ORIGINAL

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STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 327

Witness

Garda Patrick Egan,
34 South Circular Road,
Kilmainham, Dublin.

Identity

Sgt. and Lieut. "C" Coy. 4th Batt'n Dublin Brigade 1916;

O/C. Battalion Communications post 1916.

Subject

(a) Roe's Distillery Easter Week 1916;

(b) Reorganisation of I.V's. and despatch work post 1916.

Conditions, if any, stipulated by Witness

Nil

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STATEMENT OF GARDA PATRICK EGAN,
34, South Circular Road, Kilmainham,
Dublin.

When quite a young lad, I knew the Count and Countess Markievicz. My sisters stayed with them on a few occasions while they lived at Raheny. In the year 1912, when the labour strife was at its height in Dublin, I was then only fourteen years. Nevertheless I witnessed many incidents during the strikes and great lock-out, and was present in O'Connell Street when Jim Larkin addressed the crowds from the balcony of the Imperial Hotel and succeeded in getting away when the R.I.C. and D.M.P. charged and wildly batoned the people. The fight of the workers in those days was much akin to that of the national struggle against the common enemy. Madame's name featured much in the news during those years. So it was in 1913, with two ex school companions - Charles O'Grady and Larry Riordan - I joined the boys of Na Fianna Eireann. This was also the year I started my apprenticeship to the gilding trade in my father's business establishment 26, Lower Ormond Quay. Both my parents died prior to 1910, leaving us nine orphans. Such were the circumstances as I entered the national movement.

We joined the Fianna early in 1913 at 34, Lower Camden Street and were drilled by Con Colbert, Cremins and Barny Mellows. We had outings to Ticknock, Madame's cottage and Mrs. Mulligan's at Barnaculla. This I think was the first year I participated in the Wolfe Tone Celebration at Bodenstown. Larry Riordan,

who was an apprentice at the tailoring, made me a large tricolour flag, which I unfurled on the roof of home that Sunday; this marked the house out for special attention three years hence.

It was in this same year, 1913,(I think it was a night in October) that this flag featured in an exciting incident in O'Connell Street that I shall never forget. It was the night of the annual inspection and parade of the Boys' Brigade held in Fowler Hall, Parnell Square. They were our opposite number, and it was always an occasion to stage a counter demonstration by the Fianna lads. O'Grady, Riordan, I and some of the lads assembled at Parnell Square. The parade started from Fowler Hall, with Union Jacks waving, a band playing British marching airs and the usual force of police. The small Fianna group headed the procession, singing and shouting patriotic slogans. On the way down O'Connell Street, I hoisted my Tricolour, fastened to a stick. This was followed with an outburst of shouting and shots being fired from the procession behind us. On turning round, I saw several men rushing towards me. I cannot say whether they were detectives or the Brigade supporters. Finding myself alone, still holding up the flag, I ran towards Nelson's Pillar; more shots were fired behind me. On turning around at the Pillar, I saw one of the men right on my heels. So I pulled out a small .22 Harrington-Richardson revolver I carried; I pointed at my pursuer; he went down sprawling on his face. (In the excitement at the

time I didn't see all that happened). I made for under the canopy of the G.P.O., where I was joined by the lads who advised me to get away home as I might be picked out during the night. At home, I found my gun still intact, and learning some days later that it was Louis Ridgeway, Barber, Parnell Street, standing at the Pillar, tripped my pursuer who was taken to hospital in an ambulance. The Fianna boys followed to the Diocesan School, Adelaide Road, after several baton charges - the flag came safely through.

IRISH VOLUNTEERS.

I was present at the Rotunda Rink, Parnell Square, in November, 1913, at the meeting to inaugurate the Irish Volunteers. I remember being jammed in the huge crowd gathered outside the entrance and seeing the large folding doors being forced open by the weight of the people and broken glass panels showering down on us as we surged into the hall. I cannot remember all the speakers - there were Eoin MacNeill, Sir Roger Casement, P.H. Pearse - nor can I remember now anything particular that was said during the meeting.

About a week or so later, I commenced attending parades at 25, Parnell Square. Eamon Kent and Tom McDonagh were much in evidence at these nightly drill parades. Some nights we would mobilise at Blackhall Place under command of Captain Monteith, who would march us to the Pheonix Park, beyond the Magazine Fort, where we had extended order drill. Sometime later we

were organised into battalions. Charlie O'Grady and I went to "C" Company, 4th Battalion, and found ourselves back again in 34, Lower Camden Street, while Larry Riordan went to the 2nd Battalion. Thomas McCarthy was elected Captain of the Company, while Garry Byrne and Willsie Byrne were elected 1st and 2nd Lieutenants respectively. O'Grady and I were appointed Sergeants. We had an ex-British soldier, named Whelan, as drill instructor. I remember Whelan taking both O'Grady and I down to Swords, Co. Dublin, where a new company of the Irish Volunteers had been formed. Michael McDunphy (Bureau of Military History) was with us when we gave the Fingal Company their first evolutions in section drill. A weekly Battalion parade was held on Saturday evenings in a large enclosure off the Long Lane, Camden Street. Dummy rifles next made their appearance, and musketry drill was started. The N.C.O's. attended a special class at Hardwick Hall. We had another ex-British soldier here; his name was either Merrinan or Marrigan. Here we received instructions in target-finding from a large chart; we had a rifle and rest and were instructed in the various firing positions. We now moved to Larkfield, Kimmage, property of the late Count Plunkett; this became the headquarters of the 4th Battalion. It was a large granary or hall; underneath this was erected a miniature rifle range. I remember Laurence Kettle conducting the practice at the range. The headquarters of the Irish Volunteers at this time was in Pearse Street.

THE HOWTH GUN-RUNNING

On the Sunday prior to the Howth Sunday, I remember the 4th Battalion being mobilised at 4 a.m. at Larkfield. We marched to Sandyford and later in the day we returned to the city via Irishtown; we remained here for a long time before returning to our Battalion headquarters.

On Howth Sunday we paraded at Croydon Park. Captain Monteith, who was in uniform, was in charge. The Brigade marched to Howth. I later heard that it was George or Harry (?) Nicholls of the Engineer Department, Dublin Corporation, an officer of the 4th Battalion, who grounded the telephone wires before entering the village. On entering we got the order to double. I remembering seeing a young lad semaphoring from the harbour wall, and seeing the white yacht sail in. As "C" Company reached the entrance to the pier, we were ordered to block it and let no one by. I saw Madame Maud Gonne MacBride standing in the crowds who looked on. Commandant Kent and Seamus Murphy stood in front. A trek cart was brought up, and oak staves were issued out to the men. Wild cheers came from the direction of the yacht. We could see the Companies march back, shouldering their guns, while other men stacked the guns along the break-wall ready for the men coming on.

It was not long when the Coastguards made their appearance. They proceeded to try and force their way through our ranks but, with uplifted staves threatening them, they backed into the crowds. We

thought our turn would never come to race down the pier. Cheers went up as each Company marched back shouldering their guns. Back to the city we marched, singing ourselves hoarse, so it was a welcome sight, on arriving at Raheny, to find several mineral water carts awaiting our arrival. Here we also got the first sight of the enemy, about two hundred armed R.I.C., lined along the footpath and looking on as we slaked our thirst. After this short rest, the Brigade moved forward. Nearing Clontarf, we came to a road junction; here the column took the road to the right. As we passed the junction, we saw the Scottish Borderers with fixed bayonets lined across the road, about a hundred yards down. After travelling a short distance down the road, by which we went, we met the same sight and, in addition, a large force of Dublin police; here we halted; a parley apparently was going on in front. Suddenly we saw the police charging the leading Companies. This was followed by a mad rush of Volunteers up to the front. The roadway was quickly jammed with men roaring and shouting, and the butts of guns swinging down on our assailants. Charlie O'Grady was jammed in on my right. I saw a policeman about to bring his baton down on Charlie's head. Before I could ward off the blow, Captain T. Byrne, who was on his right, brought down his butt crashing on the assailant's head.

The police were then withdrawn, and the Scottish Borderers moved up. I saw Commandants Eamon Kent and

Thomas MacDonagh in front; both officers knelt down; Kent rested his Mauser pistol on MacDonagh's shoulder and opened fire. Charlie and I ran back to the trek wagon which contained the ammunition. Several Fianna lads were standing around the car with drawn revolvers. I think Eamon Martin was one of them. The road was jammed with Volunteers roaring and shouting for ammunition, while the Fianna threatened us if we advanced a step nearer. Lying along the top of a wall bordering the road was a young Fianna lad emptying his revolver over the heads of the men on the roadway into the Scottish Borderers. An order was quietly passed around the men to slip across the fields of O'Brien Institute. We made our way to a small whitewashed cottage somewhere near "Goose Green"; here a large amount of guns were hidden.

On arriving home, I heard of Bachelor's Walk shooting. Later in the evening, Captain MacCarthy called on me; he had a motor car. We went to many houses in the Clontarf area collecting guns.

The split in the Volunteer organisation was brewing about this time.

THE SPLIT

Sometime about September or October, 1914, as a result of John Redmond's appeal to the Irish Volunteers to join the British Army, the difference was brought to a head. I remember that Thursday night, when "C" Company assembled at Larkfield, there

was no drilling. The Company was lined up; it mustered about seventy or eighty men. The Captain addressed the men, referring to Redmond's speech in a few short words. He concluded by asking the men who were prepared to fight for Ireland to stand fast, and those who agreed with Redmond's appeal to leave the hall. About six men left the ranks. The Company then marched to Kildare Street, and lined up outside a house opposite the present Motor Registration Office. We were here addressed by Thomas MacDonagh from the steps, during which he was interrupted by a man shouting from the top window of the same house. Someone in the ranks fired off a revolver, which silenced the interrupter, who disappeared inside. MacDonagh jovially referred to our handling of such persons, and complimented us on our number and good work.

ARMS.

Just prior to the split, a few new .303 Martini old-fashioned block-and-lever action rifles were received into the Company. I purchased one of them. About this time, we had a real old-timer ex British soldier, named Maguire. He came over from Liverpool with elaborate plans for an attack on Dublin Castle. I believe he was received sceptically by the members of the Volunteer Committee, but was more or less tolerated. Maguire lived in Hardwicke Street. He posed as an expert on the Martini's. It was not long before these rifles developed trouble, the block jamming. Maguire got the job of repairing them. One

Saturday evening I took mine to Larkfield range to try it out but, to my surprise, could get no discharge. On getting home, I determined to seek out the trouble myself, opened up the block and found the point of the striking pin filed short. Other rifles had been similarly treated. Maguire was not seen after this affair.

After the split, an all-out drive to obtain arms was made. Some were purchased from British soldiers. I remember a young telegraph messenger who was responsible for equipping the Company with about a dozen short Lee-Enfield rifles. He was specially employed in delivering telegrams to the military barracks. He always wore his great-coat and, when the opportunity occurred, would slip a rifle down the leg of his trousers and walk out with the prized possession. Unfortunately, the poor lad went one too many and fell into a trap set for him. Having got a rifle or revolver, it was just as difficult to obtain a few clips of ammunition for them.

O Hannrahan. P.E.

Michael ~~O'Halloran~~ was Quartermaster General. One day - I think it was in 1915 - he walked into our shop on the Quay. He asked me if I had the means of concealing some arms and ammunition, and if I was agreeable. I replied in the affirmative, and showed him over the premises. Shortly afterwards I received about fifty .32 Webley and Scott automatic revolvers and a large quantity of .22 ammunition. I think these came through Cullen's, Carriers, of Pearse Street. Occasionally, lads from the country would call

in and ask to see me, and, on presenting a note from Michael, would be handed over the goods.

IRISH REPUBLICAN BROTHERHOOD.

Sometime in the spring of 1915, I was initiated into the Lord Edward Fitzgerald Circle of the I.R.B. at 41, Parnell Square. I think we met once a month. Being only an ordinary member, I knew little or nothing of its inner activities. I cannot recollect any discussions - nothing, beyond the introduction of new members. One of the objects of this organisation was to get as many officers and N.C.O's. of the Volunteers into their Circles; at least, that's how it appeared to me; they were not always successful. I think it was shortly after joining this body that I received a long Lee-Enfield rifle in perfectly new condition. There may have been two other members as young as myself. Most of us were in the Volunteer movement. This Circle was, no doubt, very active in various ways that I knew nothing of. I cannot recall anything of interest to tell. To me they appeared merely a body of trusted men, though my later experience has led me to doubt if we were even awarded this qualification.

It was some time late in 1915 or early in 1916 the police all over the country became very active in raids for arms, and were in some cases successful. This moved G.H.Q. to issue instructions to resist such attempts. The first results of this order came from the Midlands - Tullamore - where the R.I.C. raided a

drill-hall for arms. The Sergeant was shot in the attempt. Two Volunteers, Peadar(?) Bracken and Seamus(?) Brennan, as a result of this shooting, went on the 'run'. They stayed in our house on the Quay a day or two after. I don't know where they went after leaving us. (Brennan, I believe, is at present employed in the National Health Insurance.) Another incident of this kind I can recall is that of the raid on the Fitzgerald brothers, house painters and decorators, Pearse Street. One of the brothers lost his life in this raid.

It was about this period that there was a strong rumour of the British military seizing the Volunteer headquarters, which at this time was situated at the Nassau Street end of Dawson Street. I, with a small group of Volunteers fully equipped, did duty here for several nights.

About a fortnight or three weeks before Easter, 1916, a gathering of all the officers of the 4th Battalion was held in Muldoon's(?) Tearoom at Old Bawn on a Sunday evening. Captain McCarthy told me to meet him at Terenure, which I did. After waiting a short while, we were joined by Willie Pearse. All three of us cycled to Old Bawn. In Muldoon's house there was a large room where we all gathered and had tea. At both ends of this room were two other smaller rooms. Tea over, we sat about, chatting and smoking. Not to my recollection was there any reference to the Rising, or a hint of it. Commdndant

Kent and Vice Commandant C. Brugha, with Willie Pearse, adjourned into one of the smaller rooms. They were in there practically all the evening after the tea was over. Kent would come out occasionally and hold a short conversation with one of the officers and then return. On one of these occasions he spoke to Captain McCarthy. I was called aside, and taken into the third (unoccupied) room. Kent said he heard from Tom that my brother (Joseph) had a powerful motorcycle (7/9 H.P. Harley-Davison) and that they were looking for a man who wasn't known and who would be willing to carry out an important job. I said that I was sure he would be only too willing, but I was afraid he had little petrol (A British Military Order had placed restrictions on the sale and possession). To this, Kent smilingly replied, "Don't let him worry about that We have plenty of German Gold", and told me to get him to report to him at his home. I, at the time, was told nothing of his mission. We then went back to the big room, and the evening went on. What went on in the other room with Pearse, Kent and Brugha, one can only guess. The evening ended and, on approaching my brother, I found him, as I said, only too willing to take on any job. (He was not officially attached to the Volunteers). It was not until long after Easter Week that he told me about his mission. My brother has since gone to reside in England, and I can only give you a brief outline of his story. He said that, on receiving instructions from Kent, he called with his motor-cycle and sidecar to a house in Parkgate

Street,. (The man of this house, I later learned, had a nephew, a teacher in Blackrock College, who was a friend of the de Valera family). At Parkgate Street he took a passenger (a 'cleric') from there to St. Enda's, Rathfarnham. Some days later, he returned and took him to Athenry. On starting out on the early part of the journey, his passenger had a large breviary on his lap; on going through Ballinasloe, he cast a side-glance at his 'cleric' and saw a large .45 revolver between his knees. My brother did not know Liam Mellows. He left him safe and sound at the late Commandant McLardner's home.

I am not sure whether it was before or after the Old Bawn meeting that many changes became evident in the ranks of the officers. "C" Company 1st Lieutenant Garry Byrne I afterwards heard was sent to Meath; 2nd Lieutenant Willsie Bryne became attached to the Battalion Staff; both myself and O'Grady were promoted 1st and 2nd Lieutenants respectively.

I think it was on Spy Wednesday, or some day in Holy Week, that I was instructed by Commandant Kent to keep Wellington (Griffith) Barracks under observation throughout the night. I was to report immediately to him the first signs of military activity I saw on the square. This duty was performed between twelve midnight and 5 a.m., and was done by slowly cycling around the district. Nothing occurred.

Commandant Thomas McDonagh appeared to have taken the precaution against being caught napping. It was on Good Friday that Dannie Reardon (brother of

Larry - both belonging to 2nd Battalion; Dannie fought in Jacobs) asked me if I would put up Tom McDonagh for the night. It was about twelve midnight when he arrived. I was putting the finishing touch to my equipment. Though the table was set for supper he would take nothing, I tried to show him he was most welcome. We had very little to say. He sat down to the table with several sheets of foolscap in front of him. After spending some time scribbling notes in the margin of the papers in front of him, we retired to bed. He left early the following morning.

On Easter Saturday Captain McCarthy called on my brother, Joe, and advised him to get in extra food - tinned foods. It now became clear that the storm was about to break - still I was told nothing except the general mobilisation for Easter Sunday, entrenching tools and iron rations, not forgetting to bring a candle; but Larry Reardon, in all seriousness, told us that according to Columkille's prophecies, Dublin was to have seven days of darkness; this caused more laughter. I knew that something momentous was about to happen. I was not called to attend any meetings of officers of the Battalion. A small stock of Michael O'Hanrahan's dump, still on hands, was worrying me, so I called on Commandant Kent who told me to take them to Keogh's Yard, Cork Street. This was done by my brother on Saturday night.

Early on Easter Sunday morning, we got word from the Captain that the mobilisation was off. I was instructed to call on Commandant Kent, who lived on the South Circular Road, Dolphin's Barn. The house

was a hub of activity - men coming and going. Kent asked me to send up my brother immediately and tell him to prepare for a long run. I saw Joe go off, togged out in his oilskins and top boots. All men were told to remain in the city and hold themselves in readiness

About 4 p.m. that evening we were strolling past the "Evening Mail" office, Cork Hill, when we heard the tramp of marching men. On looking towards Dame Street, we saw the Irish Citizen Army; every man appeared heavily laden; they had a cart with them; it was also loaded; I think it had a ladder attached, with ropes and axles hanging on the outside. I cannot recall whether James Connolly or Madame Markievicz was with them. They went up by Castle Street.

EASTER MONDAY, 1916.

Sometime around 8 a.m. on Easter Monday, Captain Tom McCarthy called to Lieutenant O'Grady's home, and gave us the order for the general mobilisation at Emerald Square, Cork Street. I slept in O'Grady's home on Easter Sunday night. Being in charge of the right-half Company, I set out to notify my Section Leaders, Frank Burke of James Street and John Kelly, Donore Avenue, while O'Grady of the left-half went to John V. Joyce, Terenure. I cannot recollect who was the fourth Section Leader. I remember Charlie, on arriving back after seeing his men, telling me that he had a narrow escape at Leonard's Corner. A touring

car, loaded with British officers, nearly ran him down (he was cycling). It appears that the enemy had also begun to move.

It was about 11 a.m. when the Volunteers started to assemble at Emerald Square, Cork Street. While waiting for the line-up, the men stood about in groups, chatting quietly. In a conversation with Captain McCarthy, he told me that a split had occurred in the Executive Body, that O'Neill and Hobson were against us turning out, and spoiled our chances of success. I replied that we "have to see it through", or words to that effect. Just then, some girls came into the Square in a hysterical state; they apparently heard that the fight was about to commence. The Captain went over and tried to quieten them. Commandant Kent then came into the Square, and the order to line up was given. "C" Company mustered nearly a hundred men. The Captain took Lieutenant O'Grady's rifle and handed it over to an unarmed Volunteer; he gave him a nine-foot pike instead. The Battalion proceeded to march down Cork Street. I took up position in the rear of the Company. Lieutenant Liam Cosgrave of "B" Company marched beside me. There was a horse and cart in front, loaded with sledgehammers, crowbars, etc. The Captain, with O'Grady, was in front; I could see the latter's pike towering high above the rifle in front of me. There was no singing - none of the usual humour that accompanied manoeuvres and route marches. While passing through Marrowbone Lane, one(?) of the

Companies wheeled into the distillery. We proceeded around the back of Guinness'es, down Edwington Lane and out into James Street.

On arriving at the entrance to the South Dublin Union, we wheeled in. As "C" Company was doing so, the Captain called to O'Grady to get a sledge-hammer out of the cart and, at the same time, ordered me to take the rear section and follow him. While proceeding towards Mount Brown, he told me that we were going to take over Roe's Distillery. This was the first intimation I got of the post allotted to us. As the section wheeled down Cromwell's Quarters, he told me to take two men and cut off the top of the steps, and report immediately the advance of the enemy. I placed Sean Gogan at the top of the steps, and Paddy Byrne across the roadway looking down the hill towards Kilmainham, and gave them their orders.

This section comprised about twenty-three Volunteers: Section Leader John Kelly, Sqd. Ldrs. George Byrne and Pat Ward; Volunteers Martin Keogh, Michael Cunningham, Sean Gogan, Paddy Byrne, Frank Murphy, James O'Toole, Henry and Tom Gaskins (brothers), Patrick and Bernard Ward (brothers), George Quinn, Tom Doran, Sean Nugent, John Dowling, Larry Sinnott, Willie Bowles, Dan Horan, John J. Dunne, Willie Fagan and Mike McCabe. The Captain, myself, John Kelly and George Quinn were the only men who wore uniforms.

As for arms, we had about four modern rifles, one(?) shotgun, three revolvers, a few bayonets. The

Captain and I, in addition to the revolvers already mentioned, carried swords, and O'Grady his pike. I think there were one or two unarmed men. The remainder of the men had Howth guns. I reckon we had a little over 300 rounds of ammunition. These were the only type of weapons the section possessed.

Before proceeding further, I'll describe Roe's Distillery. This building is a three-storey, right-angle building, situated on Mount Brown, at the north-west corner of the South Dublin Union at James Street. Its frontage on Mount Brown consisted of a double building (back and front), used for the storing and drying of grain. On the east side, it was bound by Cromwell's Quarters, or "Forty Steps"; here it is a single three-storey building, used for washing, drying and roasting grain, with boilers in the basement. The premises extended about a hundred yards in each direction, north and west. A small yard was in rear, with steps descending to a large triangular-shaped yard at the level of Bow Bridge. bound by the river Camac and Bow Bridge. There were two entrances - one at Mount Brown, and the other at the rear at Bow Bridge. At the corner of the distillery was a private house, detached. The top windows in front overlooked a field on the opposite side of Mount Brown, sloping up from a low wall at the footpath. It was bound on three sides by hawthorn hedges, and on the fourth by the South Dublin Union wall. To the best of my recollection, there was a second field further west, with four or five

small cottages down at the bottom of Mount Brown. The latter field and cottages were completely out of view; so was "Garden Hill". The roadway at the bottom of the hill turns slightly S-shape. There was no vision beyond the top hedge of the field in front into the interior of the Union grounds. The rear of the premises was dominated by the Royal Hospital, about 300 yards of which looked down into the upper and lower yards. The rear windows of the front building commanded the brow of Irwin Street, and on the side building the top window looked over the houses towards Kilmainham Lane and Royal Hospital. The whole premises has since undergone structural alterations, both interior and exterior.

The section passed down, and entered by the gate at Bowbridge. While standing at the top of the steps, a small hostile crowd gathered, but most of the shouting and roaring came from below. After ordering Seán to let no one down, I hastened down to Bowbridge; here a large hostile crowd of men and women had gathered. Lieutenant O'Grady, with Sqd. Ldr. Pat Ward and Volunteer O'Toole were erecting a barricade with old packing-cases across the bridge. The women spat at us and shouted jingo slogans, while the men started to pull down the barricade. The remainder of the section had gone inside. The butts of the rifles were used on the men; O'Toole knocked out two of them; the crowd then scattered. I hurried up the steps and met a Dublin constable coming down to see what was the matter. I ordered him back

up to the top where Sean Gogan was posted, and ordered the latter not to let him away. I returned to O'Grady. Both places were quiet now; the crowds had dispersed. On going up to Seán, I found the policeman missing. I asked him where he went, and Seán told me that he had gone into a side door of the small school which was on the opposite corner. On going around to the front, I saw that he had come out by the front door and was hurrying towards James Street. I chased after him and, drawing my revolver, yelled at him to get back. After some hesitation, he retraced his steps. Back with Seán, I took his rifle and loaded the breech and handed it back to him, at the same time telling him to keep his prisoner covered and not to let him away. O'Grady had just come up and joined with us at the top of the steps, when Paddy Byrne rushed over and told us that two enemy advance guards were coming up Mount Brown, in the centre of the roadway. I turned to the constable (Spillane) and told him to get away as quickly as he could. We all then rushed down to the back gate and, to our dismay, found ourselves locked out. We hammered and kicked. Pat Ward tried to scale the wall but it was useless. Just then, a single shot rang out; this, I later learned, came from a gable window of the Union facing down Mount Brown. This was followed by a burst of firing coming from the direction of the front of the distillery. Barely twenty minutes had elapsed from the time we arrived, when the fighting commenced. In the meanwhile someone inside, realising our plight, came down and let us in.

On going to the upper yard, I saw the Captain with two men in a little office there; one, I think, was the boilerman, the other, some sort of a supervisor - a Belgian refugee; the latter was very indignant at being held there. After some consideration, it was decided to let them go. The Captain and I then went through the building. The men were already in firing positions at the windows. The firing in front had increased in volume, but was only rifle fire. To the best of my recollection, the men were distributed as follows: O'Grady, Sinnott, Murphy McCabe and Fagan occupied the top loft which extended right across over the rear building, partly divided by a centre wall; there was no exit from the top floor covering the rear portion to get down to the loft below: Kelly, Sqd. Ld. Ward, Quinn, Captain Dóran and George Byrne were in the middle loft in the front, overlooking the field. Sean Nugent, Tom Gaskin, J.J. Dunne and Sean Gogan, the ground floor. The brothers Pat and Bernard Ward were on the middle floor in the rear portion of the double building looking towards the top of Irwin Street and towards the Royal Hospital So much for the frontage of the premises. In the side building (east) bordering Cromwdl's Quarters, Seán Dowling, Dan Horan and Larry O'Brien were on the top floor; Willie Bowles, Martin Keogh and Paddy Byrne occupied the middle, while Henry Gaskin, Mike Cunningham and O'Toole were situated down by the boiler covering the rear gate. I am not quite positive of a

few men, but that is to the best of my recollection.

The firing had become intense, and came mostly from the enemy at the end of Mount Brown or Kilmainham direction. I went up to O'Grady to see if we could locate them through any of the top windows, but in vain. I came down to the middle front and, on looking out of the window, here saw three Volunteers lying in a group under the hedge across the road. They were Sean O'Shaughnessy, George Owens and Gannon (a Red Cross man). Two were lying face down, while Owens was on his back. He was wounded and was making great efforts with his right hand to move his water-bottle to his mouth; he got it to his neck, when it tumbled over and fell down beside his head; his hand slipped down to his side; his face had the pallor of death; he was slowly dying. By this time, the enemy machine guns had come into action and were whipping the hedge and field. A fourth man (McDowell?) lay on his back, with his knee up and arms outstretched, near the Union wall; he was dead. The sight was depressing; their position was hopeless - no back or cover to protect them.

I came away and, on rushing down to the ground floor by the ladder stairway, my sword got between my legs and threw me to the bottom. Sean Nugent, who was stationed at the door looking out into the upper yard, broke his sides laughing as I picked myself up. I showered my blessing on the ornament as I threw it on the floor.

The machine guns had now opened up on the rear

of the Distillery in long and short blasts, raking the yards and walls. Having directed the lads on the ground floor to build up a barricade of sacks where Nugent was stationed (there was very little of the grain filled in sacks; most of it was spread out), I dashed across, zigzagging for cover into the entrance of the side building, as splinters and mortar showered down into the yard. I inspected the lads here, and went to the top floor to see if I could locate the machine guns' positions, but it was useless As far as I can remember, the windows here were high up, only allowing a tall man to see out. (I forgot to mention that there were a few windows in this building facing east, but they were down at the bottom almost at a level with the 'Forty Steps'.) After spending some time over here, I left and, again diving for cover here and there as I crossed the yard, this time went into the entrance of the rear portion of the front building at Mount Brown. Only the brothers Patrick and Bernard Ward were on the middle loft. On coming to the top steps here, my ears were deafened with a burst of machine gun fire that came right in through one of the windows. I threw myself down on the steps, and saw the brothers sprawling on their backs on the floor. They had been peeping out of one of the windows. I jumped up and ran towards them. To my great relief, I saw them scrambling to their feet. I shouted to them to get back from the window. The windows here were extra large, and open almost down to the floor level. The loft was completely

empty, so there was nothing to block the windows. We were a bit shaken. After staying some time with them I left, advising them not to be together at the same window and to be wary when taking up a position.

I made another dash across the yard, returning into the front building. I did not enjoy these crossings. Once inside, I reported to the Captain, and went up to O'Grady. The firing was still heavy, front and rear. Charlie told me that he suggested breaking out towards Dunlop's Laundry, but the Captain ruled against it, probably as the building we occupied was already large enough for the few men that were there. As I already have stated that the top floor extended over the rear middle loft, where the brothers Ward, were stationed, I suggested breaking a hole in the floor; and, with a ladder we found, we could keep in touch with the Wards without having to go through the yard entrance. We had no pick-axes or crowbars, but Sinnott said he could break the floor between the rafters with a cwt. weight that was there. Having warned the brothers underneath, the lads started pounding the floor. The noise resounded throughout the empty lofts and mingled with the firing. We also heard firing in the distance. I cannot say if it was from the Rialto direction; it may have been from Marrowbone Lane distillery.

It was sometime about 5 p.m. The Captain and I went around on inspection. He gave orders that no wild or useless firing was to be engaged in, owing to the shortness of ammunition and the constant

expectation of a sudden attack at close quarters - only where the enemy was actually sighted. He (the Captain) noticed that no water was made available. so a few empty earthen jars were filled.

On returning to the front, we saw the Corporation ambulance come up the hill and stop on the opposite side of the road. Volunteer Owens was lifted down from under the hedge and placed on a stretcher and put into the ambulance. There was an elderly man with them. Tom told me that he was Mr. David Sears, editor of the "Enniscorthy Echo". They did not attempt to stir the other two men. I thought they were dead, they lay so still. I think it was about this time that Sean Nugent told me that a priest, passing the bottom windows, told him that the Germans had landed in Kerry. (This may have been Father Smith, Passionist, Mount Argus).

Sometime later, we had a sudden alarm. Larry O'Brien rushed over from the side building and told us that the grain was ready to burst into flames. The Captain and I ran over, and found the men, with their coats off, shovelling the grain for all they were worth. The place was reeking with the smell of roasting barley. It appears that the men down near the boilers, like all of us, were longing for a cup of tea. They stirred up the fires and put on fresh coal, unaware of what was happening above. After the fires were extinguished and the barley turned and turned, we sat down exhausted.

The firing was heavy all day, and the enemy

machine guns were, throughout the day, spraying the rear of the premises.

When darkness fell, we prepared to settle down for the night. The guns had almost stopped - an occasional short blast and a rifle shot now and then. The men were instructed to take turns in watching, while others rested. The men down in the lower yard, where the boilers were situated, were told to be extra careful, as this was considered the weakest spot. We could not see what was going on outside the wall or in the houses on the Camac overlooking the lower yard, and were warned of the possibility of grenades being thrown over the wall into the yard.

The officers divided the time between twelve midnight and 6 a.m. I propped myself against the wall on the middle floor. I could not sleep. An occasional murmur would be heard here and there, a cough - the dust and loose barley on the floor were getting into someone's throat. None slept, but one, to my knowledge. I went on my rounds of inspection between 4 and 6 a.m. I remember passing from loft to loft in the darkness, barely distinguishing the forms squatting against the walls, speaking in a hushed voice; if all was well, someone would answer. The dawn was breaking when I visited Sean Nugent's post. He had made a comfortable bed with the sacks behind his barricade. Sean was lying down with his shotgun and improvised bayonet (a blade of a garden shears) nursing in his arms. He was fast asleep, and the hammer of his gun was cocked. I remember

standing over him, afraid to disturb him, fearing the gun might go off and blow his head off. I gently gripped the hammer with one hand and woke him up.

EASTER TUESDAY.

The early morning, like the night, was quiet except for an odd shot now and then. We heard the explosion of grenades in the distance during the night We were all very hungry. The few sandwiches we carried had long disappeared. A slug from the water bottle was now all that was left.

About 9 or 10 a.m., I thought it would be a good idea if I got the sacks of grain out of the lower loft and placed them on top of a very low wall bordering the upper yard. I got four men from the side building, Larry O'Brien, Martin Keogh and others. Having procured a small truck, we commenced to struggle out over the cobblestones. We had no sooner got the first in place when the yard was raked with machine gun fire. We all dashed for cover. After a short interval we tried again. Another burst showered down on us. Further attempts had to be abandoned.

That morning when in the front, someone drew my attention to the fact that the two men under the hedge on the opposite side of the road were gone. They apparently moved under the cover of darkness during the night. (Long afterwards I learned that Sean O'Shaughnessy had been wounded in the leg and was helped by Gannon through the Union grounds, and was

told that, when seeking refuge within one of the buildings there, they were fired on by their own men who mistook them for the enemy in the darkness.)

About noon, a flag was put out of the gable window of the Union facing towards Kilmainham. I think it was a green harp on a yellow ground. (I heard afterwards that it was a window blind, with a harp painted on it.) We saw a figure appear occasionally at this window, across the road to our left. The Captain now concentrated in getting in touch with the Union through this man. Everything was done to attract his attention - blowing whistles, calling over, waving handkerchiefs - but we could get no response. Mike McCabe, who was probably the youngest member of the post and who had been a signaller in the Fianna and able to semaphore, volunteered to signal from the roof. He was hoisted up through the skylight, and no sooner had he started to wave his handkerchief, when the machine guns burst open on him. He was dragged in immediately.

On my rounds of inspection, I became aware of the danger of the private house at the corner of the distillery being occupied by the enemy and the garrison cut in two. I examined the basement windows which were protected by iron bars. After some time, I succeeded in wrenching one of the bars away. I went back and reported to the Captain, who instructed me to place a man in the back of the hall, covering the halldoor. This was done. The rifle and machine gun fire were still going on, but not as bad or

continuous as on Monday. Later in the day, when visiting the private house, I found the post deserted. I later learned that this man fell into the hands of the enemy. Two men were then placed in this post.

Two incidents occurred - I think it would be about 4 p.m. I was in the side building when one of the lads called me quickly over to the window. I ran over, and saw a small party of the enemy, unarmed and wearing Red Cross armlets, marching down Irwin Street. They asked me if they would fire on them. I ordered them not to fire, as they were unarmed and were wearing the Red Cross. We couldn't very well shoot them down. There were about six of them. Sometime later, when with Tom in the front of the building, a horse drawn Red Cross ambulance, with three soldiers sitting in front, passed down from the front of the Union, down the hill by the distillery. It had a canvas hood covering it, so it was not possible to see inside it. Those sitting in front appeared unarmed. The Captain took the same view as I did on the previous occasion. I did not know then, but was told by John Joyce after Easter Week that some of the enemy had been shot by his men in ambush at the foot of Mount Brown on Easter Monday morning and were taken into the cottages beyond Dunlop's Laundry.

The Captain again tried to get in touch with the Union garrison. This time, he sent several men across to the entrance gate but, after kicking and hammering on the gate, could get no response. One of

these men, Frank Murphy, reported that he actually saw some men in the windows of the Union and signed to them that he wanted to get in, but they paid no heed to him.

After these attempts had failed, I carried on my rounds. The shooting in the locality had died down considerably, and was not so continuous. The men rested about. The loss of sleep, hunger, the excitement of the previous day and that morning, and now the news that we had failed to establish communication with the Union garrison did not help to brighten them up. Nevertheless we felt comparatively safe within.

On returning to the front, the Captain approached me. He had been apparently reviewing our position over in his mind. He referred to our failure to get into the Union and said he could see no use in holding out in the distillery any longer, and that he would order the evacuation of the post; the men could go out singly or in pairs, so as not to draw attention. I was surprised to hear this. I had to admit that the situation looked bad and that there did not appear to be any hopes of getting into the Union. The Captain then left me and went downstairs. Charlie came down from above. I overed to him the Captain's conversation to me. He was also surprised. Though we felt fairly safe within, we would sooner or later have to prepare for the worst. After some time the Captain returned. I asked him if we could all go over in a body across to the entrance of the Union,

the consequence of being found sheltering rebels. They showed us to a vacant cellar, and brought us some bread and tea. It was now dusk. We lay down on the ground and were soon asleep.

The following morning I got a change of clothes and, hearing that they were letting some people through, we left and got by, without being challenged. It was the following Monday when I succeeded in reaching Grattan Bridge, after finding further shelter. Here after several attempts, I finally got across and reached home.

What happened to the other men? Some, I learned, got home, only later to be arrested there. Others walked into Marrowbone Lane garrison, while others were taken prisoners only a short distance from the Post. One of the latter was Sean Gogan, who told me that, when lodged in Kilmainham Gaol, the first person to come into his cell was the constable (Spillane) who questioned and threatened him to reveal my identity, but Sean insisted that I was a stranger. Again, in Richmond Barracks, he saw him scrutinising the prisoners drawn up in ranks for identification purposes.

On arriving home, I found that my brother, Joseph, (whom I had last seen reporting to Commandant Kent's home on Easter Sunday morning) had just preceded me. He had been taken prisoner from our home on either Wednesday or Thursday. He told me he had been given despatches to deliver to Liam Mellows,

who was then with Vice Commandant McLardner at Athenry. My brother stopped there on Easter Sunday night. On leaving early the following morning, he was given despatches to take back to Commandant General P.H. Pearse, and was told he would find him at the G.P.O. While passing through Lucan, on the return journey, he saw a number of R.I.C. across the road, in front, signalling for him to stop. Ignoring them, he put down his head and accelerated his machine to a terrific speed, and dashed through them. Proceeding along the Conyingham Road, near the Magazine Fort, some people warned him that it was going to blow up, but he continued on and, on coming to Ellis' Quay, ran through a cross-fire between the Mendicity and enemy troops attacking. On reaching near Church Street, he found the Quays barricaded, so had to go around by North King Street. Here he was again stopped by barricades. He left his machine in with a cycle agent named Reynolds, and proceeded on foot to the G.P.O. where he handed over the despatches safely into the hand of Pearse himself. I cannot say what time he arrived there. Knowing that I would be out and feeling the responsibility for the safety of the younger members of the family, he returned home. A day or two later, three of the enemy troops were shot, one on the Quays and two in Strand Street, near our home. A house to house search was made. I remember my brother telling me of a man from the house at the corner of Eustace Street, on the other side of the Quay (Wellington), and pointing across to No. 27.

This man apparently did not forget seeing the Tricolour flying there in the early days. Joe was taken prisoner, and brought to an Auction Room in Capel Street. The place was packed with civilians of all types. It was on either Saturday or Sunday they were all taken out by an officer. He lined them up along the footpath at the top of the street near the bridge. Enemy troops were seated behind machine guns at the opposite corners of the bridge. The officer wore no boots, and was rushing about in his stockinged feet, shouting and roaring. He warned them if anyone attempted to stir or show any signs of manifestation they would be mowed down by the gun posted at the corners. Joe said he couldn't understand what was afoot, but shortly after he heard singing coming from down the street. On looking, he saw a small band of men walking towards them. Some wore Volunteer uniforms, smoking large cigars, others chatted to each other, and some were singing "The Soldiers' Song". They were worn out, dirty and unshaven. In the centre, they carried a man on a stretcher. They slowly strolled past and wended their way toward Dublin Castle. He was compelled to suppress his feeling, knowing the consequence. When the heroic band had gone out of sight, they were all hustled back to the Auction Room. Sometime later they were released. Before closing on this subject, I would like to mention that my brother received no recognition for his part in the Rising.

THE AFTERMATH OF 1916.

It is now thirty-three years since that eventful week, yet my memory is fairly clear, and I have given a faithful and honest account of the facts relating to Roe's Garrison that I know. Nevertheless I would not consider the narrative complete without relating its aftermath and, in doing so, to comment on the general situation in the area as it later came to my knowledge.

Of the general plan of operations to take place in this area, I knew nothing but what I saw being carried out, or if these were frustrated by the split in the Executive Body. I am told by Section Leader J. Kelly that William O'Brien (teacher in Sts. Michael & John Schools, Lower Exchange Street), Captain in the 4th Battalion, was Chief of Staff, and that they both slept in a house in Donore Avenue on Easter Sunday night. O'Brien had with him a large bundle of papers and his uniform in a suitcase. On the following morning, Kelly was standing beside Commandant Kent in Emerald Square, when O'Brien approached Kent. Some arguing ensued between the officers. John saw the Commandant brush O'Brien aside, and heard him say: "I've no time for that now". I saw O'Brien myself walk out of the Square. O'Brien's uniform and papers found in the house were burned during the week. Did his absence and information he possessed as Chief of Staff hinder putting into effect the plans of operation for this area? This is a question that may have some

bearing on the general situation.

As I have previously stated, I received no instructions regarding the general or particular objective allotted to Roe's garrison. Tom McCarthy may have known them. It is obvious, seeing that no order was given to erect barricade across Mount Brown, that one of the major objectives here was to ambush the enemy forces. I knew nothing of our men lining the hedge, nor did I know of John Joyce having a handful of men at the foot of the hill. Had the Volunteer, stationed at the window at the gable end of the Union, withheld his fire (that single shot) until the troops were half way up the hill, they would have been caught between a cross fire and suffered severely, whereas it was only John Joyce's men that inflicted most of the punishment. I heard that, owing to the sudden approach of the enemy, the men in the field hadn't time to get into position, also that, when Joyce's section retired to a small gate at the Union wall at the top of the field, they found it locked and had to climb over, under heavy fire. How did the enemy break through into the Union grounds? Was it from Garden Hill? And was it this section that intercepted Captain Irvine's Company crossing the interior to take up position at Rialto end, who were forced to surrender after putting up a tough fight?

Sometime late 1916 or early 1917, a meeting was held in a house in Thomas Street, near Watling Street corner (now occupied by Guinness'es), of the Battalion

officers to review the actions of various garrisons. The meeting was conducted by General R. Mulcahy. I remember Michael Lynch (Superintendent of the Corporation Markets), who fought in the South Dublin Union, telling how Kent was missing from some time on the Monday until Tuesday night. He had apparently gone out to get in touch with Captain Irvine's Company and found himself cut off from his men, and had covered his uniform with a sack to get back. In the meanwhile, the second in command, Cathal Brugha lay dangerously wounded, and the lads there were in a state of great alarm, as the enemy had ventured into some of the buildings occupied by them.

As I have already stated, several attempts were made to establish communication with the Union. I honestly do not believe it was possible for any of us to get in there at any time, either Monday or Tuesday. I am told by O'Grady that, when he was getting the sledge-hammer, he saw the lads there wheeling a large float, loaded with paving stones, to place against the gate.

It is a well known fact that a few posts proved a stalemate, others held an impregnable command of the surrounding area and were more or less besieged, while others were fiercely attacked from the very outset. That of Watkin's Brewery apparently was one in the first category, as Captain Colbert withdrew his men who actually marched up Cork Street into Marrowbone Lane Distillery.

These observations are merely pieced together

from conversations of men in the other garrisons, and I cannot, therefore, vouch as to their accuracy. However, I think they are of sufficient importance to mention.

Sometime late in 1916, an inquiry was held into the cause of the evacuation of Roe's by the Senior Officers then available - Vice Commandant C. Brugha and Lieutenant Liam Ó Broin (D. Company?). It was held one night in Nolan's shop in Cork Street, facing Donore Avenue. O'Grady and I attended. I do not remember any others being there, nor do I know if Tom McCarthy was asked to attend. We were interviewed individually and asked to give our account. I briefly outlined the facts, as given in this statement. I was asked only two questions, and those by Brugha: first, why we didn't attack the troops at the foot of Mount Brown; second, why we didn't hold up the enemy on St. John's Road with our fire. To the first I replied that "in order to do so, we would have had to take our men out on to the open roadway before we could even get to see them", and to the second query that "St John's Road was completely out of view from even the highest windows at the rear of the post". These officers appeared satisfied with our account. It was some time later when we were notified that all officers were exonerated from any censure, and to retain our ranks. I think it was Larry Bryne informed us. Later, we received instructions to reorganise the Company of what men were available. I think this came from Lieutenant Garry Bryne. This

was the only inquiry that I attended. Though McCarthy, O'Grady and I were members of the same Circle of the I.R.B., neither O'Grady nor I were called to any inquiry by that body.

Before closing this survey, I would like to state that the men and officers of Roe's, in evacuating this Post, acted as a disciplined body on the orders of the Commanding Officer. All the men listed were awarded military service pensions, with the exception of three, to my knowledge. Two, I cannot account for, as they are at present in the U.S.A. Of the three, Bernard Ward's relatives received a medal, granted posthumously - he died in 1917. Doran died of illness received during imprisonment during Black and Tan period. His relatives never applied on his behalf. The third, William Bowles, now over seventy years of age, failed to apply in time, with the results that the latter two names are not inscribed on the Roll of Honour in the National Museum, Kildare Street, owing to a restriction (Certificate of Military Service) by the Minister for Defence, but it is hoped that this omission will be rectified some day in the near future. Tom McCarthy, though in receipt of a military service pension, declined to sign.

After Easter Week, raids and arrests by police and military were a daily feature. I felt unsafe at home, so got out. I got information that Larry Reardon and Peter McGrath, both of whom fought in the

College of Surgeons, were stopping with friends in Aungier Street. We agreed to hide ourselves in the Dublin mountains, above Ticknock. I had a small tent. We divided our luggage, and went our separate ways. We also had a lad, named George O'Neill, who fought, I think, in Jacobs. He was a glass embosser and worked in Mercer Street. The latter was a very silent individual. We never felt at home with him. When we laughed and chatted over our experiences, O'Neill invariably wore a cynical smile. It came as no surprise in later years when I saw him wearing Black and Tan uniform. McGrath told me that O'Neill had a burst-up with Simon Donnelly (3rd Battalion). On Bloody Sunday morning, McGrath met O'Neill at Nelson Pillar and spoke to him of the good work done that morning. O'Neill just remarked that they would "pay for it". The ensuing event at Croke Park confirmed McGrath's suspicion and was duly reported. Unfortunately, when later seen, it was never the time or place. Two traps were set for him, but he never bit. Finding it getting too dangerous, he retired into uniform, and one day, while standing outside the lower Castle gate, saw Donnelly pass by and had him promptly arrested. Coming back to our little camp in the hills, all went well for about three weeks. One day, returning back from Rathfarnham, with food for dinner, we found Larry, whom we had left behind, hurryingly dismantling tent. On asking him the reason, he told us that he had been visited by two R.I.C. men. We returned to the city and, after a few more months, things became normal and we returned to

employment.

I think it was early in 1917 a meeting was held in Cathal Brugha's home, and the reorganisation of the Battalion began. Following this, an election of officers for "C" Company took place. Garry Byrne was elected Captain, John V. Joyce and myself - Lieutenants. We went back to the old spot at Larkfield, Kimmage. With scouts out, we carried on our weekly parades and drilling, until several raids by the police were made on the place. I remember on one of these occasions the men were just scrambling out of the hall as the police were rushing down from the gate leading in. Fortunately, it was a dark winter's night and we succeeded in making our way across the field at the rear unnoticed. We then abandoned Larkfield, and began drilling in the Sandpits in the Greenhills towards Ballymount. Here too it became dangerous. I remember one evening - it was in the summer - about sixty or seventy men were present ("C" Company only). Scouts were out at Walkinstown Cross-roads, as it was in this direction was the nearest approach. The Sergeants were marching their sections up and down, until one of them went up to the hedge on the Clondalkin direction in the pits. Fortunately, one of the men, looking through a gap in the hedge, saw a large party of British soldiers about a hundred yards away advancing in extended order, with helmets and fixed bayonets. The order was immediately given to get out through the hills towards the Half-way House. Having got safely away from the pits, the

sections were sent in different directions.

The British troops came from the direction least expected. Four or five bicycles had to be abandoned. These were taken possession of by the R.I.C. and deposited in Tallaght Barracks. One of the lads - I think it was McSweeny of Harold's Cross - whose new machine had been seized, found out where the machines lay. About a week or so later, he gathered together a few of the boys and, with a revolver or two, raided the barrack, held up the orderly, procured their bicycles and got away without having to fire a shot. This may have been the first raid by the Company on an enemy position after 1916.

Sometime late in 1917 or early 1918, Captain Garry Byrne was transferred from the Company to G.H.Q. Staff. The vacancy was filled by J.V. Joyce; I became 1st Lieutenant, and Charles O'Grady 2nd.

During 1918 the training of the Companies and Battalion was in full swing. I remember one Sunday the Battalion was manoeuvring between St. Enda's College, Rathfarnham, and Ticknock. About ten men of "C" Company under Section Leader Paddy Kelly lined the hedge opposite Emmet's Fort, covering the rear. Commandant Kelly, with some Staff Officers, had just moved forward. I had gone down towards Whitechurch Cross-roads to get in touch with some of our scouts when a lorry, loaded with police, arrived opposite the Fort. Kelly and his men were all arrested. Some cycle scouts had got away and warned the Commandant and myself. The police inspector, after marching his

captives some distance towards Rathfarnham, apparently realised that he hadn't the Battalion Staff, and let Kelly and his men go home.

On another occasion Lieutenant O'Grady took his half-Company for an all-night's outing, one Saturday, to the woods at Bohernabreena, near the Waterworks. I took charge of the cyclists, who acted as advance scouts, protecting the main party as they moved out via Wellington Lane, Balrothery and Firhouse. The party had no sooner moved across the Dodder, when our scouts reported a large cycle detachment of British troops advancing from Templeogue in the Tallaght direction. Our scouts were able to keep in touch with them until the main party were safely encamped in the woods at Bohernabreena. Sentries were posted. After some exercises, the men settled down for the night. It was a beautiful moonlight night. Towards the early hours Sunday morning, a sentry reported movements on the outskirts. All men stood-to, while a patrol was sent out to investigate. They had no sooner reached the spot when the wood echoed with shouts and roars from an attacking force. (The other half-Company, led by Lieutenant Sean Dowling, had planned to take us by surprise but, through the vigilance of our sentries, we were not caught napping)

On Sunday morning, we went to Mass at the Dominican Priory. The men were warned to go singly or in pairs, and not to draw attention. Despite this, two or three men (Sean Nugent, McSweeney and another) marched out after Mass, playing rebel

marching tunes on mouth organs. They were chased through the Priory grounds by an R.I.C. Sergeant, but got away from him. Back in the woods, we set out on our return journey to the city on the same route. Two remained behind to spend the day there. One was Section Leader Denny O'Brien. They later reported that we had only gone about an hour when lorries, loaded with troops and police, arrived and searched the woods for us. I just mention those incidents to show the conditions. Though constantly hazarded by enemy forces, we still carried on with the training.

1917-1918 were years of the elections in which Volunteers gave active assistance. They went in small groups from the City Battalions down the country to attend them, cycling and camping on the roadside on the journey. These elections were by no means mere show. They often resulted in casualties, in conflict with Redmondite element. I, with others, attended Kilkenny for William Cosgrave, and Joe McGuinness for Longford. I remember returning from Newtownforbes to Longford town with two lads, with their heads in bandages, after a free-for-all scrap. Another election was that of McCartan for Newry. This was a three-corner fight. A call for Volunteers to go down was sent round, as the Unionist and Redmondites had more or less joined forces against the Republican supporters. A couple of hundred Volunteers under Dick Mulcahy assembled at Beresford Place, and marched to Amiens Street Station where a special train awaited us. On arrival at Newry that night, we marched through the town to our barrack - a disused warehouse

in William Street. As we approached our quarters, we received a 'glorious' welcome from our opponents, consisting of bottles and stones. During the two or three days there, clashes were a frequent occurrence. The men did duty protecting election rooms, patrolling roads and escorting vehicles. The morning of polling day, we were lined up in two ranks outside our principal election rooms, awaiting to be detailed into patrols for duty. A large force of armed R.I.C., under a District Inspector, were present. There was also a large hostile crowd on the opposite side of the street, who engaged in stone throwing. Several of our lads had been struck; their temper and patience were solely tried. We were just wondering how long we were going to endure it, when Mike Lynch (Superintendent, Corporation Markets), who, I think, was in charge of the 4th Battalion men, approached the D.I. and told him if he did not take action, he was ordering the Volunteers to clear the street. This had the desired effect, and order was restored.

The threat of conscription sent many young men of all types into the ranks of the Volunteers. I enrolled into "C" Company several clerical students from All Hallows; they had apparently stolen out from there in the darkness of night, and were anxious to keep their identity secret. The general situation at this time was very tense. There were practically little or no arms among the men. Nevertheless a scheme was drawn up so as not to be taken by surprise. This involved mobilising or banding together of the men into district groups, these combining with others

into large groups. The men were advised to get in a stock of iron rations. Large provision shops in the area were noted. I cannot say if any buildings were earmarked for occupation. Owing to the shortness of arms, the whole plan was more or less passive nature. There were many conferences between the leaders of the various political organisations. A small group were urging action before actual enforcement. Finally, de Valera went to Maynooth to confer with the Hierarchy. This was a long conference and lasted most of the day. It was said at the time that de Valera debated the pros and cons for four or five hours without a break, before finally winning their approval to oppose the enforcement. It was mooted that some Bishops had actually been in consultation with the British Authorities and had some agreement - one of every ten of military age. This may have been done with the best intention to avoid bloodshed, as it is hard now at this stage to realise the critical situation that then existed. Whatever occurred at Maynooth, it would appear that de Valera met with some opposition. It was in 1933 I met a teacher from Blackrock College (name unknown) who stated he was an intimate friend of the de Valera family, and that Liam Mellows stayed with his uncle at Conyngham Road after his escape from England in 1916. This man may be a nephew of Frank Fahy, Ceann Comhairle?

I took the opportunity to question him on the Maynooth Conference, and he informed me that it was no mere rumour, that there was an understanding between

some of the Hierarchy and the British.

When the threat of conscription passed over and the majority of our would-be Volunteers faded into thin air, we were back to normal, but with a difference. A determined effort was now made to procure arms, and the making of bombs was started. O'Grady, I and others of "C" Company attended a class for instructions. Andy Hyland (Bookbinder, father of Molly now Mrs. Lawlor) was our instructor. These were held in a small room in Battalion Headquarters (an old disused premises, where James Street Post Office now stands). These bombs were the first attempt to get near the Mills pattern. The casing was not sectional but plain. One-third of a stick of gelignite, with about four or five inches of fuse, with detonator inserted, was placed inside the casing and padded up. The opening of the shell was cemented over, leaving about three inches of fuse sticking out. We were shown how to fasten detonators, taking care to hold fuse end in hand, not detonator - cutting gelignite and holing it with skiver, etc. Each man would do a bit to familiarise himself with the work. I remember one night Andy was cementing the tops. An extra large bomb on the table aroused all our curiosities. One of the Kavanagh's of Marrowbone Lane would insist on taking it up to feel its weight and would swing it backwards and forwards. I was waiting for Andy to tell him off. Just then, the bom slipped out of Kavanagh's hand, struck the wall opposite, and rolled around the floor at our feet.

We were all frozen stiff, except Andy who went on methodically at his work; having picked up the bomb, he casually dismissed the class with - "That's all for to-night, lads".

Every effort was made to obtain arms. Some were got from friendly British soldiers, handed out from barracks under cover of darkness. With Keogh, Barker, High Street - also a 1916 man - I succeeded in getting two short Lee Enfield's for the Company. Again, I contacted a man named McEvoy, who worked in Kavanagh's, Gunsmiths, Dame Street, and purchased a Colt, a long and a short Webley revolver. These had been brought in by people for sale. The transaction was never registered.

I remember one amusing incident that happened to me one day, while at work in the shop on the Quay. A seafaring man walked in and asked to see the boss. As my brother, Joe, was out at the time, I told him I was in charge, but he insisted on seeing Mr. Egan. By his attitude, I reckoned it had nothing to do with the business and was personal, so I told him I was his brother. I was expecting him to ask me for a loan of money but, to my surprise, he drew a long Webley revolver from his pocket, saying he was short of cash and I could have it for fifty bob. I was bewildered and naturally showed signs of hesitation. I took and opened it; it was unloaded. Holding it in my hands, admiring it, I cast an inquiring glance at the man. He appeared to know what was passing through my mind, as he said: "Its alright with me, son. There's no catch". Having got him the money, he handed over the

prize, thanking me, and was gone as abruptly as he came. When my brother came in, he laughed heartily over the purchase, but claimed the gun, as it was his money bought it. I had already one, so I couldn't object. My sailor, no doubt, was tipped off in one of the local pubs, as our political persuasion was well known to our workmen and those in the neighbourhood.

In our drive to secure arms, plans were drawn up to raid Trinity College, where a quantity of Lee Enfields were stored in a hut in the rear of the College grounds, adjacent to Pearse Street. The men had been actually mobilised at Oakley Road (where we were then meeting) for the job, when word came through, calling it off. It later transpired that the bores had been filled and were useless. Another escapade was an attempt to seize an anti-submarine gun from off a vessel at the North Wall. This too was called off at the last minute. However, several guns were seized from civilians in the neighbourhood of Kenilworth Square and Rathgar.

In 1919 the Battalion Staff and Officers' meetings were held in Tom Glynn's home at Portobello Harbour. At one of those meetings, I was appointed O/C of Battalion Communications. Seán Dowling was elected Lieutenant in "C" Company to fill the vacancy. Acting in this capacity, I was responsible for sending G.H.Q. despatches on their way to the Southern and sometimes to the Western Divisions. I received them from Commandant O'Kelly, with explicit instructions not

at my peril to let them fall into enemy hands. I was to hand them personally to Fr. O'Kelly, Presbytery, Kill, Co. Kildare, and the others to Donal O'Buckley, Maynooth. I received them once a week - sometimes twice when I would have the two districts. This duty I performed myself for many months. As I was more or less my own boss, I was able to leave off work and cycle immediately to either districts, as the case might be. Owing to their regularity and frequency, I had often to take a circuit route to avoid suspicion. The despatches were at this time enclosed in extra large envelopes, which were difficult to conceal. Sometimes I would put them down the legs of my trousers or pin them in the back of my shirt. After some time the distance was shortened to Clondalkin where I delivered them to clerk of the Catholic Church, and then only Southern despatches were received. Finally these were passed on direct from G.H.Q. to Andy Healy of Inchicore who, in turn, delivered them to Clondalkin.

I was now out of my old Company and, with the shortened relay and direct delivery of the despatches, the post I held became a nominal status. But before closing this record, there is one other incident relative to "C" Company that I should mention, as I think it may have been the means of prompting G.H.Q. in the speedy liquidation of the political section of the Detective Branch of the Dublin Metropolitan Police.

This incident occurred on a Sunday morning early

in 1920 when several of the lads were removing two boxes of explosives from a dump in Winetavern Street to Kavanagh's, Marrowbone Lane. (This dump was later discovered and Kavanagh arrested.) As the lads were crossing High Street to a small alleyway, they were intercepted and challenged by a young constable as to the contents of the boxes. Although being warned off at the point of a gun, he persisted in trying to effect an arrest, and was fatally wounded.

As a result of this shooting, Detective Officer Johnny ~~Redmond~~ Barton, who up to this time had carefully cloaked his activities, arrested a man who lived a short distance from the scene on that Sunday. He was released after several hours. It was apparent that Barton got some information, and was following on the right track until he was shot on the following Saturday evening. Detective Officers Dan Hoey, Smith, Wharton and others followed in short succession This was followed with the enforcement of curfew - when Paddy McGrath was shot and wounded by detectives in Westmoreland Street and his companion had to shoot his way through to make good his escape.

There are other events of the years between 1916 and 1920 I could refer to, and in which I took a small part but, as they are now generally known, I shall refrain from including them. Toward the end of 1920 and during 1921, I was more or less "on the run". This developed from a raid by Auxiliaries on the home of my brother-in-law, Paddy Kelly. Although a 1916 man and, at the time, an ective member of the Engineers

under Sam Irwin, he was not arrested during the raid, but the house was searched and the family questioned about me and where I was living. They told them that I didn't visit them and that they hadn't seen me for many years - that they didn't know anything about me.

Some time later, the shop on the Quay was raided by troops, on the same quest. I, at this time, was living at 32, South Circular Road. This raid was the result of a document (a list of available men at short notice) captured by the enemy, which a senior officer failed to destroy, making his escape.

After some time (during 1921) the Auxiliaries raided 36, South Circular Road (where my aunt previously lived before going to reside on the Quay after my father's death), and also 34, South Circular Road, which was then occupied by an old British loyalist who, I must say to his credit, never divulged that I was living next door. I then became aware that the premises on the Quay was under the vigilance of Castle touts from time to time, so I decided to get away on the country work of our business. This resulted in long absences from the city and prevented me from taking an active part in Battalion operations in the later stage of the struggle.

SIGNED: Patrick Egan

DATE: 15th Dec. 1949

WITNESS: W. Jury Lomdt

DATE: 15.12.49.

BH