there was shooting in the city and that large numbers had been killed. I got into the city and I had to go home and collect some food. I got back to Finglas on my bicycle and tied four rifles on to it with ropes and brought them to 21 Upper Dorset St. where my

uncle lived. I left them there and returned to Finglas and tied on four more and brought them in also. On the way I got a fall off my cycle which was damaged and was now unserviceable. I met two friends and succeeded in getting the rifles into a house in Whitworth Road, Drumcondra. I returned again to Finglas by foot with these two friends and with the men who were still there we succeeded in bringing the rest of the rifles in and leaving them in the house of Seamus Hughes in Whitworth Rd. The next two days we spent in searching around Donnycarney and succeeded in collecting a large number of rifles which had been deposited in various places including six in a haystack.

The next important incident was the Kilcool gunrunning. We went there three times previous to getting the guns. This was, I think, a bluff to put the police off the scent. The party consisted of picked volunteers from the Dublin Brigade. On the night the guns came in we left Dublin at 8 p.m. on cycles and cars. I was posted at a cross roads about a mile away from where the guns came in to prevent anyone getting access to the area except volunteers. The rifles were taken by trucks to Dublin. There was also a good amount of ammunition landed, but I am not in a position to say how much. No incident occurred during this operation and we all got back to the city safely.

The following week McDermott instructed me to make an inspection of the Volunteers in the area of Kildare, Leix, Tipperary and Cork. I was to cover the principal centres and report back to him. I got my annual holidays and started on a bicycle. I found all centres very active and keen, but all were short of arms. Drill and instruction on military subjects were being carried out consistently. On my return I made my report to the Volunteer Hqrs. at Dawson St.

At the big Volunteer parade in Limerick I was in charge of the Galtee Battn. The Battn. was about 200 strong that day. They had about 50 or 60 Lee Enfield Rifles and bandoliers and haversacks etc.

We marched from Mitchelstown to Knocklong and from there we went by train to Limerick. When we got to Irishtown in Limerick we got a very hostile reception and were pelted with everything that the crowd got hold of, particularly cabbage stalks. The parade included the Dublin and Cork Brigades and units from Limerick and surrounding centres. It was held mainly for recruiting purposes. The R.I.C. were there in strength, but gave us no assistance; in fact they were sympathetic to the mob. We got back to Mitchelstown about 12 p.m. that night. I visited the Volunteers in Fermoy the following day and from there I went to Cork and returned to Dublin.

At the time of the split in the Volunteers about 75% of our Battn. (4th) remained loyal to the Irish Volunteers. A muster parade of the Battn. was held and a communication from Volunteer headquarters was read out after which all who were prepared to stand by the Irish Volunteers were asked to take a pace forward. After this all the loyal Volunteers formed up and marched to Pearse St. where the Executive were meeting that night. We lost a lot of our arms and equipment through the split as they were in possession of the Volunteers who went to the Redmond side.

Shortly after this the Hibernian Rifles were formed. They were mostly composed of men who had gone to the Redmond side but were now dissatisfied with his policy, but at the same time were too dignified to return to the Irish Volunteers. We encouraged them and assisted them to train. They had a good amount of arms. There was only one Company of the Rifles in Dublin and the principal men came from the Inchicore district. They paraded at 41 Parnell Sq. A good number of the men of this unit turned out for the Rising. I cannot say how many as I was not in the city at that time.

The Bulfín Football Club of which I was a member and founder did their practices and training in the Park on Sunday mornings. We usually entered the Park by the Islandbridge Gate and when inside the lads were wont to start kicking the ball around to one another on their way up to the pitch. One Sunday morning one of the lads

kicked the ball rather hard in front and it went over the barbed wire into the Magazine Fort enclosure. He went after the ball and the sentry on duty allowed him to go in and retrieve it. This struck me immediately as a possible way for getting into the Magazine and I reported the matter to Tom Clarke. He thought it was very important and he sent for Sean McDermott and I reported the matter also to him and he took notes on it. On subsequent occasions we deliberately kicked the ball into the Magazine again to test the reactions of the sentries and in all cases the sentry left his "beat" and went after the ball for us. This was on the other side of the Magazine where there were no entrances. Some of the members of the Club were in the I.R.B. and from this we concluded that it would be easy to deal with the sentries on the Magazine in case of an attack on it. It was from this incident that the subsequent plans for capturing the Fort were drawn up and the use of the football succeeded.

During the weekends of the year 1915 I travelled a large part of the country and started I.R.B. circles in a large number of areas. These were usually very small for a start, consisting of one or two men and usually included the schoolteacher. I was followed up by members of the Executive of the I.R.B. who were able to extend the membership of the centres. During this year I observed that there was a laxity in the follow-up procedure by other members and I had occasion to complain to the executive of the I.R.B. about it. A meeting was called and the matter was discussed and rectified. It was very significant that the members who, I had reason to complain about, were the men who failed to turn out afterwards during the Rising.

During this year (1915) training of the Volunteers in all branches of military subjects was of an intensified nature and occupied nearly all our spare time, so that I had no time to devote to football and athletics in which I was very interested. Arms were coming in pretty well now into the country. We got a consignment of automatic pistols. I was sent for by G.H.Q. and put in

charge of the distribution of arms for the country districts. Michael O'Hanrahan was on the same duty for the city area. All demands for arms from the country areas were submitted to me, and I decided where they would be sent, which was, where I considered the best men to use them were. This was all small arms. All arms were paid for before being dispatched to the areas. This procedure lasted until the approach of the Rising.

Prior to St. Patrick's Day 1916 I carried out a further inspection of the centres in the south of Ireland. I was back in Dublin for the big parade on St. Patrick's Day when the Dublin Brigade paraded in strength through the city carrying arms. Training and activities were more intensified than ever now and we were instructed to make ourselves thoroughly acquainted with the city streets, lanes and byeways. It was becoming apparent that things were coming to a head. Connolly gave us lectures on street fighting and on tunnelling from house to house and on the erection and manning of barricades. Connolly also lectured to the Neutrality League in a house in Parliament St., but I must say that his lectures were more of an offensive than a neutral nature. I remember after one of these lectures a debate or discussion between Connolly and Clarke. Connolly held that in the event of a rebellion and if the English used artillery against the rebels that it would be equivalent to recognition that they were fighting the armed forces of another country and that other nations would recognise us as such accordingly. On the other hand, if they only used rifles and other small arms, they could claim they were only dealing with a riot. Clarke maintained that no matter what they used - even poison gas - it would make no difference, as all the nations at that time were too interested in looking after their own affairs and skins to take any interest in us.

About three weeks before the Rebellion Tom Clarke sent for me. I met him and Sean McDermott at Clarke's shop in Parnell Street. McDermott said to me "You had better resign from your job in Guinness's. There will be something doing about Easter and we are

giving you a command and from now on it will be a whole-time job for you". I explained to him that I did not like resigning as if we were not successful, I would like to go back to my work. I further added that I could get fourteen days' annual leave. He replied to this by saying "If we succeed, you will be all right. If we don't, you will be all right also". (I should state here that I was well aware at this time through my contacts with Clarke and others that a Rising was intended). He informed me I would be taking charge of the Louth-Meath-South-Down-South Armagh and South Monaghan area. The number on the rolls of the Volunteers in that area was 1,337. This has stuck in my memory through all the years since. The biggest unit in the area was Dundalk - about 270 men, He supplied me with a list of the I.R.B. men in the area. I knew nearly all of them as I had taken them into the I.R.B.. He told me to go to Dundalk on the following Saturday or Sunday and to contact Paddy Hughes and after that I could use my own discretion as regards contacting other units. I was not given any instructions regarding the plan to be followed at this stage and was to report to Pearse at St. Enda's on the following Tuesday for military instructions. The weekend was to be devoted to making contacts &c. in the area. He informed me that the Rising would take place around Easter, but did not indicate the day or the time. I believe it was not exactly fixed at this time. McDermott told me when discussing men in the area that Paddy Hughes, although not an I.R.B. man, was absolutely dependable to the last. He also told me that Sean McEntee, who worked for the Dundalk Urban Council, was a very capable man and that, though he had applied for a commission in the British Army, some considerable time previously, he believed he was all right. He said I could use my own discretion about using him and if I found him all right I could promote him to any appointment I might require him to fill.

I travelled to Dundalk on the Saturday. There was a muster parade of the Volunteers on the Sunday. This was a fortnight prior to the Rising. I contacted P. Hughes and he introduced me to

McEntee. I also saw Tommy Harty and Tommy Hamill and Jimmy Toal. On Sunday evening the Volunteers paraded at the "Boyle O'Reilly" Hall and marched through the town with arms and equipment. This parade was to give me an idea of the standard they had reached in training. That night, under my supervision, the Volunteers had some field exercises. In this way I was able to gauge their standard.

I returned to Dublin on Sunday night. On Monday evening I reported to Tom Clarke at his shop. On this day I was able to arrange to get a fortnight's leave from my employment starting on the following day. I also got a fortnight's pay in advance, which came in very useful afterwards.

On Tuesday morning I went to see P. Pearse at St. Enda's at 11 a.m. Pearse went through the plans for the Rising. Sean Boylan from Dunboyne arrived also after some time and Pearse introduced me to him. In Boylan's presence (he was also I.R.B.) Pearse gave me instructions about my own role in the general plan. I was to mobilise the Volunteers from the area at Tara in Meath on Sunday (Easter) at 7 a.m. On completion of mobilisation I was to read the proclamation of the Irish Republic and then to march via Dunshaughli. on Blanchardstown where we would contact Sean Boylen and the Dunboyne men. We were to seize the railway at Blanchardstown and cut the line there to prevent the English Artillery coming from Athlone. The Fingal Bn. (5th Bn. Dublin Brigade) were to contact us on our left flank and the Kildare men were to come in on our right flank. The Wicklow and South Co. Dublin area was to be on the right of them again. In this way we would form a ring around the city. The ring would extend from Swords via Blanchardstown - Lucan - Tallaght and from thence across the hills to the sea. All units forming this line except the Fingal Bn. came under my orders when established. Pearse did not inform me why the Fingal Battalion would not come under my command and I did not ask him at the time.

In the meantime, on leaving Tara I was to put some officer i/c of the unit and I was to proceed to Oldcastle in Co. Meath and

and release the German prisoners who were interned there from the internment camp. Amongst the men in this camp were some who were German Army reservists. They included some Artillery men and as we were expecting artillery from Germany these men would be very useful. We also hoped to capture the British Artillery which was expected to come from Athlone and to use the German artillery men to man the captured guns. Pearse told me that there was a good supply of arms and ammunition coming from Germany including artillery pieces and that the Germans were also sending troops to our aid. He also informed me that we would receive an adequate supply of arms and ammunition when we reached Blanchardstown.

Pearse also explained to me that the object in taking and organising the line around the city had the following objects - (1) to prevent an attack on the city from the rear; (2) to prevent reinforcements reaching the city; (3) to maintain a supply of food for the Volunteers and people in the city; (4) in the case of an evacuation of the city being forced on them to hold lines of ^{both} ~~regret~~ open towards the west. He laid special stress on the latter (4) as being all important and emphasised to Boylan the importance of holding the Blanchardstown position and in getting control of it immediately and awaiting me there. He told me he would be in hourly communication with me when I got established and that all other units had instructions to contact me on their arrival in their allotted positions. I was to report to the Executive Council on the following Friday and be vested with my command and receive further instructions. He told Boylan and me that the Rising had been provisionally fixed to start at 7 p.m. on Easter Sunday night, but this would be confirmed by the Executive on Friday. I was to proceed to the Dundalk area immediately and make the necessary arrangements.

Retreat

I left Boylan with Pearse and that evening proceeded to Dundalk. From there I went to Newry and contacted Sean Southwell who was in charge there and was also Centre for the I.R.B. I next went to Dunleer where I met Nicholas Butterly who was I.R.B. Centre

there and from there to Drogheda and contacted Philip Monaghan and Larry Walsh. Walsh was an I.R.B. man. Monaghan was not, but he was the principal Officer in the area at the time. At each Centre information of my coming had been sent before me and there was a general muster of the Volunteers and I was able to see them in training. There was a Branch of the Fianna in Dundalk and Drogheda.

From Drogheda I went to Kells and that evening travelled back to Dublin. This was Friday and that night at 8 p.m. I reported to the Executive Council at Eamon Kent's house and submitted my report on the area to them. They were very pleased with the position generally as I was myself/as all Centres seemed very enthusiastic. Present at this meeting was Tom Clarke in the Chair. On his right was Patrick Pearse and on his left was Sean McDermott; also there was McDonagh, Eamon Ceannt and Joseph Plunkett and another whom I cannot remember. I think it was Connolly. Cathal Brugha was at the door.

I was then told I was in command in the area and that I was promoted to the rank of Commandant and what they expected me to do in the area. This was generally what Pearse had told me at St. Enda's. I pointed out that I thought Tara was a very inconvenient place for mobilisation, but Pearse said that for historical reasons Tara was all important and he wanted the proclamation of the Republic read there. Pearse told me that under no circumstances was I to allow myself to be arrested by the police. He also said that under no circumstances was any offensive action to be taken before 7 p.m. on Easter Sunday evening. This was all important so that no information would reach the British forces to warn them of anything brewing. I said goodbye to all present, each standing up and shaking hands with me individually, Cathal Brugha the last as I left the house. As I went down the street it occurred to me that I could not carry out the orders I received about not being arrested and at the same time not to have any shooting before 7 p.m. on Easter Sunday night. I returned again to the house and explained my position to them. They had a consultation and Clarke said I could

use my own discretion as regards shooting, but on no account to be arrested. All were in very good spirits and laughing and talking with each other. I was now satisfied and as I left again Ceannt came to the gate with me and as we shook hands he said "Don't let yourself be arrested or you will never forgive yourself".

On Saturday I again saw Ceannt and requested him to give me an officer to assist me in the Kells area. I suggested Garry Byrne as he knew that area. I saw Connolly at Liberty Hall and discussed the provision of arms at Blanchardstown when we got there. He was full of confidence and assured me that the arms would be there for me on my arrival. The Countess was there but did not enter into our discussions.

On Saturday evening (one week prior to Easter) I proceeded to Dundalk by train. When at Amiens St. I noticed that Sgt. Smith of the Detective Division was shadowing me, but I succeeded in giving him the slip. The R.I.C. were waiting at Dundalk Station when I arrived but did not interfere with me. There was a parade of the Volunteers in Dundalk that night. Phil McMahon of Ardee and Southwell from Newry were present. There were 28 Lee Enfield rifles stored in Ardee belonging to the Redmond Volunteers and 3,000 rounds of ammunition for same. I arranged with McMahon that on Friday night he would collect these rifles and ammunition and I would provide an escort to bring them to Dundalk.

When I saw Pearse at St. Enda's he instructed me to call a meeting of the Volunteers in the area for the Town Hall, Dundalk, for Good Friday night and to bill him to speak at the meeting. He said it would be most unlikely that he would be there but that in this way I would get all the Volunteer Officers to Dundalk and be able to give them the necessary instructions for mobilisation &c. He would send three dispatches to me on Friday by three different routes. Receipt of these would mean confirmation of the plans and I could arrange accordingly. I was not to tell them of the Rising but of a very important Route March on Sunday. I could issue

instructions re mobilisation centres and where they were to link up &c. He told me that using my own discretion I could inform I.R.B. men and other Voluntarr officers about the position and what was about to happen. He stressed that I would have to be discreet in choosing the persons whom I would let know.

I called on McEntee who was working for the Urban Council. After this interview I concluded that the man was genuine and could be trusted with any mission. On Wednesday night all Volunteers in the town and Dundalk area were mobilised. This was Ash Wednesday. We moved out to the country and practised attack and defence tactics. After the Exercises which were very successful, each officer had to submit a report to me on the different phases of the Exercise. On Thursday evening I came to Dublin and saw Clarke and McDermott.

Before leaving Dundalk I received a dispatch from Eoin O'Duffy who was an engineer to Monaghan Co. Council that he had a considerable quantity of explosives and was placing them at my disposal. I sent for the explosives that evening. The Fianna Boys and girls who went for them did not get them as O'Duffy could not get access to them and he promised to forward them. On Saturday I again sent for them but again O'Duffy could not get them and promised to forward them on Sunday morning but they never arrived. O'Duffy was not in the know regarding the Rebellion. I reported to Clarke and McDermott. There was no change in the plans and everything seemed to be moving smoothly. Clarke told me that they expected a consignment of arms from Germany on Sunday. They were pleased with the position in the Dundalk area.

On the Saturday previous to this I addressed a meeting of the Volunteers in the Square, Dundalk. This meeting was attended by about 20 R.I.C. including the District Inspector. At the conclusion of my address I said that I believed that an attempt would be made at the end of the meeting to arrest me. I said "I have an automatic and a Colt revolver here and 13 rounds of ammunition, and 13 R.I.C. will die before I am arrested and then perhaps not either". This

bold statement gave the Volunteers great heart as it was the first time anyone had spoken to them in that manner. I also wanted to let the police and the people know what the position was in case there was any shooting. From then on I had an armed guard of Volunteers continually. The R.I.C. always followed me after that but no attempt was made to arrest me. I did not take this guard to the city with me but I was not followed or shadowed as far as I could see. Clarke gave me £40 on this Thursday towards expenses and promised a further supply on Sunday morning.

I returned to Dundalk on that Thursday night. The guard met me at the station, also the R.I.C. but they did not interfere with me. During that week I visited all the centres in the area that I could fit in, including Kells, where I contacted Garrett Byrne who had reported there.

On Friday night at 8 p.m. a monster meeting of the Volunteers was held in the Town Hall, Dundalk. McMahon reported to me that he could not get the rifles at Ardee, but promised to have them on Saturday. I was the principal speaker at the meeting. A general discussion took place at this meeting and I announced that a route march for all units would be held on Sunday morning, all men to carry arms and equipment and ammunition and three days' rations. No indication was given to them of what was afoot. Instructions would be given later as to assembly areas and lines of march. Volunteers were to remain and see their officers after the meeting.

On the conclusion of this meeting I held a meeting of officers which included McEntee, P. Hughes and Paddy McHugh and Jemmy Toal who were not I.R.B. I told them that we were definitely striking on Sunday evening and explained to them how serious this would be for all of them. I said that if anyone of them felt that they were not in a position to go on, they were at liberty to withdraw at this stage. At this point McEntee stood up and saluted and asked if he could speak to me privately. I went into another room with him. Here he explained to me that had I known his past history I

would not trust him. He told me he had applied for a commission in the British Army and, it being delayed, in the meantime he had read ~~AM~~ T.D. Sullivan's famous book "Speeches from the Dock" and that it had changed his whole outlook as regards the British Army and British Empire. He was now prepared to go the whole hog in the service of his country and to stand or fall by the Irish Volunteers. I informed him I was quite well aware of all this and that I trusted him implicitly. At this he was very pleased. He asked if he could sleep in my room for the next two nights, a privilege he would appreciate, as he said we might never see each other again. I agreed and this made him very happy. We returned to the meeting. I gave out the necessary instructions informing them the Rising was starting at 7 p.m. on Sunday evening. I also gave them our plan as far as the mobilisation at Tara. All information given to them was secret and not to be conveyed to the men or any other person outside themselves.

All the Dundalk area including Cooley were to be at the O'Boyle Reilly Hall at 8.45 on Sunday morning. Newry and Dunleer contingents to be there also at the same time. Ardee were to be ready to join us on reaching Ardee. Drogheda men were to proceed to Tara direct. I had visited Kells on Friday also and had given instructions to Garry Byrne who was now in charge there to proceed to Tara direct with the men from that area. South Armagh were not expected to do anything and no allowance was made for them. We had transport of sorts, 3 pony traps, 1 horse sidecar and two wagonettes. This would accommodate about 50 men and by working a system of relays or ferrying we hoped to get to Tara this way.

Ardee promised to have the Redmond Volunteer Rifles on Saturday. I sent out a party to bring them in but again they had not procured them. They said they would have them on Sunday morning. On Saturday I travelled to Drogheda and contacted the principal men there to ensure that things were all right. All was satisfactory there and I returned to Dundalk. I sent again for the

explosives to O'Duffy, but again failed to get them, I do not know why. I went to Kells on Saturday also and saw Byrne and found everything O.K. there. I then returned to Dundalk on Saturday evening. There were no further incidents on that date.

On this date I informed all the local I.R.B. men who were not officers and were not present at the meeting on Friday night about the Rising. All had anticipated that there were serious happenings about to take place. Previous to this McEntee had submitted a plan for ~~landing~~ ^{Sanitary to OH} arrangements which I thought was perfect and adopted. It was very noticeable, all the men going to confession on Saturday night and to Communion on Sunday morning. The R.I.C. placed eight armed men outside where I was staying on the Saturday night. My Volunteer Guard was also strengthened on that night.

On Sunday morning McEntee and I went to early Mass. Mobilisation started at an early hour. The Hibernians in Dundalk had some Lee Enfield rifles, but as we could not act until 7 p.m. on Sunday night I detailed McEntee to remain in Dundalk with five other men to procure these at zero hour and then to follow us on in a car to Tara. McEntee was also to keep in touch with Seamus Hughes who worked in the telephone exchange and in this way he would have the latest information up to 7 p.m. which he could forward to me by dispatch en route.

At 9 a.m. we were on parade in the square ready to move off. We were 120 strong all ranks. At about 9.10 the Cooley contingent arrived - about 10 all told. By 9.30 when we moved off we were over 160 all ranks, all carrying rations and what arms we had. I considered the strength at this stage very satisfactory. We proceeded by route march to Ardee. When about three miles out from Dundalk, Phil McMahon from Ardee met us and informed me that the rifles at Ardee could not be got as the R.I.C. were guarding them. This was very disappointing. He told me the rifles were in a house owned by Mr. McGee a chemist on the main street of the town.

I decided I would have to get those rifles. I picked out 50 men and put them in charge of Lieut. McHugh of Dundalk. This party was to march to the northern entrance to the town and on hearing three whistle blasts to double down the main street to where they would find me standing. I put P. Hughes in charge of the main body. McMahon and I proceeded by car to Ardee and when we arrived at McGee's house we found four R.I.C. men guarding it. They were unarmed. I knocked at the door and on it being opened I entered followed by McMahon. I locked the door from the inside. I asked the lady who had opened it if the rifles were still here and she said "yes". I said I wanted to get them away as the "Sinn Feiners" were after them. She said "Thank God I have not slept since you left them here". We found the rifles in a room in the house and McMahon and I carried them to the hall and placed them against the wall. There were, as far as I can remember, 48 rifles all Lee Enfields. When all the rifles were down in the Hall I left McMahon and the man who was with him inside the house and told him to lock the door from the inside. I went outside and blew three blasts on my whistle. The R.I.C. did not seem to take any notice. The party of Volunteers detailed arrived at the "double march". I detailed four men to handle the rifles and as each section of Volunteers arrived they were handed rifles and proceeded forward. At this stage a couple of R.I.C. reported to the Barracks and some reinforcements arrived, but they did not interfere with us. We got all the rifles out. I jumped into the car with McMahon and proceeded to the house where the ammunition was stored. Previous to this I had arranged with McMahon to have one of his men go to this house and to tell the people there that he had left the Irish Volunteers and had joined the Redmond Volunteers and that the Irish Volunteers were after the ammunition and that it should be taken away and stored somewhere where the Irish Volunteers could not find it. The occupants of the house fell for this story and actually assisted him in moving it to another place in the house where it would be safer as they thought. When we got to the house this man

was awaiting us. I went in and told the people in the house that I was moving it for safety and we took it and loaded it in the car. Three boxes of 1,000 rds. each. The owner of the house seemed to think everything was all right and did not seem to suspect anything.

We returned to the town and joined the main body who were now augmented by the Ardee and Dunleer contingents. This increased our strength to about 230 all told. I mustered the Fianna Boys who had accompanied us from Dundalk and all who were under 18 years old I called one side and told them to return to Dundalk as McEntee wanted them there. They all knew by now what was afoot and protested volubly against being sent back. Many of them cried, but I succeeded in getting them back. Only, however, on issuing an order for them to do so. We then proceeded to get some refreshments. I arranged for teas and minerals for all which I paid for. While this was happening an R.I.C. man came to me and told me that the Sergeant would like to see me privately for a minute. I went with him. The Sergeant told me that the telephones were going strong and that reinforcements of R.I.C. were converging on Ardee from several points. He wanted to know if we were going back to Dundalk or going further. Apparently his main concern was to get us out of Ardee and his district before there was a clash. I told him we were going for a long route march and then returning to Dundalk and would he arrange for some houses in Ardee to remain open so that we could get some refreshments when we returned. He was pleased to hear this and said he would.

We now fell in again and marched towards Slane followed by R.I.C. from Dundalk who were now augmented by some from Ardee. We were also followed by our own transport. I did not issue any ammunition as yet. When about two miles out from Ardee towards Slane Sean McEntee arrived in a car from Dundalk. This was about 2.45 p.m. and gave me a dispatch addressed to myself from Eoin MacNeill and signed by him as President of the Irish Volunteers.

This was to the effect that orders and movements of Irish Volunteers were cancelled for that date. Volunteers were to be disbanded until further orders. I considered this for a while and then called Paddy Hughes, Toal, McEntee and McHugh. I told them that I did not believe this, explaining to them that there were two Executives existing. I said I would not obey this order until I had it confirmed by Pearse and the headquarters I recognised. They agreed to this. I sent a dispatch rider, Joe Birrell, on his motor cycle to Dublin to call to 21 Up. Dorset St. if there was trouble in the city and, if not, to go to Liberty Hall to Connolly. I gave him a written dispatch. He was to contact Pearse also. I arranged with him where men would meet him on his return from the city. He set off but never returned. Later, I sent two more men to Dublin on push bicycles and they were to return to Slane. These men never returned either.

In the meantime we continued our march towards Slane. McEntee remained with us now as he could not now carry out his mission in Dundalk under the changed circumstances. We arrived in Slane without incident and halted there. We put up in an old bakery yard where we got shelter. By now it was well after the fatal hour, but my hands were tied on account of the countermanding order of McNeill. We got refreshments in Slane and each man had a good meal. We had about 60 R.I.C. accompanying us now under the local District Inspector. I asked the Inspector to withdraw his men over the bridges to the south side of the river as I was taking over this side. He agreed and withdrew and did not come near us again. I mounted a guard on the bridge to ensure that they did not re-cross.

I next called a council of the officers and I said I wanted a responsible person - one who would return - to proceed to the city for instructions. Capt. McEntee immediately volunteered to go. He said "If you draw me a plan of the city, setting out where you want me to go, I guarantee to get to Dublin and to come back if I am alive". I made out a brief sketch of the city for him directing

him where to go when he got there. He was to proceed to 21 Upper Dorset St. That was the residence of my uncle. He would be brought from there to where he wanted to go and get local information regarding the position in the city. If everything was normal he was to go to Liberty Hall. If not, he was to depend on my uncle to get him in contact. If successful and made contact, he was to leave his bicycle and come back by car. In the meantime, if we had left Slane he was to follow us back the Ardee Road towards Dundalk. My idea in returning towards Dundalk while waiting was to ensure that if everything was off, that the men would be back in time to get to their work. I gave him a dispatch asking for confirmation. This was to Connolly and asking Connolly to put him in touch with Pearse.

He set off on a bicycle for Dublin. It was pouring rain and storming at the time. I afterwards found out that McEntee carried out his instructions to the last letter.

At about 3 a.m. on Easter Monday morning we started marching back to Dundalk via Ardee, the R.I.C. from Dundalk and Ardee again following us. We arrived in Collon without incident and we were able to get breakfast of a sort there, helped out by some of our rations. I addressed the men here without the R.I.C. hearing me, and told them that anyone who wanted to be back at work could leave without their arms and get back as best they could. This depleted our force and we were left with only 28 men. With this party we rested in Collon for a while and about 10 a.m. resumed our march. We got to Ardee where the Ardee and Dunleer men parted with us. I had instructed all the men when speaking to them in Collon that they were to stand to and await further instructions at their homes. I should mention here that none of us was in uniform.

At about 6 p.m. on that (Monday) evening when we had arrived at Lurgan Green near Dundalk, McEntee arrived on a motor cycle. He had a dispatch from Pearse which read "Dublin is in arms. You will carry out your original instructions". I had about 28 men at the time and all our original arms and our transport. I organised these in two

squads and on the double deployed one squad to the south of our position and one to the north. This was to surround the R.I.C. and what others were there at the time. They were to close in on a whistle blast from me. I then declared to all present, including the R.I.C., that a Republic had been proclaimed, and that headquarters of the Republic had been established at the G.P.O. Dublin. I addressed the R.I.C. telling them I proclaimed a Republic as being in existence and that they were now my prisoners. There were about a dozen R.I.C. at this time. They were to hand over their arms and documents and although they wore the King's uniform they would not be molested as they were, even so, our own countrymen. I told my own men that as long as the R.I.C. surrendered peacefully they were not to molest them or injure them in any way. I also ordered that all persons who approached our position were to be made prisoners to prevent information getting through to Dundalk which was a British garrison town; also that all transport was to be commandeered.

The R.I.C. all surrendered and I lined them up along a wall together with all the civilians present. I put a guard on them with instructions to shoot if they tried any funny tricks. One Sergeant Weymes at first refused to surrender documents he had on him. I had to threaten him with my revolver. He then handed them up. They were notes on all our movements from the time we had left Dundalk on Sunday and were only copies, he having dispatched the originals prior to I getting the orders for action. We then collected a few horses and carts which came along.

I then saw a big car approaching from the Dublin direction. I put up my hand for it to stop. It did not stop. I had a rifle and pointed it at the driver's head when it was about 20 yards away. The car halted at once. It contained six British officers and the driver, all in uniform. I informed them that a Republic had been proclaimed and that a state of war now existed and ordered them to get out with their hands up and stand over by the wall. They did not do so but began to talk to one another. I gave them 10 seconds

to get out or that they would be taken out. They waited for awhile and when the time was nearly up they actually tumbled out of the car in their haste to get out. I placed them against the wall and put a guard on them. I then called a Volunteer and told him to search them. They had no arms or documents on them. I put another Volunteer in the car behind the driver and made him turn his car around and face southwards. Another car of similar type now approached and it also contained the same number of officers. This was followed again by a third. The occupants were all treated in a similar manner and the cars turned around by their drivers. We now had an additional 18 officers and 3 drivers prisoners and their 3 cars.

Mr. McGettrick, who was chairman of the Dundalk Urban Council and a Justice of the Peace, arrived with a coach drawn by two horses. We informed him we were taking his horses and replaced them by two of the horses which had been travelling since Sunday morning. He was told he would be held as a prisoner until we moved off. Two more military cars now arrived with 5 officers and drivers and were also dealt with in a similar manner to the first ones. We now had five military cars with drivers and three cars of our own, two horse traps and an outside car and a wagonette. I put some men on the horse vehicles and moved them off towards Slane again. I allowed the prisoners, including the military officers and police, to go and put a man on each car behind the military drivers. I arranged signals by whistle blasts for halts, etc. I proceeded on the front car myself placing McEntee, Paddy Hughes and Paddy McHugh in succession so that if anything happened to them they would assume command in that order. The cars were arranged in three sections conforming to an advanced guard main body and rearguard. I was with the advance guard, McEntee in charge of the main body and McHugh the rear guard.

At At Castlebellingham we halted and awaited the arrival of the horse vehicles which we had passed on the road. We commandeered some food here as we had very little money now. The money

promised by Sean McDermott had not arrived. On arrival at Castlebellingham there were about 10 R.I.C. men with two Sergeants there. We took them prisoners; they had no arms. We gave a receipt for what food we took over. Just as we had dealt with the R.I.C. two more military cars arrived. We took them prisoners and took possession of their cars. We got a couple of sides of bacon and groceries here. While I was in the provision shop a scout came to me and informed me that a British officer had arrived on a motor cycle and would not surrender. I could not leave the shop at the moment as the owner was very aggressive and threatening us with a large knife. I told the scout to tell McEntee to take the officer's bicycle and to search him and put him with the other prisoners. Shortly afterwards I heard a shot and went out immediately. There were two men lying on the road - an R.I.C. man and a military officer (Lieut. Dunville). I got a doctor who was standing in a doorway nearby. I instructed him to attend to the two men which he did. I could see that the R.I.C. man was dying and that the officer was wounded.

From the report I received it appears that when the officer was approached by McEntee he dropped his motor cycle and ran behind the R.I.C. men and made attempts as if to draw a gun from his pocket. On seeing this one of my men fired at him. At that moment the R.I.C. man unfortunately moved into the line of fire and the bullet passed through the R.I.C. man and wounded Lt. Dunville. Lieut. Dunville was found to be armed with a revolver.

We now moved off again allowing our prisoners to go free. We travelled on a by-road in order to avoid the main road. It was dark now. At this time we had all the arms which we had brought with us on Sunday. I had a road map. On reaching a crossroads - I can't remember where it was now - we halted and I made a survey to find the right road which I did and we proceeded on. Some miles further on I halted again and now I had only three cars present. I sent two men back to the last crossroads to see if they could

locate the missing cars. While these men were away I was approached by a tall civilian who was apparently a policeman. He started asking questions as to where we were going, etc. I placed him under arrest and locked in in a stable at a house close by. I afterwards found out that he was an ex-officer of the R.I.C.

The two men reported back and stated that one of the cars was overturned in a ditch by the road. I went back and found the car partly overturned and blocking the road. There were no men with it. It was one of our cars and there was no sign of the others. I decided to move on, assuming that the other cars would make for Tara. We arrived at Tara as dawn was breaking on Tuesday morning and found that no other cars had arrived there. There was no one to be seen, and the place was deserted. We went in near Navan but could not contact anyone. None of our missing cars turned up. There were now only about nine or ten of us all told with our three cars still driven by British military drivers.

I decided to go straight on to Dunboyne and on to Blanchardstown. We proceeded by the main Dublin-Navan road towards Dublin. When we got near Dunboyne I halted and by using my field glasses I could see British soldiers on the railway over the road apparently holding the bridge. There was a big house immediately on our left. I went up to this and knocked but could get no response. I then went down the road to a small house. The people in this told me that the big house was not occupied. I decided we would occupy the out offices of the big house and get the men and what arms we had in there and establish a camp there for the time being. We had now more arms than we had men for. We got the place occupied and placed sentries and got some food ready, assisted by the people in the small house, who gave us milk. While we were having this meal our horse vehicles arrived. This augmented our force by an additional 8 men and an amount of rifles and other arms which I got transferred to the out offices.

There were three men of the party who were very old. I ordered

them to return to Dundalk with the horses and vehicles which we did not want further. They were very reluctant to do so, but obeyed my orders and got back safely. Some more men joined us now belonging to the party which had been under McEntee. Their car had broken down and they had walked. We had now about 23 all told. McEntee had advised them to try and contact me and failing this to go home. He himself went on a load of hay going towards the city and eventually got to the G.P.O.

When my men had got some rest and food I sent one man on a bicycle to Dublin with a verbal message for Pearse or Connolly at the G.P.O. This was to report our position and strength and to inform them that Dunboyne was held by the British troops. This man was unarmed. I sent another man to scout locally to find out about the military in Dunboyne - to get into the village if possible and also to try and find out where the Dunboyne Volunteers were. The man for Dublin got as far as Cabra Bridge and could not get beyond that as the military were holding up everyone there. He returned late that night having failed to get to the G.P.O. In the meantime we mounted a strong guard to ensure against surprise from any direction.

The second or local scout returned and reported that the Dunboyne Volunteers disbanded on the Sunday and that they had mobilised again on Monday, but that he could not get their location. He said that Dunboyne was held by the Lancers in strength. He reckoned there was about 100 of them there including the men on the railway. There was also Infantry there - about 50 men also.

Tuesday night passed without incident, the men getting all the rest possible. We did not commit ourselves to any offensive action owing to the depleted strength of our forces and awaited getting instructions from headquarters and to keep concealed. On this Tuesday morning a girl from Dunboyne (Miss Mullally) had come to us and told me where the Dunboyne men were and that they were anxious

to join up with us. I sent word that they were to join us and they arrived about 5 p.m. that evening. They were about 16 men strong and in charge of Sean Boylan and had some arms. In the meantime I had sent another man to try and get into Dublin. He returned on the same day with a dispatch from Connolly which read "To Comdt. O'Hannigan, Commandeer transport and move your men to Dublin where they will be rested and armed before being sent into action". Signed James Connolly, Comdt. General, G.P.O."

I called a conference of the officers which was attended by Sean Boylan, Paddy Hughes, Paddy McHugh, Garry Byrne, who had arrived from Kells, and myself. We discussed Connolly's orders and decided it was impossible to carry out as (1) there was no transport to be got anywhere; (2) Cabra Bridge was in enemy hands and there was an enemy cordon around the city by this time. We decided to get in touch immediately with Tom Ashe and the Fingal Battalion with whom we had no contact so far and to join up with them or at least discuss the position with them.

On Wednesday Miss Mullally and Miss Byrne contacted Tom Ashe who sent word to me that he would meet me the following day. He was to send word later where he would meet me. I waited all day on Thursday but got no word from Ashe. I could not get any further contact with the G.P.O. as all scouts sent out found it impossible to get through the enemy lines to the city. On Friday I got a further message from Ashe to the effect that he would send me word where and when he would meet me. No word arrived on Friday. On Saturday morning I got a message that Ashe would meet me at Dan McAllister's house at Turvey at 11 a.m. on Sunday morning. On Friday morning I had sent instructions to Kells for the men in that area to be in readiness as we might want them. This message was conveyed by a doctor who called into camp on his way to Kells. Food was now very scarce and we had to commandeer a sheep and a beast. The Misses Mullally and other local girls helped us considerably by bringing us bread and cakes. Nothing happened on Saturday and I spent the day

7.
instructing the men what action they should take in case of an attack on our position.

On Sunday morning, accompanied by one of the Dunboyne men, a Vol. Madden, I started to meet Ashe. Madden knew the country well. We got to Turvey without incident. Dan McAllister came out of the house very excited and shouted "Go away, go away. You will be caught at any moment" I said "Where is Tom Ashe" and he replied "He is a prisoner and they are looking for you, go away at once". I succeeded in calming him down somewhat and he then informed me that Ashe and his column were now all prisoners, having surrendered. At this moment I heard Cavalry approaching. McAllister ran down the haggard and disappeared. Madden and I went out on to the road and cycled towards the Cavalry troop who were approaching. We saluted them. They returned the salute and allowed us to pass on without even stopping us. This was the advance party of an enemy column. Near Swords we met the main body who were halted. We passed through without being stopped or questioned. Swords was occupied by the military. They had a cordon across the southern end of the Main St. ^{KANE'S DOH} men on their ~~horses~~ with rifles facing towards the city. We went into a publichouse at the northern end of the village. There was a number of drinks on the counter but nobody in the place. We stood against the counter. I looked across the road and was amazed to see one of Guinness's drivers driving a lorry for the British. He knew me well and I was afraid he would give me away. Two soldiers with fixed bayonets came into the shop and went upstairs where we could hear them talking to someone. They subsequently left, ignoring us completely. We left there and proceeded up the street and through the cordon without being stopped. We left Swords and made for Blanchardstown. I could not get any information in Swords as to what happened in the city or to Tom Ashe.

On arrival in Blanchardstown there were 9 R.I.C. in the village street. We entered a publichouse which was pretty full of men but no one was speaking. I called for a drink and when the owner whom I

did not know was serving us he whispered "Don't stay, you are known here" and took no money for the drinks. We had our drinks and left immediately. We passed the R.I.C. without being stopped and got back to our camp at Tyrrellstown. We met no further police or military en route.

It was dark when we got back. I found all there as I had left them. I still did not know what the position was but I had a good idea that all was over. I called a conference of the officers immediately. We decided to move from there. We moved across country in darkness to Mullally's house where we got food and refreshments. We then moved to a disused house about a mile from Dunboyne on the south side. On arrival there we got information from a scout that the military had been to Tyrrellstown House which we had left some time before this. They had arrived there an hour after we vacated it.

About 10 a.m. on Monday morning we got information that the military were advancing on our position. Our position was a bad one without any good line of retreat so we decided to stand our ground and fight and I made my plans accordingly. The military came and passed by without even looking at the house where we were. They were Lancers.

After a couple of hours we left there and went to Keating's House nearer Dunboyne. Two of the Keatings were with us. We remained there for the night, some of us going to Mullally's.

On Tuesday morning we were informed by Miss Mullally that she had learned there was fighting in Galway. We now understood that the city had surrendered. That was from information picked up locally. We held a further conference and it was decided that a number of the Dundalk men would go home. The remainder would be billeted around Dunboyne and keeping in touch with one another. The Dunboyne men would also return to their homes. I was to start for Galway. On getting there I was to send word back and get them down if necessary.

We oiled and buried all the arms and ammunition. That evening I started for Galway after dark on a bicycle. Near Maynooth I again ran into a party of Lancers, but succeeded in getting my cycle across a fence and although they halted they apparently did not see me. I stayed the night in a herdsman's house who, although he was intimately associated with the British Army, treated me very decently. Next day I got near Mullingar and met three priests on the road. They stopped me and wanted information about Dublin which I gave them as far as I knew. They informed me that they had come from Galway and that Liam Mellows and the Galway men had disbanded and gone on the "run". They told me that 3,000 Clan na Gael from America had landed in Kerry and that all Kerry was out. I now decided to make for Kerry.

After many minor incidents of evading arrest I got to Mitchelstown in Co. Cork and there I learned that there was no truth in the priests' story about Kerry and in fact that the whole country had surrendered and were handing up their arms to the authorities. There were Government notices posted up everywhere instructing the people to hand up what arms they had under heavy penalties for not complying.

I stayed around Mitchelstown for about two months and then I came back to Dublin. It was a changed place from the day that I had left it. I knew that I was posted in the Police Gazette as a man wanted for the murder of a policeman at Castlebellingham, Co. Louth, plus several other charges.

I travelled back to Cork and on to Gougane Barra where I contacted Sean O'Hegarty who was also a wanted man. He was living in a dugout in the mountains near there. I stayed at the College there passing myself off as a student but in contact with Hegarty. I had gone to school there in my earlier years. During my visits to Hegarty we conceived the idea that I should go to America and propose to John Devoy there to get a few others and myself to Germany where we would be trained in the use of high explosives and to get the Germans to supply by submarine explosives which we would

use against the English Navy and Merchant Service.

I started for Courtmacsherry and there after a lot of trouble I contacted a Captain Murray who had a three-masted schooner there. I shipped with him to Newport in Wales dressed as a sailor. The boat was boarded here by military officers and after questioning I was put under arrest. I had given my name as Cleary bound for Liverpool to trace a missing uncle of mine. I was kept under arrest at the Home Office Branch there for four days and then released. I was well treated. It was peculiar that they never thought of getting in touch with Dublin and have me identified.

From there I travelled to Liverpool and contacted there Neil Kerr and Steve Lanigan who were I.R.B. men. I also met there Callanan, Corbett, Liam Mellows and Matt O'Callaghan. Through O'Callaghan I got a job on the freighter "Holly Branch" bound for Baltimore. On arrival in Baltimore I remained on the ship until the day before she sailed and that night deserted her. From Baltimore I travelled to New York and there I got in touch with John Devoy. I put up to him our plans about going to Germany. Devoy was quite interested and called an executive meeting of the Clan and discussed the matter with them. He sent for me and told me that they had adopted the idea and were working on it. In the meantime I got work in New York. Some time later Mellows, Corbett, Callanan and O'Callaghan arrived in New York. Mellows was very favourable to the idea.

After some considerable lapse of time Devoy sent for me and told me that they had decided in carrying out the plan and that all was ready except that they were awaiting word from Berlin. He said I would get a cablegram to report to him in New York for final instructions and that I would be going back to Ireland to make arrangements for reception of the German submarine with the explosives. It was early in the Spring of 1917 I got the cablegram. I went and saw Devoy again. I was told that I was to proceed to Ireland at once and that the others were going on to Germany. I was given a password

"Berlin" which was to be used when contacting members of the German Espionage Branch.

As Mellows and McCartan and I left the Astoria Hotel where we had seen Devoy I noticed that we were being shadowed by four men who were apparently English detectives. We travelled to a house at *Battery* Battery, about 15 miles away, in a fast car, but they followed us there. I parted with Mellows and McCartan there and travelled back to Westchester. I was able to slip the 'tocs when leaving the house at the Battery.

The following day I got a job as a sailor on the "SS Saint Paul" an American ship, and sailed to Southampton. I came to Liverpool and met Kerr and Lanigan, but did not tell them my business. The following day I sailed to Dublin. In Dublin I got in touch with Diarmuid Lynch and Mick Collins. I was well known to them. I reported the whole matter to them and they were very pleased with the idea. I told Collins that I believed that the plan would not work as I felt that Mellows and McCartan would be arrested on any ship that they tried to sail to Europe on. I also told him about the incident of the detectives shadowing us in New York. I suggested that I should go back to New York immediately, he to send two other men with me to go to Germany. Mick did not agree to this. We discussed a plan where we could land the explosives and it was decided that I would travel around the coast and make a survey and work up an organisation for their reception. I went to Wicklow and surveyed the coast there and got Christy Byrne of Wicklow town to organise for such an event. This was repeated along the coast to Limerick. From there I decided to go to Dublin to see how things were progressing there.

When at Knocklong Station awaiting a train I got the daily paper and was amazed to see the main headline which stated that Liam Mellows was arrested on the Hudson, New York, off a Dutch tramp steamer, and that McCartan was arrested in Halifax, also on a Dutch tramp.

I have included this part of the story in order to eradicate the idea which is prevalent that they were bound for Russia. They were travelling to Germany on the mission as told by me previously.

About June 1915 a gentleman named Hare came to my house. He was about 35 or 40 years of age and lived in a house in Clare St., Dublin. He was unknown to me then. He had a note of introduction from Tom Dunne of Wolfhill, who was an I.R.B. man. This man had made a study of the '67 and '48 movements, and an extensive amount of research work in connection with the Irish Ireland movement. He had an idea that there was a secret military organisation existing here at this time and was anxious to get in touch with the heads of this organisation. He stated he could give them an amount of valuable information including the strength and ^{Composition} ~~occupation~~ of all garrison troops in this country. Without revealing anything to him I told him I would see what I could do.

I reported the matter to Clarke and McDermott. They were already aware of this man's existence, but did not trust him. They instructed me to keep in touch with him and to get all the information out of him that I could. He supplied me with a list of the various British garrisons giving their strength and so forth. We tested some of these for accuracy where we had the means of doing so and found that he was 100% correct. I kept playing him and in this way got a vast amount of valuable information out of him. I do not know how he got his information. He must have had access in some way to the records at British Hqrs. at Parkgate St. He told me he had access to all military barracks in the country but did not tell me on what business. I lost touch with him when the Rebellion started and do not know what happened to him.

Adverting to the plans for the Rising, I had seen the plans on two or three occasions and Liam Mellows and I went over them in detail. I understood they were drawn up by McDonagh assisted by Joseph Plunkett. The plans were kept in a safe at Volunteer Hqrs.

in Dawson St. It is so long now that I cannot remember them in detail. Some of the high spots of the plan for the city included the capture of Marlboro (McKee) Bks., Magazine Fort, Islandbridge (Glancy) Bks. and Dublin Castle. The other city barracks were to be isolated and starved out. It also visualised the occupation of the G.P.O., the Rotunda Hospital and the building where the bank is now at the corner of Parnell St. and O'Connell St. The line of the canal from Bolands Mills to Inchicore was to be held. This would isolate Portobello, Wellington, Beggars Bush and the Richmond Bks. and as none of these had artillery they would eventually have to surrender as all food and other supplies would be cut off from them.

I remember distinctly that a strong garrison was to be established at the Bishop's Palace in Drumcondra and this, in conjunction with the Fingal Volunteers, would isolate the city from the north side.

In case of a retreat out of the city being necessary this was to take place through the Park. When outside the city guerilla tactics were to be adopted and to fight back towards the Shannon.

In the case of the country it was expected that they would rise and a general instruction to them was that they were to attack and capture the British garrisons in their area. Thomas McCurtain and McSwiney had worked out a plan to cover Munster including the landing of arms, but I do not know what the details of this plan were. The plan was kept by Sean McDermott in a safe in Dawson St. (Vol.Hdqrs.) I remember the special mission of the Galtee Battn. was to capture Fermoy and Kilworth Camps.

On the Tuesday, when I reported to Pearse at St. Enda's with Sean Boylan, Pearse had the complete plans for the Rising and before Boylan arrived he discussed them with me in a general way. The city area was outlined clearly and visualised a possible withdrawal to the country and a fight back towards the Shannon, if necessary. In giving me my instructions about my mission he was most emphatic

about keeping lines of retreat open out of the city
towards the west. Boylan was present during the latter
stage when I got my instructions regarding my own
particular job.

Signed Donal O'Hannigan
(Donal O'Hannigan)

Date: 2 12. 48

Witness: Markus Barry Comdt
(M. Barry, Comdt.)

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