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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913–21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 340

Witness

Mr. Oscar Traynor, T.D.,
14 Dollymount Ave.,
Dublin.

Identity

Lieut., Coy. Capt.,; Vice-Comdt.; Vice-Brigadier and Brigadier, Dublin Brigade.

Subject

(a) The Rising, Easter Week 1916 - Fairview and O'Connell St., Dublin;

(b) Raid for mails Rótunda Rink, 1919;

(c) Bloody Sunday, 21/11/1920;

(d) Escape of prisoners from Kilmainham, February 1921;

(e) Destruction of Custom House, May 1921;

(f) Re-organisation and the Truce.

Conditions, if any, stipulated by Witness

Nil

File No. S.508

Form B S M. 2

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ORIGINAL

STATEMENT BY OSCAR TRAYNOR, T.D.

14 Dollymount Avenue, Dublin.

CHAPTER I.

1914-1916.

I joined the Volunteers on 27th July, 1914, the Monday following the Howth gun-running. I was connected with football up to that and I broke with football when I saw that there was something serious pending. I joined "F" Company, 2nd Battalion Dublin Brigade, in Fairview Park. The officers of the Company were Captain McGee, who afterwards became a John Redmond man, M.W. O'Reilly, Lieutenant, and Connaughton, 2nd Lieutenant.

We trained in the ordinary way between that time and the split. The split was the division between the National Volunteers and the people who were regarded as being extremists At the date of the split the Company was something over 140 or 150 strong. Captain Frank Fahy presided and spoke at a specially convened meeting at that time. He was in the 1st Battalion and he represented Headquarters at that meeting. The case was put by speakers on both sides, and appeals were made to the men to go on this side or that side. Eventually the vote was something like 80 to 50 in favour of the National Volunteers. The division took place immediately, and the Irish Volunteers, as they were known, took possession of the Father Mathew Park and continued to drill and train there. I became an officer shortly after the split; I was elected 1st Lieut. straight away. Pat Sweeney was 2nd Lieutenant.

In the course of one of my early parades in Father Mathew Park, whilst we were out in the fields, I was approached by P.E. Sweeney who asked me if I would be prepared to join the Irish Republican Brotherhood. This I readily consented to do. Later on in the same evening I was brought before Liam Cullen, whom I knew very well, and for whom I was holding large quantities of weapons, ammunition and the like, and the oath

of the Irish Republican Brotherhood was administered by him. This, I was given to understand, was only offered to members of the Volunteers who were regarded as being sincere and trustworthy, and I felt duly proud of the fact that my comrades had deemed me to possess these qualities.

In course of time the Company dwindled considerably, and on occasions there were no more than a dozen men on parade. Schemes of various kinds were adopted to recruit men, and one of these was the presentation of a revolver to the member bringing in the most recruits. This had the effect of bringing about the increasing of the Company to between 25 and 30.

We went on in the usual way up to 1916.

There was a big parade on St. Patrick's Day, and it was very impressive. My recollection is that it was Eoin MacNeill who took the salute. Other people have told me that Patrick Pearse took the salute, but I remember - maybe I am wrong - Eoin MacNeill with the long beard standing up in the middle of the street, facing the bank, taking the salute, as we marched past.

A short time before Easter Week, Fairview Park was raided by the police on a Sunday afternoon. I was the only officer on parade at that particular time, and I issued instructions to have the gates of the park chained. The gates were chained and the police were refused admission. The few people who were in the park were practising target shooting and had with them a number of miniature rifles. These rifles, manned by Volunteers, covered the gates in question, and the police were warned that if they made any attempt to force the gate, fire would be opened on them. The police made all sorts of threats, but in the meantime a hurried mobilisation order was issued. Within an hour there were several hundred

Volunteers on parade. The volunteers carried small arms. With the mobilisation of the volunteers in the park the police withdrew. A number of G.H.Q. officers had responded to the mobilisation order, including Thomas MacDonagh, Commandant of the 2nd Battalion, The O'Rahilly, who was a member of Headquarters staff, and a number of officers of other Battalions. Thomas MacDonagh addressed the assembled volunteers. He commended the junior officer for his initiative in taking the action which he did take, and commended this action to all present as an example of how to deal with an emergency. That happened very close to Easter Week, 1916.

For some time prior to the Rising a number of recruiting meetings were held throughout the city and addressed by prominent members of the headquarters of the volunteers. In the 2nd Battalion area these meetings, which were public meetings, were addressed mainly by Thomas MacDonagh, the Commandant, and Thomas Hunter, Vice Commandant. Numerous persons handed in their names and were duly initiated.

Some time before Easter Week Thomas MacDonagh gave me a short list of names and told me it was imperative that these persons should be mobilised and got to join the volunteers, in order that they might be trained to some degree in the use of arms. In the course of his talk with me, he made it clear that on Easter Sunday there was going to be something more than mere manoeuvres, and I left him with the deep impression on my mind that we would be going into action then.

The general plans of the Battalion were the plans of G.H.Q. The plans were headquarters plans, and in due course I presume they would have been issued to executive officers and the executive officers would put them into operation.

In the course of my volunteer activities I attended all lectures for officers, which were arranged by headquarters, and which took place at No. 2 Dawson St. James Connolly

delivered a number of lectures on street fighting, and Thomas MacDonagh gave lectures on general strategy. There were lectures on armoury, target shooting, and so on. I remember distinctly one of these lectures delivered by Thomas MacDonagh where he made an extraordinary forecast of the future. He said that the volunteers would eventually go into action, that they would appear to be defeated, but that they would rally again and have another fight in which they would be more successful, but not still fully successful. He said that in the course of this fight they would have their Army recognised, and that in a third great effort the Irish people would be freed. This also made a very deep impression on my mind, although at the time I felt that there could be little in it. However, as events turned out, his forecast now appears to be fully justified.

As an extraordinary coincidence, in a conversation many years afterwards with Dick McKee, the then Commandant of the Dublin Brigade, he made a somewhat similar statement. Of course, at that stage, part of Commandant MacDonagh's prophecy had been fulfilled, but Brigadier McKee told me that it was almost certain that in the course of the present struggle we would reach a stage when the British would negotiate and eventually give recognition to the right of the Irish people to have their own Army.

In a further lecture in Dawson St., which proved to be the final one, all the officers of the Dublin Brigade were mobilised to attend. During the course of the evening a number of officers spoke, including Thomas MacDonagh, Eamon Ceannt and Eamon de Valera. Each of these officers spoke on his own particular subject, all giving the impression that in a very short time the volunteers would be going into action. Pleas were made by each of these officers to the volunteers to equip themselves with all the necessary articles, even

referring to such things as needles and thread, pins, bandages and emergency rations - Horlick's Tablets.

It became obvious after a time that the speakers were holding the meeting for the attendance of someone of greater importance. This eventually proved to be so, as later in the evening Patrick Pearse, accompanied by his brother Willie, entered the room. Patrick Pearse was wearing his greatcoat, a volunteer green, and a slouch hat, when he entered the room. His brother, Willie, helped him to take these off. Pearse then approached the head of the table and, after a short time, was introduced to the volunteers by one of the officers who had already spoken. Patrick Pearse rose amidst dead silence, stared over the heads of the volunteers assembled in the room, and paused for almost one minute before he spoke. The first words he uttered sent a thrill through the persons present. The words were somewhat as follows:- "I know that you have been preparing your bodies for the great struggle that lies before us, but have you also been preparing your souls?" These words made such a deep impression on all present that there was dead silence for a considerable period. Following this, Pearse went on to urge the volunteers to do everything possible to prepare themselves for the great struggle that lay ahead. He repeated many of the things that the previous speakers had been exhorting the volunteers to do. Most of us left that meeting, which was held on the Saturday week preceding the Rising, with the impression that in a short time we would find ourselves in action in the field.

CHAPTER II.

EASTER 1916 - THE RISING.

On Holy Saturday Thomas MacDonagh called a meeting of the officers of the 2nd Battalion. This meeting was held in the pavilion in Father Mathew Park. On that occasion, Commandant MacDonagh, without telling us in actual words that we would be going into action on the morrow, made it clear beyond any doubt that we were going out on something very much more important than the manoeuvres which were being written up in the newspapers. He himself on that occasion was wearing a pair of top boots reaching to his knees, which he informed us he had just purchased. He said "You see I am preparing myself for taking the field. You fellows should go and do likewise". We left this meeting convinced that every volunteer whom it was possible to mobilise should be mobilised.

Frank Henderson, who was my Captain, and myself went around the area and mobilised every available volunteer, including many civil servants who had been excused from all parades. Eventually something like 60 odd volunteers of "F" Company participated in the actual Rising of Easter Week, which showed the success which attended our mobilisation efforts.

I should mention that at that meeting with Thomas MacDonagh he asked me if I could put him up for the night in my house, and I said I would regard it as a very great honour. Then I suddenly thought of the fact that we were living beside a policeman and his family, and because of the excitement of the times I thought MacDonagh should be told this. I said to him, "By the way, while I would be delighted to have you in our house, I should mention that our next-door neighbour is a policeman". MacDonagh immediately said "That finishes that". Then he said "I'll settle that up" and went to Tom Meldon. I am almost certain that he spent the night in Tom Meldon's

house, 45 Lower Gardiner Street. Tom Meldon, I think, was the armourer of the 2nd Battalion. He was musketry instructor and used do a lot of work on our guns. He held officer's rank and used to be up at all the lectures at No. 2 Dawson Street.

Following the talk that Thomas MacDonagh had with us on Easter Saturday, and just before we left Father Mathew Park, Frank Henderson said to me, "Do you know anything?". I said: "I know there is going to be trouble, but that is all I know". Henderson said: "There is going to be an insurrection tomorrow". "Are you sure of that?" said I, "I was expecting some trouble, but I did not know that there was going to be an insurrection tomorrow". Henderson said: "I am certain of it. Furthermore, I understand there is a split, that our headquarters staff are divided on the question. Some are in favour of the Rising and some are against it, and it may be necessary to arrest some of the members of the staff". I said that that was an extra-ordinary state of affairs, and asked him if he knew what Pearse's attitude was. He told me that Pearse was strongly in favour of the insurrection. I said: "That's good enough for me". It was this conversation that urged us in our efforts to secure a full mobilisation of all our members.

My prospective brother-in-law, Robert Gilligan, who was a close companion of mine, spent the best part of Saturday in purchasing all sorts of equipment which we deemed would be necessary to have with us in the event of our going into actio He stopped with us on Easter Saturday night and on Sunday morning, at about 8 o'clock, I went with him to his residence in Dominick St. to collect his equipment. On our way down we purchased a "Sunday Independent" and were astonished to find what appeared to be a countermanding order for the Easter manoeuvres. Gilligan said to me: "What does this mean? Does it mean that we are divided again?". With the information which I then possessed, I said to him: "We will await our instructions when we go to Father Mathew Park". Eventually

we reached Father Mathew Park, and found a state bordering on chaos there. Volunteers were coming and going, and there seemed to be a doubt in the minds of most as to what should be done. Officers of the various units were unable to clarify the situation, but later in the day the volunteers who had remained in the park were instructed to return to their homes, not to leave them, but to await a further mobilisation order. This most of us did.

Tom Hunter was still Vice Commandant, as far as the volunteers were concerned, but it was never announced that MacDonagh was not the Commandant. He was always regarded as being Commandant of the 2nd Battalion, and even to this present day there seems to be doubt as to whether Thomas MacDonagh was ever Brigadier of the Dublin Brigade. I am almost certain that he was.

Early on Easter Monday morning I received a mobilisation order to attend immediately at the Father Mathew Park. Myself and my friend, Bob Gilligan arrived there. We were met there by Commandant Tom Hunter, who took hold of Gilligan and informed him that he had a special task for him. As Gilligan was a member of my Company I asked the Commandant what the special task was, and he cooly announced "We want him to be one of a party that is going to destroy the magazine in the park". He gave Gilligan instructions to report to a house in Lower Rutland St. I think, and to take his orders there from P. Daly or G. Holohan. Robert Gilligan, who knew of the plan to destroy the magazine on the Sunday, left me to report to Rutland St. I felt that we were parting for the last time.

The volunteers in the Father Mathew Park were then assembled, and we were informed by Captain Weafer that we were being held as an escort party for the equipment, ammunition and explosives which were to be brought to the 2nd Battalion Headquarters in Jacob's. The lorry which was

expected to take this stuff away failed to arrive, and in the course of the morning whilst still waiting, a young lady, who appeared to be in a rather excited state, entered the Park and asked to see the officer in command. She was brought into the pavilion where the officers were discussing the general situation, and told them that she had been instructed by The O'Rahilly to ask the officer to demobilise all volunteers and send them to their homes, as a small body of men had disobeyed orders and had taken possession of some buildings in the city. This led to an almost heated discussion as to, firstly, the veracity of the order, and secondly, our right to demobilise if any unit of the volunteers were in action. It was eventually agreed that a short demobilisation would take place, and all the volunteers were instructed to stand-to and to be ready to respond at once to any order issued.

I understand that investigations were made in respect of the volunteers who appeared to be in action in the city. I was greatly concerned, as the general impression created was that the Volunteers were divided in their decisions as to the action to be taken, and that some were out and some were not taking any action at all.

I decided to go to the Magazine in the Park and try and contact my friend, Robert Gilligan. I arrived there some time in the afternoon only to find the Magazine burning and ammunition exploding. In the course of my movements around the Magazine I found my friend's coat and leggings, of which he had apparently divested himself. I rolled these up, placed them on the back of my bicycle and returned at once to the city. On the way back I had to pass through a barricade which was held by a number of Volunteers on the Cabra Road. I knew some of the volunteers there and asked them for certain information. I was convinced that the volunteers, as such, were out.

I returned to my home, left in the coat and leggings and reported immediately to Fairview, where I met the volunteers marching along Ballybough Road. I was then informed that the Company was in action and that they were going to the aid of a unit that was situated in some building at Summerhill. I was told that I should go to Gilbeys in Fairview Strand, as we were going to occupy that building. I arrived there and reported to Frank Henderson. We took possession of the building, together with another building alongside, both of which covered the Tolka bridge and also held a commanding position towards Fairview. This position was held by about thirty men, between the two buildings, until Tuesday night.

In the meantime we had our scouts out, and reports began to come in to the effect that enemy troops were de-training at Malahide and were marching along the main road to the city. These reports were verified from time to time, on each occasion the troops were reported as being much nearer the city.

Some time on Tuesday morning Captain Henderson asked me to go into O'Connell St. and to report our position to James Connolly in the G.P.O. This I did. Whilst in O'Connell St. I was impressed by the activity which was taking place all around. Barricades were up at all the necessary and vital points, barbed wire was stretched across the street at several places, and, in spite of all this, the general public were wandering up and down O'Connell St. as if nothing was taking place.

In due course I was brought to the G.P.O. and met James Connolly, to whom I explained our position. Whilst I was talking to Connolly he was approached by a man who was somewhat under the influence of drink. This man said that he wanted to join the garrison, and Connolly asked him why did he want to join the garrison. "Because" the man said:

"I want to fight for Ireland". "Are you sure you want to fight for Ireland?" Connolly asked him. "I am certain" said the man. "Well, then" said Connolly, "will you go home now, have a good sleep, and when you are sober come back and tell me that you still want to fight for Ireland and I'll give you a rifle". I was very much impressed by this little incident, which I have related on many occasions.

Commandant Connolly assured me that it was vital to the Dublin plans that Fairview should be held, as, apart from holding back the garrison which was then in occupation of the golf links at Dollymount, it was possible that the troops coming from the north might pass that way, or that the railway which had been destroyed at Malahide might be repaired, and that the use of the railway opposite should be denied them. Following these instructions from Connolly, the tracks of the embankment at Fairview were destroyed.

I returned to Fairview, and afterwards in the evening our scouts were continuously bringing in information of the approach of enemy troops. We were making preparations to put up as sturdy a defence as possible, and by this time we were convinced that there was going to be another Battle of Clontarf. We were not too hopeful, however, owing to the number of men who lacked experience in the use of their weapons; neither were we satisfied with the positions which we held.

Late on Tuesday evening, however, a dispatch arrived from James Connolly urging us to retire on the G.P.O. if that was possible. At the same time he assured us that our position was difficult, and that if we failed to make the G.P.O., he felt sure that we would put up a gallant fight for the freedom of our country.

Arrangements were immediately entered into to withdraw all the units from the outlying areas, such as Annesley Bridge, Fairview Park, the buildings occupied at the Tolka and Gilbeys. In all, the men from these various posts numbered about sixty. All our equipment was gathered together, and it was found to consist of more weapons and other material than we had men to use them. The march from these positions was begun late on Tuesday evening. We were informed at this time that British troops were actually marching down Clonliffe Road. We got down to Great Britain St., as I think it was called then, before individuals began telling us hair-raising stories as to where the enemy were; we were informed that there were cavalry here and artillery there. Eventually we reached Sackville Place.

Captain Henderson sent me across to the G.P.O. to report our arrival to James Connolly. This I did, and he asked me to get the men over in single file. I reported the result of my mission to Captain Henderson, and the volunteers were then sent across in single file, taking with them a number of British soldiers who had been taken prisoner and who were in full khaki dress, which resulted in a rather extraordinary incident. As this single file of volunteers and British soldiers were doubling across the road, fire was opened on them from the Imperial Hotel, which was occupied by our own men. In the course of this firing, James Connolly rushed out into the street with his hands over his head, shouting towards the Imperial Hotel. Immediately following his appearance the firing ceased, but not before a couple of our men had been wounded. Connolly returning to our men said: "It is all a mistake". He then ushered us into the G.P.O. where we were formed up and were addressed by Patrick Pearse.

In the course of his talk to the volunteers from Fairview Pearse assured them that they had done a great and noble work for their country, and said that if they did not do anything else they at least had redeemed the fair name of Dublin city,

which was dishonoured when Emmet was allowed to die before a large crowd of its people. He said: "Be assured that you will find victory, even though that victory may be found in death". That was another terribly thrilling moment.

Pearse was standing up on the table in the G.P.O. when he addressed us. He congratulated us, and gave us great praise for the help we had given. Charlie Saurin pencilled a little sketch of Pearse which I have in an autograph book, and I think he wrote the words underneath. He did it in Frongoch a couple of months afterwards.

Following this address we were taken out into the street and lined up in front of the post office. James Connolly, who was standing in front of the group, divided us into three groups. He instructed Frank Henderson to take the first twenty men and to occupy positions in Henry St. He instructed Leo Henderson to take twenty men and report to the O.C. of the Imperial Hotel block. He then instructed me to take charge of the remaining men and to occupy the block of buildings from Prince's St. to Abbey St. which included the Metropole Hotel, Messrs. Easons, in a central position, and Manfield's boot store, which occupied the corner of Abbey St. The instructions issued to me were that I was to dig a hole through each of the houses until I got to the corner of Abbey St. and, when this was completed, I was to report that fact to the Commandant.

Before entering on my task, I pointed out to Commandant Connolly that I was only a lieutenant and that there was at least one officer senior to me present. This officer was Captain Poole of the Citizen Army. The Commandant turned to me and said: "Is it not sufficient that I give you the command of this unit?" I said: "It is, Sir, but I want to be assured that if I am in command I will be obeyed by all, including the officer senior to me in rank". Poole immediately stepped

forward and said: "Did I say that I would not obey you?". I said that I only wanted to have the matter clear, and that I was now satisfied. We then moved into the Metropole Hotel, which we occupied immediately, giving notice to the people staying in the hotel that they would have to get out in fifteen minutes.

We had no sooner entered the vestibule of the Metropole Hotel than Captain Poole assailed a volunteer named Harry Boland and charged him with being a deserter. It appears that Boland, in his anxiety to get into action, reported to the first unit he met, which happened to be Poole's, at the manure works in Fairview. I pointed out to Poole that Boland could not possibly be a deserter as he was there on duty with us. Poole continued to argue with Boland, actually rising the butt of his rifle in the course of the argument. I reminded Poole that I was the officer in charge, and that he had given his word to Commandant Connolly that he would obey my orders. I said to him: "My orders to you now are to go upstairs and see that all persons occupying rooms in this hotel have left". He did so, and later in the evening he brought along a man whom he described as his prisoner. He charged this man with being a British officer and a spy. I asked Poole on what he based his charge, and he told me that he found this man in a room long after everybody had been ordered to leave, that he had no good excuse for his presence, and that when he told him to stand up and then asked him to quick march that the man stepped off with his left foot, which proved that he was a soldier. I asked the gentleman what he had to say to this, and he told me it was untrue. He said that he was a schoolmaster in a position at Portora, near Enniskillen. I asked him if he could give me any proof of that. He searched his pockets, and appeared to find some difficulty in producing anything that would satisfy me, when he suddenly remembered that he had a watch which had been presented to him by the pupils. This watch carried an inscription which satisfied me.

I made Sean Russell my second in command, and together we entered into the defence of the building. We also began to dig holes from one building to the other, and by Wednesday afternoon we had reached the corner of Abbey St. We had actually worked our way down to Easons in Abbey St.

When this was completed, I reported in person to James Connolly in the G.P.O. and informed him of what we had done. He then accompanied me to the Metropole Hotel, went through the building, examined all the positions, examined the holes which we had dug, made an effort to get through one of these holes and got through with some difficulty. I followed Connolly through the hole in the wall, and he said to me: "I wouldn't like to be getting through that hole if the enemy were following me with bayonets". I then reminded him that these holes were built according to instructions issued by him in the course of his lectures. We reached Easons in Abbey St. and, although at this time, heavy firing was taking place, Connolly insisted on walking out into Abbey St. and giving me instructions as to where I should place a barricade. While he was giving these instructions, he was standing at the edge of the path and the bullets were actually striking the pavements around us. I pointed this out to him and said that I thought it was a grave risk to be taking and that these instructions could be given inside. He came back, absolutely unperturbed, to Easons with me, and while we were standing in the portico of Easons a shell struck a building opposite - I think it was the Catholic Boys' Home - and caused a gaping hole to appear in the front of that house. Connolly jokingly remarked: "They don't appear to be satisfied with firing bullets at us, they are firing shells at us now".

Connolly then returned to the G.P.O. via the way we had come. That was late on Wednesday afternoon. As far as I can remember, the shells started late on Wednesday. They were

They were shrapnel shells, and the amazing thing was that instead of bullets coming in it was molten lead, actually molten, which streamed about on the ground when it fell. I was told that the shrapnel was filled with molten wax, the bullets were embedded in wax, and the velocity of the shell through the barrel and through the air caused the mould to melt. As the first of those shells hit the house, the volunteers rushed and told me about them. I rushed up and found an old fellow crawling about on his hands and knees gathering the stuff up as it hardened. I asked him what he was doing and what he intended to do with the stuff. He said "Souvenirs". That is all he said.

From this time onwards the shelling continued, and the building was hit on a number of occasions, the chimney-stack falling in as a result of one of these explosions.

We continued to put all the buildings in this block into a state of defence, windows being removed in many cases and the necessary protection for the riflemen placed therein.

By Thursday morning O'Connell St. was deserted of pedestrians. There was heavy fire sweeping the street from Trinity College. We also discovered that some artillery was being used from the corner of the Rotunda at Great Britain St., now Parnell St.

There were several exciting incidents in O'Connell St. during the day. The volunteers were in occupation of Reis's where an attempt had been made to establish a wireless station. As the men from this building evacuated to the post office they were being fired on from Trinity College. On a number of occasions men were seen to fall but quickly recovered and brought their equipment safely across.

Some time on Thursday a barricade which stretched from the Royal Hibernian Academy to a cycle shop - I think the name of

it was Keatings - on the opposite side of the street, took fire as a result of a direct shell hit. It was the firing of this barricade that caused the fire which wiped out the east side of O'Connell St. I saw that happen myself. I saw the barricade being hit; I saw the fire consuming it and I saw Keating's going up. Then Hoyt's caught fire, and when Hoyt's caught fire the whole block up to Earl St. became involved. Hoyt's had a lot of turpentine and other inflammable stuff, and I saw the fire spread from there to Clery's. Clery's and the Imperial Hotel were one and the same building, and this building was ignited from the fire which consumed Hoyt's. Before that happened those of us in the Metropole made tremendous efforts to warn the garrison in the Imperial Hotel of the grave danger which menaced them. If our messages, which were sent by semaphore, were understood they do not appear to have been acted on, as the eventual evacuation of the Imperial Hotel appears to have been a rather hurried one. I had the extraordinary experience of seeing the huge plate-glass windows of Clery's stores run molten into the channel from the terrific heat.

Some time later on that night we heard a tremendous noise caused by the galloping of horses. As we had been warned to be on the alert against any attempt at taking our buildings we presumed that this was the beginning of an attack, and that the attack was being led by cavalry. Our men manned the windows and a number of them were in possession of our home-made bombs. As these horses approached, fire was opened on them. One of our men was swinging a home-made bomb, which was, in fact a billy-can packed with bolts, nuts and, I believe, gelignite as the explosive. He was swinging this bomb round his head in order to gain impetus for his throw, when to our horror, the handle parted company with the can and the can flew into the room instead of being thrown at the horses. Luckily for us it did not explode. I think three bombs, none of which exploded, were thrown. It eventually turned out that this was not a

cavalry charge, but some horses that had been released from a building which was endangered by the fire.

Round about this time there was tremendous activity by enemy forces in the region of the Abbey Theatre. Efforts were being made to send men from the Abbey Theatre side of Abbey St. to the opposite side. Apparently the idea was to make some kind of a frontal attack via Sackville Place. Our men in Manfield's boot shop were in continuous action against these troops. Those holding that building were Vincent Poole of the Irish Citizen Army, Harry Boland, and a volunteer named Tom Leahy. So continuous was their fire at this time that the barrels of the rifles became overheated. It was then that Captain Poole, who had served in the British Army and in the South African campaign, proposed that, in the absence of any suitable oil for cooling the rifles, we should open some sardine tins and use this oil. This was done, with the result that the men were able to continue in action.

Fire was then opened by the enemy from a new position, which appears to have been occupied as a result of our action against the troops mentioned. This position was the building at the division of Westmoreland St. and D'Olier St. - I think it was Purcell's, or Stanley's the photographers. A number of machine guns appeared to have been erected in this building and continuous fire was directed on the Manfield block.

In the early hours of Friday morning word was brought to me that the top floor of the Metropole, which had been hit on a number of occasions, was now in flames. We had laid hoses all round the buildings, and these were brought into operation against the fire but with little effect, as the incendiary material appeared to be impervious to water. This floor had to be evacuated some time on Friday.

We were warned on a number of occasions from the G.P.O.

that our building was on fire. We continued to hold on until late on Friday evening, when my second in command, Sean Russell brought me a message to Manfields, where I was helping the men, to say that he had received a message that we were to evacuate this block of buildings. I accepted this message as genuine, and, knowing that the fire was gaining fast on our building, I presumed that we were being taken out because of the impossibility of holding it much longer.

When we arrived at the post office, Pearse sent for me and asked me why did we evacuate our post. I informed him that my second in command had received a message from some person in the G.P.O. When we tried to confirm that fact we failed. I immediately saw that some mistake had been made, and I suggeste to Commandant Pearse that we should return. He agreed immediately and said "It is imperative that that block of buildings be held, in order to give protection to the post office". We returned immediately and re-occupied all our former positions. A number of hours later, however, another message was delivered asking us to retire at once. I naturally questioned this message, and went myself to the back entrance of the post office in Prince's St. to assure myself that there was no mistake this time.

I met Frank Henderson at the gate and he informed me that the men had been evacuating the post office over a considerabl period of time and that only a small number were now left. He said: "Your garrison had been overlooked, and only for Sean McDermott remembering that your party were in occupation of that block of buildings, I am afraid you would have been left behind". We immediately retired to the post office, which was then a seething mass of fire.

Shortly after entering the post office I was marshalling my men in two files, when there was an explosion and what appeared to me to be a series of shots. A number of our men fell wounded. I was informed that this was from a rifle

grenade - whether that is correct or not I cannot say. One of our men was fatally wounded and died at a later stage in Moore Street.

After the explosion went off one of the fellows in our party was rolling around on the ground and I thought he was fatally wounded. I ran over and held him on the ground; he looked as if he was in a fit. He pointed to his leg which he thought had been hit. When I examined the leg I found the remains of a blade sticking out of his stocking. It appears he was a Boy Scout and that this was the remains of a dagger which he had stuck in his stocking. The handle was blown off the dagger, but he was untouched. The explosion seemed to have given him shell-shock or something like that.

We were almost the last party to leave the post office. We crossed Henry St. under heavy fire and entered Henry Place. When we entered Henry Place there seemed to me to be a state bordering on chaos. Men were trying to get shelter in doorways and against walls from the fire, which no one seemed to know whence it was coming.

About this time I heard someone shouting for volunteers for a bayonet charge on a white cottage. The man who was calling for volunteers turned out to be a scout named Sean McLoughlin who had, rightly or wrongly, assumed the rank of Commandant General, which, he stated, he had been given by James Connolly. He told us that the white cottage was occupied by the enemy and that the enemy must be dislodged. I joined this group, together with Volunteer Liam Cullen. We charged the building, entered it and found it unoccupied. What McLoughlin took to be fire from this building was, in fact, the splashes of plaster caused by the volume of machine gun fire which was crashing against the front of the house and which was being directed from the Rotunda Hospital in Parnell St. Cullen, who was with me when we entered the building,

went out to the front to look into the front room and was hit on the leg and fell to the ground. We got Cullen back out of the line of fire. Immediately, Tom Clarke came to the side of the building, just out of the line of fire, and called for volunteers to cross this line to secure occupation of a building at the corner of Moore St. A number of men undertook this task, and were led by Tom Clarke himself. We reached the corner of Moore St. and Clarke called upon me to occupy these buildings, and to dig from one building to another in order to extend our position. We smashed our way into this building and progressed, as instructed, from house to house.

On entering one of the buildings in the middle of Moore St. we were met by a little family, an old man, a young woman and her children, cowering into the corner of a room, apparently terrified. I tried to reassure these people that they were safe. The old man stated that he was very anxious to secure the safety of his daughter and his grandchildren, and that, for that reason, he intended to make an effort to secure other accommodation. It was his intention to leave the house under a flag of truce, which, he said, he felt sure would be respected. I did my best to dissuade him from taking this action, especially during the hours of darkness. He, however, appeared to be very confident and said he would make the effort. I appealed to his daughter not to allow her father to take this action. It appears that he eventually ignored the advice which I gave him, because when we were forming up in Moore St. preparatory to the surrender I saw the old man's body lying on the side of the street almost wrapped in a white sheet, which he was apparently using as a flag of truce. His body appeared to have been hit on several occasions by the bullets of the enemy. Previously the old man had told me that there was somebody, who said he was a Volunteer, lying in Moore St. I went down to the halldoor,

opened it and found a man lying on the edge of the path, apparently badly wounded. I urged him, as there was heavy fire sweeping the street, to crawl over to the door. He made several attempts to do so. Eventually I reached out and pulled him in. I found this man very badly wounded in the leg. It appears that he was one of the party that went with The O'Rahilly through Moore St. at an earlier stage. The name of this man was later given to me as Kenny, a brother of Sean Gall

We continued to extend our line until we reached the Lane which intersects Moore St. about fifty yards from Parnell St. I, at this stage, reported back to say that the line had now been extended as far as it was possible to go.

Some time around this period I was sent for and asked to report to Commandant Pearse in Hanlon's fish shop in Moore St.; this was one of the buildings through which we had passed on our way up the street. Pearse was accompanied by his brother, Willie, and by a Volunteer named Eamon Bulfin. Pearse said to me: "I understand that you know this area very well". I said I did, and he asked me if this position was suitable as his headquarters. I said that it was about the centre of Moore St. He asked me what was at the back, and if I could point out on a map the actual position at the moment. This I did, and, after answering a few more questions in that respect, I retired It was from this building that Pearse eventually left to arran the surrender. This was some time early on Saturday morning,

At about twelve o'clock on Saturday Diarmuid Lynch called for Volunteers for a bayonet charge. When these men were mobilised, he detailed a plan which we were to carry out. The plan was that we were to leave the building on the corner of the lane to which I have referred, and to charge the barricade which was situated across the top of Moore St. and which dominated the whole of that street. Having taken possession of this barricade we were then to proceed through Parnell St.

Dominick St. and into Dominick Lane, where we were to occupy Williams & Woods' building, which was in that vicinity. The men for this mission were being prepared in a yard at the back of/the one of Moore St. premises. A man was actually moving the bolt of the gate in order to allow us to make our exit on a given signal. Almost on time for this charge to take place a volunteer rushed into this yard and said that the bayonet charge was to be cancelled. We did not know the reason for the cancellation, but, apparently, negotiations with the enemy were being considered. We were told to go to different rooms in the different houses and rest, and to be ready to carry on later in the evening, if necessary. I was terribly exhausted at this time and lay down. I apparently fell asleep, and remembered no more until I was awakened by some of my comrades who informed me that our garrison was surrendering. I naturally was astonished, as appeared to be most of my comrades. I remember, as we were going out into Moore St. and crossing through the ruins of one of the houses, meeting Sean McDermott who was marshalling the men into the street, and I said to him: "Is this what we were brought out for? To go into English dungeons for the rest of our lives?" Sean immediately waved a piece of paper which he held in his hand, and said: "No. We are surrendering as prisoners of war". This piece of paper, which he had in his hand, appeared to me to contain two signatures, but as I did not peruse the document I cannot say what it contained. As we formed up in Moore St. the general discussion amongst the volunteers was that we were surrendering as prisoners of war and were being recognised as such by reason of having carried on the conflict over a certain period of time.

We marched from Moore St. in due course into O'Connell St. We were lined up in front of the Gresham Hotel, where we were surrounded by enemy troops, and we were each searched and everything on us was taken by those who searched us. Just prior to this we had laid down our arms on the street and, having done so, were marched off.

We spent the rest of that day, Saturday, and Saturday night in the grounds in front of the Rotunda Hospital, where I saw all sorts of indignities being inflicted on our leaders, principally Tom Clarke and - the Four Courts men had come there - Ned Daly. I saw the British drag out another man who had a Red Cross badge stitched on his tunic. They severed this badge from his tunic with a bayonet, and told him he was a disgrace to any country to be wearing that, considering the action in which he had been engaged. That, of course, was their outlook.

We were marched away from the gardens in front of the Rotunda at about nine o'clock on Sunday morning, and taken to Richmond Barracks, Inchicore. In the course of our march through the city we passed through a number of hostile groups of people who shouted all sorts of things at us, including calling us "murderers" and "starvers of the people". Outside the gates of Richmond Barracks I saw a Capuchin priest who, as we were entering the gates, kept saying, with tears in his eyes, "Misneach", which was completely unintelligible to the enemy forces. I do not know who this priest was.

In Richmond Barracks we were again searched, and eventually sent to rooms which were locked and guarded by sentries.

Some time late on Sunday evening we were removed from Richmond Barracks, and again marched through the city streets to the North Wall where we were placed on board a boat. We were crowded down into the hold of the vessel, where we were so tightly packed that we could only sit on the ground back to back. Again I fell asleep, due to exhaustion, and remember none of the incidents of the voyage until I was awakened at Holyhead when my comrades told me that we were going to board a train for some unknown destination.

The train on which I travelled brought us to Knutsford Prison in Cheshire, where we were treated in a rather brutal fashion. My own personal experience for almost a month was that I was left without a bed or bedclothes. Near the end of the first month there was a complete change of attitude, and we were allowed to mix together, where before we were not allowed to approach nearer than five paces.

After a period of about two months in this prison I eventually found myself transferred to Frongoch Camp in Wales.

CHAPTER III.

1917 - 1918.

I was released from Frongoch on the Christmas Eve of 1916.

Shortly after my arrival in Dublin I made contact with the Volunteer organisation again. My old Company, while meeting from time to time, was very much below strength. Frank Henderson, who was also released about this time, and myself threw ourselves into the re-organisation of the Company. The Battalion generally also became very active about this time. Dick McKee was elected O.C. of "E" Company, the former Captain of which had been Tom Weafer, who was killed in O'Connell Street during Easter Week.

Some time about February or early March, Captain Henderson was promoted to Battalion rank, and I was appointed Captain of the Company, a position which I held until I was appointed Vice Commandant to Frank Henderson.

Dick McKee had in the meantime been appointed Commandant of the 2nd Battalion, but some time about March, 1918, he was appointed Officer Commanding the Brigade. Just before he took over this command the Battalion was holding manoeuvres in North County Dublin when they were surrounded by military and police, and McKee, Henderson, Sweeney and myself were arrested, and in due course sentenced to a term of imprisonment. On our release we all assumed our new ranks. Later in 1918 McKee was again arrested, in a house in Harcourt Street, and sentenced to a further term of imprisonment.

Dick Mulcahy, who had been the O.C. of the Brigade but who had been appointed Chief of Staff, continued to give help to his old Battalion.

During the time we were in jail the conscription crisis arose. The feeling of the time was reflected in the attitude of the officials in Dundalk prison, who informed us that if there was any attempt to enforce conscription in this country they would open the prison gates and allow all the prisoners to go free. The conscription issue naturally gave a tremendous impetus to the Volunteer movement, and when we were eventually released we found all the Companies of the Battalion at almost twice their former strengths. With the removal of this menace the Companies strengths gradually resumed their normal character, but quite a number of excellent Volunteers were given to the movement as a result of this recruitment.

On the second release of McKee the activity in respect of the Battalion increased considerably, and numerous raids were arranged and carried out. All this time the Battalion was arming itself, as indeed were most of the units throughout the country. During 1919 there was a gradual increase of Volunteer activity, which developed to a crescendo in 1920.

Some time about August, 1918, an official organ of the Irish Volunteers, which was given the title of "An tÓglach", was published. Originally this publication was printed by the Gaelic Press, which had its premises in Liffey Street. Owing to continuous raids on this establishment the issue of the journal became very uncertain. Finally it was decided to have it set up by Mr. Stanley, who then gave the form out for printing. I was employed in Messrs. Mitchells of Capel Street. The owner of this establishment was an Englishman, who, as far as the enemy authorities were concerned, was above suspicion. The printing of the paper from the type supplied continued over a period of time, but General Headquarters, through the activities of Dick McKee, the Officer Commanding the Brigade, set about the

purchasing of both type and platen printing machine for the future production of the paper. When this equipment was secured, premises situated in Aungier Street were obtained. These premises were occupied by a Volunteer named Gleeson. From here all issues, up to 1922, of "An tóglach" were issued. Dick McKee, who like myself was also a compositor, set the complete issue of the paper, and having done this he also printed it on the platen machine. In addition to this work and that of his Brigade duties he was also Director of Training. Due to the enormous amount of work which he had to undertake as a result of all these appointments, Dick McKee asked me to go in and give him a hand on this particular work from time to time. This I did in the evenings and on Saturday afternoons. It was in this manner that the issues of "An tóglach" during this period were turned out for the Volunteers of the country.

Following the death of Dick McKee, to whose position I had been appointed, I decided that in future the production of the paper would be carried out by a full time compositor, assisted by a full time printer. Heretofore the printing of the paper was done by treadle, that is, by manual labour. I had a small motor introduced and from then on the paper was produced by this whole-time staff. In addition to the production of the paper, this little staff undertook the production of quite a number of confidential Volunteer documents.

The staff to which I have referred consisted of Joe Cullen, compositor, and Charlie Walker, machine-hand.

The main articles in "An tóglach" were written by Colonel J.J. O'Connell, Piaras Beaslaí, Dick McKee, as well as a number of officers dealing with special services, Red Cross, Engineering and other subjects of military interest. Rory O'Connor was

mainly responsible for the articles on Engineering. I know that Piaras Beaslaí had a more active interest in the paper than any of the others; he probably was Editor. He was also Director of Publicity on the Army Council.

CHAPTER IV.

1919. RAID FOR MAILS, ROTUNDA RINK.

In the summer of 1919 I was summoned to 46 Parnell Square, where I met the Director of Intelligence, Michael Collins, who informed me that he had a little bit of work which he wanted me to carry out. He outlined in very great detail the task which he asked me to have accomplished. It was the raiding of the Rotunda Rink, which was then occupied as the General Post Office, and it was there that all mails, incoming and outgoing, arrived. My task was to meet the incoming mails from England at an early hour of the morning. He outlined in very great detail where the mails would actually be, the position in the Rink which they would occupy at a certain hour, the bags in which they would be contained, and which he assured me would be made of leather carrying strong padlocks. He also informed me of the fact that there was a special emergency telephone to the Castle which would have to be seized immediately upon entry to the building, inorder to prevent surprise.

Having given me all the necessary details, and a view of the plan which he had, Michael Collins said, "You can take it. It's all yours". That was the way things were done then.

My task now was to secure the most efficient type of Volunteers possible for the carrying out of this work. I got into touch with Sean Russell, and gave him all the details. We selected our men, and on the morning of the raid four of us synchronised our watches because it was important that the entry from two different parts of the building would be simultaneous. We entered the building at the precise hour which was arranged. I think it was 7.27 a.m. At that time there was a large chute, down which the mail bags were allowed to slide into the building, where they were taken possession of by the postmen inside for sorting. When we entered the building, this

work had already been done. As we had approached the building a number of men were detailed to take the police who were on duty outside the building prisoners. These were immediately brought within the building.

Myself and a number of my comrades entered the building by means of the chute to which I have referred, with the result that were were shot into the middle of the Rink at high speed. I at once made my way to the office in which I had been informed the emergency telephone was situated. We took possession of the 'phone, the room and its occupants, and they were held prisoner under cover of the Volunteers' revolvers. No one was allowed to move. In the meantime the other Volunteers who were assigned to the task of securing the mails had accomplished their part of the task.

Needless to say, there was great excitement within the building. All the postmen gave up work and crowded dangerously near the Volunteers who were carrying out their task. In the main, these men were friendly disposed, and our task of securing the mails was not interfered with.

We evacuated the building from both ends, precisely on time. Altogether the raid had not taken more than five minutes. We had only evacuated the building one and a half minutes when the British military escort arrived to take possession of the Castle mails, which had vanished. A number of very valuable and confidential documents were secured as a result of this particular raid.

The mails were handed over to a special squad under the command of one of the Director's Intelligence staff named Joe Dolan.

Mick Collins impressed on me that the timing of this raid was the whole kernel of the success or otherwise of the raid. The mails were delivered at, we will say, twenty-five minutes past seven and they were to be collected at half past seven. We had to collect them in between these two times.

After the raid I went off to my job of work, and while I was there Mick Collins sent word to me to tell me that I had been identified. Actually I had no disguise on me, I went just as I am now. Mick Collins said I had been identified by a postman, who was an English Jew. Mick said that if I thought it necessary to get away from work to do so, but he said that he was taking the necessary steps to see that this fellow did not talk any more about it. A couple of fellows were sent to talk to this Cockney Jew, and they told him that if he did not keep his mouth shut they would have it shut permanently. They put the wind up the fellow, and I think he left the country. This postman lived on the North Circular Road, and apparently knew me in some way or another, probably through football. He identified me and said, "I know the fellow in charge of that raid". Some of the other postmen told this to Mick's fellows, and Mick notified me in case I thought it desirable to get out for fear the place would be raided for me.

CHAPTER V.

1920. APPOINTMENT AS VICE-BRIGADIER AND BRIGADIER FORMATION OF ACTIVE SERVICE UNIT. ARMY COUNCIL. EXECUTION OF SPIES.

In July, 1920, I was elected by my brother officers to the position of Vice Brigadier. I held this position until the death of the Brigadier in November of that year. I assumed office immediately on the notification of his death, and attended my first Army Council meeting in the Cuig Cuigi Branch of the Gaelic League in Ely Place. This meeting was presided over by Cathal Brugha. A general discussion took place on the situation as it existed at that time. The Council informed me that I was being appointed to replace Brigadier McKee. I informed the Council that while I was taking over that post following his death I would much prefer that my appointment would come from my brother officers, and that I should be elected if they deemed it desirable to elect me. The Council, although thinking this unnecessary, agreed, and about a week later I was elected to replace my old Brigadier.

At an early meeting of the Army Council I proposed the formation of a permanent Active Service Unit which would be always available to go into action at very short notice. I made this proposal because of the increasing difficulty of securing the release of Volunteers from their employment for active service in the middle of the day. The Army Council agreed to the establishment of an Active Service Unit, and it was agreed that only the best Volunteers would be recruited for this unit. I am not quite sure of the number, whether it was one hundred or whether it was fifty at this stage - that they should be taken from their employment and paid at the rate of £4. 10. 0. per week.

This unit was formed by me in the month of December, 1920,

and the men for this unit were brought together for the first time in a hall in Oriel Street, off Seville Place. I addressed the men and informed them of the various tasks which they would be called upon to perform from time to time. The position having been made clear, the unit came into being. Captain Paddy Flanagan was appointed Officer Commanding. Each Battalion gave its quota of men, and, except when the unit would be working as a whole, it was decided that each unit would carry out its activities largely in its own area. From this time onwards street ambushes were of fairly continuous daily occurrence. The unit was also used on the occasion of the burning of the Custom House.

By virtue of my position as Officer Commanding the Dublin Brigade I was a member of the Army Council. This Council seldom met in the same building twice in succession. Notices for attendance at these meetings were typed on a tiny piece of tissue-paper, which could be quickly destroyed or swallowed if the necessity for such action should arise.

The Army Council meetings were presided over by the Minister for Defence, Cathal Brugha. Also present were:-

Chief of Staff, Richard Mulcahy,
Assistant Chief of Staff, J.J. O'Connell,
Adjutant General, Gearoid O'Sullivan,
Quartermaster General, Sean McMahon,
Director of Intelligence, Michael Collins,
Director of Organisation, Diarmuid O'Hegarty,
Director of Purchases, Liam Mellows,
Director of Publicity, Piaras Peaslai,
Director of Engineering, Rory O'Connor,
Director of Munitions, Sean Russell,
and myself as Officer Commanding the Dublin Brigade.

The general discussion at these meetings usually centred around the reports of the various Directors. Naturally the most interesting of these discussions centred around that of the

Director of Intelligence, and, to a somewhat lesser degree, that of the Director of Organisation. Reports from the various Divisions were given at the meetings, and activities, or proposed activities, were discussed. Occasionally authority would be sought for the execution of spies, and these, I understand, were usually submitted to a Committee of the Cabinet and later returned for action to the Army Council. These things could not be discussed by the Government because, first of all, they were Army reports which had to be discussed by the Council, and if there was anything in them the Minister for Defence, who was Chairman, would say, "We will have this matter dealt with, and report later". I wondered for a while what this meant. I was told then that in every case the authority of the Government was required for the execution of spies. In other words, unauthorised executions were not permissible. You had to bring forward your evidence and have it examined by the Cabinet. The Cabinet would examine the case thoroughly and if they were satisfied with the evidence they would refer it to the Army Council for any action they deemed necessary. On the other hand they might say "No". I mention this merely to show that the execution of individuals of this type was not a haphazard affair. As an instance I can quote one case which I remember, in which such authority was not given. Authority was being sought for the execution of a lady somewhere in the South of Ireland. It was stated that this particular person was responsible for the loss of several lives by the divulgence of the place of ambush through which she passed. The men were surprised by the enemy, and in the course of the attack a number of them were killed. The evidence placed before the Cabinet, which appeared to be satisfactory, did not, apparently, satisfy the Cabinet that the death penalty should be inflicted. In the first place they saw a grave danger in the creation of such a precedent, and I remember it was pointed out by

the Minister for Defence, that this was an action which could be carried out to a very much greater degree by the enemy if it was ever deemed necessary to apply counter-action. In spite of the decision of the Cabinet, the lady was executed, and this was excused, I remember, by a statement to the effect that her execution took place before the notification was received from the Cabinet.

In another case, a man in the 3rd Battalion named O'Neill was captured by enemy troops, taken to the Castle, tortured, and as a result proceeded to give certain details to the enemy. He was released from custody, and, by arrangement with the enemy, was to give away some of his Battalion dumps. Because of the capture of a number of members of the 3rd Battalion whose addresses while not known to most of the members were known to this man, and because of the circumstances of his release from custody, certain suspicions in regard to him were aroused. A trap was laid in which he was mobilised for the definite purpose of transferring a rather important dump. Having assisted at the transfer he was then dismissed. Immediately following the transfer another transfer was made, from which O'Neill was completely excluded. A watch was then kept on the position to which O'Neill had assisted in the transfer. That night that particular dump was raided, but, of course, nothing was got. On a later occasion a Volunteer's home in Camden Street was raided by enemy troops. The Volunteer in question had left his own home and transferred into the house next door. O'Neill was aware of this Volunteer's original address but not of that to which he had transferred. The house was raided late at night. The Volunteer, hearing the noise of the military lorry, looked out through the window of the house where he was staying and saw to his amazement the figure of O'Neill standing in the back of the lorry. He reported this matter on the following day, and the Battalion immediately gave me all the necessary evidence and asked that this man, O'Neill,

be executed. I submitted this in the ordinary way to the Army Council, detailing the circumstances and asking for a decision. The usual action was taken and some delay followed. At a later meeting, however, authority was given and the question was being discussed when the Quartermaster General intervened to say that he had been informed that the person seer in the back of the lorry was not, in fact, O'Neill. The Minister for Defence immediately withdrew the authority for the execution and said that more definite evidence of this man's identity would have to be given. In the meantime, O'Neill, who was being watched by the Volunteers, had his suspicions aroused and disappeared from the city. We were later informed that he was facilitated by the enemy authorities to leave the country, and that he was resident in some part of England.

I mention these cases merely to show to what extent the lives of people, even though they were spies, were protected.

The Army Council met at least once a week, and oftener when occasion arose. The Council met more often in Barry's Hotel than anywhere else. We met in Vaughan's Hotel; we met in The O'Rahilly's house in Herbert Park; we met in a little house in Fitzroy Avenue, I do not know whose house it was. We met in a house in Leeson Street over a shop, there was a chemist at the corner of Leeson Street, and this was upstairs.

Coming from a meeting in Leeson Street Gearoid O'Sullivan and myself had a rather nerve-wracking adventure. We left the meeting carrying with us the usual papers which it was necessary to have, and were crossing the road to enter St. Stephen's Green when we were both almost frozen stiff by seeing

Igoe and his gang advancing towards us on foot. They were in their usual formation of two's, some little distance apart. As they approached they stared at us, but we continued walking on into the Green. They passed us, but we felt that we were still not safe by reason of the fact that we knew there was another body following them. This was their usual procedure. However, we got into the Green. We failed to recognise any further members of the gang and to our very great relief got through.

We later heard that somewhere in the vicinity of Leeson Street, Upper, this particular squad of men arrested a couple of Volunteers. We were naturally very relieved at our own escape, which was promptly reported to the Director of Intelligence.

The Igoe Squad was made up mainly of R.I.C. men who, by reason of their activities in the various country districts in which they had been stationed, were compelled to leave because of the activities of the local I.R.A. As a number of these men reached Dublin, someone conceived the idea of putting them into a special squad. This squad was placed in charge of a Sergeant whose name was Igoe, and who gave his name to the squa These men were regarded as being the type who would be prepared to shoot I.R.A. men on sight, and did, in fact, shoot a number of Volunteers from the country who had arrived here in the city. The system of this gang consisted in the main of waiting around the various railway stations in the city and attempting to identify Volunteers who would be known to them. These Volunteers would be shadowed, and later on, either during the da or at night, they would be attacked. In a number of cases these Volunteers were killed, in others they were arrested.

The special Intelligence Squad of the Dublin Brigade spent

months attempting to make contact with this gang, and every possible effort was made to get after them, but, as far as I can remember, they survived the struggle in the city and eventually got away to England at the end of the war.

CHAPTER VI.

STRENGTH, ARMAMENT AND ORGANISATION OF THE DUBLIN BRIGADE. 1920.

The approximate strength of the various Battalions round about this period early 1921 was:-

1st Battalion - 250.
2nd Battalion - 250.
3rd Battalion - 250.
4th Battalion - 300
5th, or Engineers Battalion - 100.

These figures might be regarded as the fighting strength, or the strength that was given by the Battalions as being on parade each month.

The armaments of the various Battalions consisted in the main of automatic pistols, revolvers, hand-grenades and land-mines. There was a number of rifles and a limited number of Thompson machine guns. As regards the rifles, the use of these weapons in the city was naturally limited, and on a number of occasions when appeals were made by G.H.Q. for these weapons for use in country districts, the various Battalions of the Dublin Brigade did, from time to time, hand over a number of rifles. The main weapons used in the various ambushes in the city were the small arms and the hand-grenades.

Shortly after my own appointment November 1920 as Officer Commanding the Dublin Brigade, Sean Russell, whom I had appointed as Vice-Brigadier, was taken from the Dublin Brigade by Michael Collins and was promoted to the position of Director of Munitions, a vacancy which was caused by the death of Peadar Clancy. Russell was a tremendously keen Volunteer, and had an extraordinary bent for organising and establishing matters of this kind. He made tremendous progress by the establishment of a number of munitions factories, as they were then called, throughout the city. In some of these establishments the

casting of the grenade took place, in others the brass work and the finishing of the grenade shell, and in others the actual completion, i.e., the insertion of the explosive material plus the detonator. The finished grenades were then passed to the Quartermaster General's Department, by whom they were issued.

In the course of time very great improvements were made in this particular type of weapon. Apart from the fact that the grenades were made larger, the explosive material was also greatly improved. The old complaint from which Volunteers suffered previously, that of throwing a grenade and having the experience of not seeing it explode, was almost eliminated. This aspect of the Volunteers' armament developed a greater confidence in the fighting men of the various units.

Land mines were also being produced by this department, and again great improvements were being made in this particular weapon. Because of the large size of the land mine and the difficulty of transporting them to the country places where they were more used, Russell gave the plans and the details of the land mines to various Divisions throughout the country where the manufacture of these weapons was then undertaken.

I should mention here that there were regular meetings of the Brigade Council, which consisted of the Officer Commanding each Battalion, the Adjutant and Quartermaster of the Brigade, the Brigade I.O., plus the Vice Brigadier of the Brigade.

Following the promotion of Sean Russell, I appointed Sean Mooney, who was Vice Commandant of the 2nd Battalion, as Vice-Brigadier. Mooney was appointed to this position because of his outstanding ability in regard to special services, which were, of course, the function of the Vice Brigadier.

The Council met at least once a week, when each Battalion Commandant gave a detailed report of the activities of his unit. Intelligence reports were also discussed at these meetings. Battalion Officers who had special schemes or plans in regard to attacks on the enemy would discuss these matters at the Brigade Council meetings. On occasions these plans would be improved as a result of the general discussions. Generally, however, the Battalion Commandants would discuss final details with the Officer Commanding the Brigade before launching their attacks. As a result of this kind of co-operation, it was always possible for the Officers Commanding other units to be prepared for certain types of activities, especially from the enemy, which would follow these attacks.

Round about February or March, 1921, it was found necessary to replace some of the existing Commandants. Vice Commandant P. Holohan replaced Commandant T. Byrne; Vice Commandant John Dowling replaced Commandant T. O'Kelly, and in the 5th Battalion Vice Commandant Liam O'Doherty replaced Commandant Archer. There were also numerous other changes of not so important a character. Following these changes, each Battalion undertook to intensify the campaign of street ambushes in their own area. The development which followed these activities led on one occasion to as many as five actions on the one Saturday afternoon.

Apart from the activities of the kind mentioned, there wer also numerous raids for arms on enemy posts. These raids gave, from time to time, a considerable increase to the units equipment. In addition, numbers of special men had made contacts with certain individuals connected with the enemy troops and from these individuals a considerable amount of ammunition, rifles and revolvers were from time to time secured.

The general equipment of the Battalions, however, was poor and on many occasions when a large scale attack was being launched on a particular object, it was found necessary to transfer equipment from one unit to another. In this way the fight was vigorously carried on.

The Special Intelligence Squad was a special Headquarters Squad of fighting men who were reserved for use by Michael Collins in the event of their services being specially required by reason of urgent Intelligence which he might receive. They were completely separate from the Special Services of the Dublin Brigade, for which the Vice-Brigadier was responsible.

The Special Services consisted in the main of a Signalling Service, First-aid Service, Armoury, Transport and Special Training. It was the duty of the Vice-Brigadier to visit these Special Services in each Battalion area, and to see that they were kept in an efficient manner.

The Signalling Service, while very little used, was a very competent body of men, many of them being telegraphists in the Post Office service. Their presence in this Signalling Service did not, however, deprive them, or the units to which they belonged, of their services as fighting men.

The First-Aid Service, which was under the control of Captain J.J. Doyle, was a very efficient service. Doyle was a prominent officer of the St. John's Ambulance Brigade, and was a highly experienced man. He imparted his knowledge to the members of the First-Aid Service. It was usual for the men in this Service to accompany ambush parties, and, in the event of any of the men being wounded, to ensure in the first instance their safe get-away, and in the second instance their removal to a First-Aid post, preparatory to being brought to a

nursing home or hospital, which was always there for their use.

The armoury was under the control of Captain Tom Meldon, a man who had made a very special study of this subject, and who had held this position from before 1916. This service was responsible for the repair of springs generally, as well as any weapons which happened to go out of order. On numerous occasions they did extremely valuable work in placing weapons which had been damaged back into the hands of the Volunteers.

The Transport Service was designed for the purpose of taking warlike equipment from one particular area to another. It was the duty of the men of this service to have always at their disposal some form of transport. Strange to say, the most effective form of transport that was found was that of the humble ass and cart, which generally passed through military lines without suspicion. Another useful form of transport was the handcart, and on many occasions very valuable equipment was taken right across the city with merely an old sack and perhaps a handful of scraw scattered about on the cart. On one or two occasions when motor cars were used, attempts were made to hold up these vehicles. This usually ended by a burst through the cordon by the driver and a narrow escape, with sometimes the loss of the car, if not the equipment.

The Intelligence Service, which perhaps could not be described as a Special Service, was under the control of Captain Joseph Griffin. This particular service, which was a highly important one from the point of view of the Dublin Brigade, was a highly efficient one and on numerous occasions was able to give valuable and outstanding information to the Director of Intelligence. The Brigade Director always co-operated with the General Headquarters Intelligence Service, and, as a result, the Dublin Brigade was always fully informed of important matters, such as movements of troops, transfers of police officers,

promotions and so on. In this way it was possible on a number of occasions to anticipate and to take action which saved numerous members of the Volunteers from arrest and imprisonment.

Another unit of the Brigade organisation was a force of men who were known as the Republican Police. This unit was responsible to the Department of Home Affairs, and on several occasions instructions were issued from that Department to the Police Officer in charge of the Brigade, Captain Peter Ennis. Several raids by these men on certain houses in the city resulted in the recovery of large quantities of stolen goods, the return of which to the proper owners by the Department of Home Affairs usually created an excellent impression. These men were also used to a very great extent by the Republican Courts, which were also, of course, under the Department of Home Affairs, for the execution of writs against parties who, having agreed to come before the Courts, did not then act on the Courts' decisions. Later on in the war they also gave valuable aid to another special unit which had been formed to deal with the boycott of Belfast goods. This was another aspect of activity for which the Dublin Brigade was responsible. The Government of the Republic had banned the sale of Belfast goods in the rest of Ireland, and the enforcement of this decision rested, as far as Dublin was concerned, on the Dublin Brigade. From time to time large amounts of these goods were destroyed or confiscated. The goods confiscated were usually distributed amongst the poor.

Another aspect of organisation within the Dublin Brigade was the provision of safe houses for Volunteers who were forced to go on the run, that is to live away from their own homes which were continually being raided. These safe or

friendly houses were usually inhabitated by people whose viewpoints on political matters were an unknown quantity, but, due to the work of the Brigade Intelligence Service, it was known that they were sufficiently friendly disposed to provide a Volunteer with shelter for the night and with occasional meals. I should mention that amongst these friendly houses were a number of religious institutions, which mainly provided meals in the course of the day for Volunteers who were given an authority to secure these meals.

About the middle of March, 1921, it was decided to form two new Battalions, to be known as the 6th and 7th Battalions. The 6th Battalion covered the area comprising the East coast down as far as Bray, then West to the foot of the Dublin hills, and I think Dundrum and Stepaside and along up to the Scalp. The hills intervened between the two Battalions and the 7th Battalion took in the area covering the hills from Templeogue out to Holywood and Ballyknockane. Commandant Andy McDonnell was appointed to take command of the 6th Battalion, and Commandant Gearoid Ó Boláin was appointed to take command of the 7th Battalion. Gearóid Ó Boláin took in the main road up to Holywood and all the hills across to Dundrum and down again into Rathfarnham.

CHAPTER VII.

DEATH OF KEVIN BARRY. PLANS FOR HIS RESCUE AND FOR THE RESCUE OF DAN BREEN.

Following the arrest and imprisonment of Kevin Barry, the British authorities decided to have him courtmartialled. This decision followed various attempts to extract information from him in the course of cross-examination by British Intelligence Officers. He resolutely refused to give any information in regard to his comrades. When a decision was made to have him courtmartialled, the Dublin Brigade authorities, because of his youth, decided that it would be in his interests to have him defended. When this decision was conveyed to Kevin Barry he stated that he would not accept any defence, and, furthermore, that he intended to refuse to recognise the authority of this Court to try him. Several efforts were made to get him to change his mind in this respect but he refused. He was eventually tried, found guilty and sentenced to death. Following this sentence he was held in Mountjoy Prison.

On the Sunday morning prior to Kevin Barry's execution a meeting was called at the house of, I think, John O'Mahoney of Gardiner's Place. I am not certain of the persons who were present at the meeting, except for the fact that the Brigadier, Dick McKee, Peadar Clancy and Rory O'Connor were there. I think the following were also present - Michael Collins and Dick Mulcahy. Several suggestions as to ways in which it might be possible to rescue Kevin Barry were put forward. Eventually one plan was agreed upon. The plan was that two members of the Volunteer force disguised as clergymen should enter the prison during the visiting hours and an effort would be made by these men to disarm the Black and Tan who was in charge of Kevin Barry in the visiting room. From that they were to make their way to the front gate where it was also

planned the Volunteers would have taken possession, by a ruse of handing in a parcel. When the front gate was opened to receive the parcel the warder was to be held up and the gate was to be ready for the exit of the party from the visiting room.

It was known that Mrs. Barry was to have a visit on that day. It was decided at the meeting that she should be informed of the attempt at rescue, and a courier was sent with this message to Mrs. Barry. He later returned to say that Mrs. Barry was very perturbed about this effort, that unless some kind of guarantee as to its success could be given no extra lives should be endangered, and that she very much feared that there would be such extra loss of life. I was sitting in the room of the house mentioned when this message was delivered to the Brigade O.C. Having heard the message the O.C. informed the meeting that the attempt was off, giving the reasons which I have just stated. I did not hear the message delivered by the courier, but I have a distinct recollection of the decision of the Brigadier and the reasons for that decision.

Peadar Clancy and myself were the two selected to pose as the "clergymen". Whilst waiting for the return of the courier from Mrs. Barry, I mentioned to Peadar the fact that I thought this was a very desperate job. Peadar's reply, which was typical of the man, was to the effect that "desperate jobs usually bring success". Because of the relief which the decision brought to myself personally, I have little doubt as to the message which the Brigadier delivered to me.

Other methods of rescue had also been discussed on that day. One of these, for which O'Connor was responsible, was the blowing of a hole in the wall of the prison on the Glengariff Parade side. This would have entailed the entrance through the gap so made of a number of Volunteers. It would also have

entailed the bursting of a gate covering the entrance to the wing in which Kevin was a prisoner. The Dublin Brigade had received orders to stand-to for that evening in case such an eventuality took place. This attempt was also abandoned because of a statement coming from the inside that the guardians of Kevin Barry had orders to shoot him if any attempt was made at a rescue. This attempt was called off late that evening.

On the day of the raid in Talbot Street October 14th, 1920, where Sean Treacy was shot, I got a call from the O.C. of the Brigade to go to the Mater Hospital at once. Paddy Daly called at my place of business in Drury Street and said I was to go to the Mater Hospital at once and to take a gun with me. He had a gun with him and we went to the Mater Hospital. As we were passing the Pillar on our way up - we both had bicycles - we saw a crowd of people in Talbot Street. There was obviously some excitement, but at the time we did not know what it was about and our job was to get to the Mater Hospital. On our way to the hospital Daly told me that Dan Breen was in the Mater and that the Tans were raiding it. He told me that if there was any attempt made to take Dan Breen out the whole Dublin Brigade was up there and that we were to shoot the Tans down. All our men were there with guns; Dick McKee was there, hopping around in all directions telling everybody not to do anything until they got instructions.

We got into Eccles Street and saw an armoured car and several lorries of soldiers in the street, right opposite the Mater Hospital main entrance. Our instructions were that if the soldiers took Breen out on a stretcher - he would have to be on a stretcher because of the nature of his wounds - we were to shoot them for all we were worth, even if Breen had to be lost.

Apparently the fact that an attempt was to be made to take this badly wounded man away was very much resented. Nothing happened, however, and we were told - this is only hearsay - that Breen had been placed in a women's ward, that the British had raided all the men's wards, and having failed to find him had left. Immediately after the raiding party had gone, Breen was removed to a private nursing home of that hospital, which was situated further down Eccles Street.

On our way back we were informed of the shooting of Sean Treacy. We were later informed of the almost miraculous escape of the Brigadier from the same premises in Talbot Street.

CHAPTER VIII.

BLOODY SUNDAY. DEATHS OF DICK McKEE AND PEADAR CLANCY.

Early in 1920 it was obvious that a new method of Intelligence was being utilised by the enemy military authorities. From time to time certain arrests were effected, which caused considerable perturbation to the Volunteer Executive as to the reasons for these arrests. In the course of investigations by our own Intelligence Service it was discovered that a number of English Military Intelligence Officers had been introduced into the city. When this was still further examined it was found that a special Intelligence Department, manned by a particular type of trained Intelligence Officer, was being established in the city. General Headquarters went into this matter very actively, and after a period of some months a number of these gentlemen were located, identified and carefully watched. Persons with whom they associated were also taken care of. It was eventually discovered that a large number of these individuals were resident in or about the same area, which was mainly Upper and Lower Mount Street and some of the adjacent Squares.

It was decided to take action against these individuals, who were operating entirely as civilians and were thus regarded as spies. It was decided that on a given occasion these men would be executed simultaneously. The day eventually selected was 21st November, 1920.

The Volunteers who were to undertake this task had been carefully selected by the various officers of the Dublin Brigade and were finally vetted by the Brigadier. When the Brigadier was satisfied in regard to their qualifications the plan was outlined to them.

The task was regarded as a difficult one, as entry into each house had to be secured. This was effected by various means which had been arranged beforehand. The action was successfully carried out in almost every case. In one or two cases the individuals concerned had not turned up the night before. This was verified by the Volunteers, who made a thorough search of the houses in question before leaving. Altogether I think about 14 of these spies were eliminated, and five wounded.

Following the execution of these spies, the enemy authorities became very active, and during that day various raids were carried out, including one at Croke Park where a number of persons were shot.

Early in the morning of the 21st November, I was informed of the arrest of the Brigadier together with Peadar Clancy, Director of Munitions, in a house in Lower Gloucester Street.

I had been with the Brigadier on the Saturday evening up to 9.55 p.m. Curfew, which was in operation at that time, was fixed at ten o'clock. On several occasions during that evening I had urged the Brigadier to leave in order to give himself a chance to get home before curfew, but he had so much work to complete that he did not get an opportunity of leaving up to the time mentioned. We had been interviewing people up to about half past nine. I wanted Dick to hurry and finish up, and he would say, "I'll get out in a second", and then he would discover something else that had to be done. I had a bicycle and I think Dick had a bicycle. I left him at five minutes to ten, when he was rolling up his papers preparatory to going home. I presumed he was going to go home too. I got my bicycle out of the hall and set off. I made a detour. I always made a detour; I generally went through some short narrow streets, where I could

always look round to make sure that I was not being shadowed. I satisfied myself that I was not being followed. I do not know whether Dick McKee took precautions like that or nor. Because of the curfew the streets were deserted, and there can be little doubt that he was followed and information given in regard to the house in which he was residing. The house was raided at about midnight and himself, Peadar Clancy and the landlord of the house, Mr. Fitzpatrick, were arrested and taken to the Castle.

At twenty minutes past ten on that night there was a knock at the door of the house where I was staying. The people of the house were too terrified to open the door, so I went and opened it. I was astonished to see a Volunteer Orderly outside. He said he had a note for me from the Brigadier, and gave it to me. I said to the orderly, "When did you get this?". He answered, "I only got it about ten minutes ago". I said, "You had better get off home as soon as you can". Dick McKee must have left Brigade Headquarters after curfew and then, I suppose, he had to rush and take the shortest route home, which would be about four minutes' journey on a bicycle. Brigade Headquarters was in the Typographical Institute, 35, Lower Gardiner Street, and the house in which he was living was around the corner in Gloucester Street.

The note which Dick McKee sent to me that night was of very little importance, but it shows how meticulous he was in regard to his job. It probably had something to do with Intelligence. There was a crest on a little bit of paper pinned on to the note which he had written. The note asked me if I would pass it on to my brother and ask him what the crest signified and what the inscription on the crest meant. I presume the crest was cut off a piece of notepaper and he

wanted to find out what it meant. Even at the last moment he found a little job that he should have done and finished it off. That was the last note from Dick McKee.

Some time round about 4.30 p.m. on Sunday I was called upon by Michael Collins at my home, when he informed me that Dick McKee and Peadar Clancy were in the Bridewell, and that we had a great chance of getting them out. He asked me to get a half dozen of the best men in the 2nd Battalion and to meet him as soon as I had these men together, at 46 Parnell Square.

I immediately contacted Sean Russell, and together we got the required number of outstanding men. We all carried arms and we made our way to Parnell Square, walking on opposite sides of the road as protection for each other. The streets were deserted, very few people were to be seen, but as we were crossing at the Parnell Monument we saw the Black and Tans unmercifully beating a few unfortunate people who had the temerity to be out. I have a vivid recollection of seeing, where the Hospitals Trust is now, one poor fellow down on one knee and a Black and Tan beating him with the butt of a revolver. We, however, continued on our way for we had a more important task to carry out than rescuing these poor fellows from the blows of the Black and Tans and the police.

On our arrival at the bottom of Parnell Square we were astonished to see a military lorry pulled up outside No. 46 Parnell Square. This, naturally, caused considerable excitement amongst our small group, which I dispersed for the moment while keeping a watch on the lorry. After about twenty minutes the lorry drove away and Russell and myself made our way to No. 46. On entering the premises we found a small boy crying bitterly. We asked this boy if the military had taken

any men away, and he informed us that they had taken his father away, but that the other men had gone out the back. The other men, I presumed, were Michael Collins and whoever he may have had with him. Unfortunately we were unable to make contact afterwards, although we waited for about an hour and a half. We eventually decided to abandon the project, more especially because of the activity which appeared to be taking place in the vicinity of O'Connell Street.

The following day I was informed that Dick McKee and his comrade had been killed, and that they never, in fact, had been near the Bridewell. The information in this respect was later discovered to be completely wrong.

We shot a man on the following Thursday for that job. The unfortunate fellow was inside drinking in a public-house in Gloucester Diamond when he was executed. He was the gentleman who was alleged to have given Dick McKee away. He was living half-way between the two places. He could have stood at his door and seen Dick McKee going into the house. He probably saw him passing by. The evidence on which he was shot was conclusive, there is no doubt whatever about that. Michael Collins gave the order to have him shot at once. I think the fellow was an ex-British soldier but I do not know his name. I think his execution took place less than a week after Bloody Sunday.

We had some of the very best men of the 2nd Battalion in the attempted rescue from the Bridewell - Sean Russell and Tom Ennis. I remember we decided that if we could get a big bar that we would bring it with us because we might have to smash a padlock.

When I saw the lorry outside the door in Parnell Square I got an awful shock, I thought Collins was gone too. Collins was

there, but he escaped out the back. There were three people in the house. The man who was arrested was the caretaker of the house, 46 Parnell Square, and the men who escaped from No. 46 were, I presume, colleagues of Michael Collins. They had to clear away because there was great activity in the streets at that time and contact was terribly difficult to make. We would have had to shoot it out if we had been attacked; there were eight of us, Sean Russell, myself and six other men, divided between the two sides of the road, and if any of us had been attacked the others would have joined in.

The funerals of the spies covered the route of the Quays, which were fairly crowded by people, and the Black and Tan authorities who were accompanying the remains demanded every man there to take off his hat. Those who refused were badly beaten and their hats thrown into the Liffey. It was reported that one or two men were also thrown into the Liffey, because of their attitude of "disrespect" to the funeral.

Following this event, British military, Black and Tans and local police carried out intensive raiding of houses whose occupants were regarded as being sympathetic to the Republican ideals. Numerous arrests were made, but mostly of persons who were of little consequence to the Volunteer movement. At this period almost every Volunteer in the city was living away from home because of the intensity of the enemy activities.

The effect of the operation on Bloody Sunday was to completely paralyse the British military Intelligence system in Dublin. The police investigations had already been smashed by the attitude of the Volunteers in respect to that Force. The police themselves were the first to fail, and "G" Division, after the execution of Hoey and Smith, were driven into the Castle and their operations then were mainly carried out from

military lorries and consisted almost entirely of identification of individuals.

CHAPTER IX.

THE ESCAPE FROM KILMAINHAM PRISON, FEBRUARY, 1921.

Frank Teeling, a grand fighting volunteer and one of the most active in the 2nd Battalion was badly wounded in the course of the action against the English military spies on the morning of the 21st of November, 1920. He was taken prisoner and after a lengthy period as a patient in King George's Hospital, now St. Bricin's, he was transferred to Kilmainham Jail. As he was sentenced to death the Volunteers of the Dublin Brigade were anxious to make some effort to rescue him. Here is the narrative of that rescue ably aided and abetted by two Irishmen in the service of the British Army.

The simple manner in which one of the most sensational jail escapes of modern times was brought about is as amazing as anything which may be found in the pages of the sensational type of fiction which abounds at the present moment

During the years from 1919-1921 when the war for Irish Independence was being fought at its fiercest, all Irish Republican Soldiers were trained never to regard themselves as casualties so long as they were able to think. It was mainly through adherence to this principle that the famous escape from Kilmainham Jail was made a possibility.

Kilmainham Jail was a noted Bastille for the imprisonment of Irish patriots. In every generation since its foundation the blood of Irish martyrs had sunken deep into its prison soil. During 1921 it was a veritable fortress. It was garrisoned by a crack English Regiment. On each of its huge granite walls was erected a special type of fortification and in such a position as to make it almost impossible for anything in the nature of an escape or rescue to be attempted. A watchful sentry was always on guard on each of these raised

platforms during the whole twenty-four hours of the day. It will thus be seen how almost impossible it would have been to attempt a rescue.

The main entrance was naturally strongly guarded, and three massive iron gates had to be negotiated before one could even stand within the first, or entrance hall of the prison, again it will be seen how almost impossible it would have been to take French leave of the enemy. It was perhaps because the English authorities inside the prison also believed this that they usually sent their most important captures here. It was also this belief, strongly held by the garrison that led to just that little bit of carelessness not apparent to their own officers, from whom it would be hidden by an extra assumed alertness in their presence, but very apparent to the keen-eyed prisoners who were always anxious to keep the morale of their comrades as high as possible by an occasional coup of some kind or other.

It was through a prisoner, Herbert Conroy, who had just secured his release a couple of hours before, through the influence of some very loyal and important citizen of Dublin and who reported to me at Brigade Headquarters that the existence of even the possibility of a chance to bring off a rescue was first made known. Conroy was one of the Volunteer type which I have just described, who, although a prisoner, did not regard himself as a casualty because of that reason. His mind was always working in respect to finding a way out of the Jail, not so much for himself as for his comrades, some of whom were under sentence of death and others whom he had no doubt would be sentenced to a similar fate. In course of time and as a result of the knowledge which he had gained of the inside of the prison he devised a plan which he believed would lead to the successful escape or rescue of some of his comrades.

The plan which he unfolded to me was as follows.

Each morning a group of six prisoners was marched from that part of the prison in which they were detained through the wings of the prison to the front hall, guarded of course by a squad of soldiers. Their job was to collect and bring back to the prisoners' quarters the rations for the day. In order to do this they had to be taken to the outermost door of the prison, which of course was securely locked. The keys of this door were kept in the Guardroom convenient. This strong door and a large gate which gave admission from the street to a small yard were the only obstacles to freedom, to some prisoners, that Conroy could see.

Amongst the prisoners' guard, Conroy had discovered two men whom he believed to be friendly. He was of the opinion that if these men were properly approached they would be prepared to co-operate in such an effort as Conroy had in mind. On occasions these men would be on duty on the Guardroom where the keys of the inner door were kept, and Conroy's plan was to carry out an attack on the guard when these soldiers were on duty, seize their rifles and the keys, and at the precise moment of the attack inside an attack on the outer gate was to be launched by driving a large steam lorry through it, thus paving the way to freedom. Fast cars outside were to take the men away.

I, needless to remark, warmly congratulated Herby, as he was popularly known, on his excellent work, and assured him that something would be done. The main point which remained in my mind after this interview was the fact that two friendly soldiers appeared to exist in this English Regimental garrison. I immediately reported all I had heard to G.H.Q. Their decision was that I should lose no time in getting into touch with these

men. Conroy arranged an early meeting, and as a result of this I discovered that they were not only friendly but that they were Irish and very anxious to help to save Teeling's life.

Having outlined Conroy's plan to them they decided it would not be workable or likely to lead to the desired result. They did, however, suggest what appeared to be a good alternative. They informed me that there was a disused yard which was not overlooked by any of the sandbagged fortifications. It would be possible for our soldier friends to let two or three men into this yard some evening when they would be doing duty inside the prison, as they often did. We on the outside were to supply a good rope ladder, throw it over the wall, and they were confident success would be achieved.

Myself and Sean Russell had several interviews with these men in Seamus Kirwan's shop in Parnell Street before an actual attempt was made. A picked unit of the Fourth Battalion was given charge of the operation. Entrance through a small narrow lane at the side of the prison brought the men to the wall around the yard from which the escape was to be attempted. Every move, both inside and outside, was being made in accordance with a timed programme. When a light cord with a weight attached was thrown over the wall it was quickly drawn in by the men in the yard. On the end of this cord was a rope strong enough to draw in the rope ladder, this was also safely taken in, but when the rope ladder reached the wall it stuck fast and the pulling from the inside snapped the rope and that attempt had to be abandoned. At another meeting with our soldier friends it was agreed that an early morning attempt would be made. This also proved a failure by the ladder again sticking and the men outside having to pull the ladder back to themselves. These failures were naturally very disappointing, but all the men concerned were very anxious to successfully

finish their work and so another night attempt was arranged for. This had an unexpected ending. When our men reached their appointed place in the lane they were surprised to find coming towards them a group of British soldiers, our boys quickly had them covered with their revolvers and not a sound was allowed to be made by anyone. But what was to be done with the prisoners and what about the men on the inside who were waiting for the beginning to be made in accordance with the timed programme. Quick thinking saved the situation. One man was despatched for a motor car, another group took the prisoners down the lane away from the scene of operations, and one man remained behind to warn the prisoners of what had happened. The manner in which this warning was imparted to the prisoners gave the clue which eventually led to the successful escape of Frank Teeling, Ernie O'Malley and Simon Donnelly. However, the soldier prisoners our men had captured were successfully removed to an unknown destination where they were well treated until they were released after our three men had made history by their rather extraordinary escape.

How they eventually walked out of the prison was brought about in this way. Myself and Sean Russell were being given the details of what we were regarding as the latest failure, when it was mentioned in a casual kind of way how disappointed the men inside were when they were told that the operation would have to be called off once more. I asked how was this message given to the men inside, and I was informed that it was whispered through the side gate. This was news, and the first time that any mention was made of a gate being in existence. New ideas began to form in our minds and we arranged for our two soldiers to meet us again at the earliest possible moment. They lost no time, and very soon things began to look more rosy than before.

Our new plan was to get in an implement known as a bolt-cutter and cut the large padlock which held the great crossbolt in the locked position, our two friends assured us that this was the only thing as far as they could see which prevented the gate from being opened. Everything pointed to success when one of these men guaranteed to bring in the bolt-cutter himself. This implement was secured for us by a 2nd Battalion Volunteer named Michael Smyth. He was informed of the purpose for which it would be required, and he was also informed of the method by which it would be smuggled into the prison. Now, being a practical man, Smyth had the very long handles with which these tools are equipped cut in half, and pieces of tubular steel made to fit over the remaining portions of the handles, thus retaining the leverage which the long handles are intended to give. His reason for the cutting was soon apparent; it reduced the cutter from about four feet to two feet, thus making it easy for our friend to conceal it on his person. Before handing the cutter over I gave a demonstration of how the handles were to be fitted, and also how the tool was to be worked. This demonstration was necessary as the tubular handles had to be fitted in in one particular way, and a wrong fitting would lead to failure.

All now appeared to be ready for a successful effort. The cutter was safely got through. An attempt was arranged for and made, but once again we tasted the bitterness of a failure. Our soldier friend again met us and he was visibly affected by this latest failure, in fact he was beginning to think that we might be thinking that he was in some way or another an accessor to these failures. We very quickly relieved his mind in this respect. To show his desire for the success of the project he decided he would do the cutting of the padlock that evening himself. The previous failure was due to the placing of the tubular handles on at a wrong angle, and this he assured us would

not happen again.

That evening our gallant soldier friend concealed the bolt-cutter on his person, and when opportunity offered he opened the door leading from the prisoners' quarters to the disused yard. He quietly slipped out into the darkness without arousing any suspicions and crept around under the shadow of the prison building, fearful of making a sound. Every little noise he did make, such as his foot grating on a loose pebble or a slight rattle of the bolt-cutter seemed to re-echo around the prison yard. When he eventually reached the gate, he quietly, and as calmly as possible, placed the padlock in correct position for cutting. Remembering the past failures he made up his mind that this attempt must succeed. His bolt-cutter was then brought into action. Having got his position, he pressed the handles together with all his strength. For one terrible second as he felt the handles yielding somewhat easily, he thought it was another failure, when suddenly there was a snap, and to his great joy there was the padlock gaping open at him. Pulling himself together he quickly decided to conceal the cutter behind the pier of the gate. He then took off the padlock, and having placed it beside the cutter, he, as quietly as possible, began to prise back the great cross-bolt by which the gate was locked. When this job was completed he tried the gate, and to his great relief it opened easily to his pull. He closed the gate and as quickly as he could he returned to the prison. When a safe opportunity offered he slipped into the wing of the prison again, without apparently being noticed. It did not take him long to inform the men who were to go to to get moving. Simon Donnelly was replacing Paddy Moran, who in the course of the earlier failures had cried off and had decided to take his chance of being acquitted of the charge for which he had been tried, and for which he was awaiting the Court martial finding. Simon, together with Frank Teeling and Ernie

O'Malley (who was known in the prison as Stewart) slipped out one by one as opportunity offered. When all were out, the move towards the gate was begun. The journey, though less than fifty yards, could reasonably be described as the most momentous they had ever undertaken. When the gate was reached they only opened it enough to allow one to squeeze through at a time. This done the gate was carefully closed and the move through the lane to the main thoroughfare was made. This reached, care had to be exercised that they would not be noticed leaving the lane. This was very quickly accomplished, and hasty farewells with wishes for success were passed around and they parted, each making for a safe house to stay at until they received orders or advice from H.Q.

As an example of Volunteer efficiency I have before me at the moment a note which I received from Simon Donnelly in less than one hour after his leaving the prison. It runs as follows:-

To O/C Dublin Brigade, 14th 2nd, '21.
Teeling, Stewart and myself escaped.
Quite safe. SIMON.

But in half that time I was made acquainted with the fact that the long-watched for event had been successfully brought off. Our next thought was for the future safety of the men. Arrangements were quickly made and a further feat of daring undertaken. On the following morning, whilst the military, the Black and Tans and the Police Force proper were scouring the city for trace or tidings of the escaped men, Frank Teeling, accompanied by my wife, travelled across the city by tram, and getting off at Findlater's Church on Cavendish Row walked up Gardiner's Row to their destination. In the course of this walk they had to pass through one military cordon where they were scrutinised. Frank's sole disguise consisted of a dirty face, a

plumber's kit of tools, which very effectively hid one side of his face, and my wife walked on the other side. He reached safety and was never re-captured.

What became of poor Paddy Moran? The verdict in his case came along in due course. It was a verdict of Guilty and the man who discarded his chance to escape and trusted to the justice of an English Courtmartial trial was hanged along with five other comrades on a grey March morning in the year 1921.

CHAPTER X.

DESTRUCTION OF THE CUSTOM HOUSE.

The story of the destruction of the Custom House is one of brave endeavour as well as one of outstanding success. To it has been ascribed, rightly or wrongly, the ending of the war with the forces of occupation. What is certain is that it always will be linked with the ending of that gallant struggle for the restoration of Irish Independence because in a matter of about one month Mr. Lloyd George invited Mr. de Valera to a conference. This invitation was followed by the arrangement of a Truce which eventually took place on the 11th July, 1921, at 12 noon. The actual date of the receipt of that invitation was the 24th June, I think. Thus was brought to an end one of the most successful fights in our long history for the restoration of our independence.

Early in the New Year of 1921 I received a note informing me that there would be a meeting of the Army Council in the home of the late O'Rahilly in 40 Herbert Park. These meetings were seldom held twice in the one place and this was the first time I had been summoned to Herbert Park. I was later informed verbally that the meeting would be a rathe important one and that I should come prepared to discuss the activities of the Dublin Brigade and matters pertaining to it. I was also told that the President (Eamon de Valera) who had just arrived back from America, would be present.

I arrived at Herbert Park at the appointed hour and found most of my colleagues already there. Those present, as far as my memory goes, were Cathal Brugha, Austin Stack, Richard Mulcahy, Dermot O'Hegarty, Michael Collins, Gearoid O'Sullivan, Liam Mellows, Sean Russell, J.J. O'Connell, Sean McMahon, Piaras Beaslaí, and, I think, Eoin O'Duffy. There may have been one or two others but I cannot remember them at the moment. However, we were assembled there for some little

time when word was brought to us that the British forces had drawn a cordon across the entrance to the road. It was immediately assumed that this activity was in some way connected with our meeting. The position we were in was being discussed, ways and means to meet it were being planned when the President was ushered into our presence. Everyone wanted to know how he managed to get through the cordon. His reply was simple. He said, "I was held up, questioned and finally passed through". Later the word came through that the cordon had been withdrawn. As it was then a very ordinary procedure on the part of the occupying forces, little further notice was taken.

The meeting proceeded in a very normal way for some time and then the President spoke, and he made it clear that something in the nature of a big action in Dublin was necessary in order to bring public opinion abroad to bear on the question of Ireland's case. He felt that such an action in the capital city, which was as well known abroad as London or Paris, would be certain to succeed. He suggested that the capture of the headquarters of the Black and Tans, which was situated in Beggar's Bush Barracks, would capture the imagination of those he had in mind, apart from the serious blow it would constitute to the enemy. As an alternative to this he suggested the destruction of the Custom House, which was the administrative heart of the British Civil Service machine in this country. It was finally decided that I, as the Officer Commanding the Dublin Brigade, should examine these propositions and report back to the Army Council in due course.

I immediately set to work and was given the help of some members of the General Headquarters Intelligence Service. Two weeks were spent on the investigation and examination of the

possibilities of capturing Beggar's Bush Barracks. The experience of the men engaged on this work was such that they reported against such an operation. My activities were then turned to the alternative suggestion - the Custom House. I made a personal examination of this building. Armed with a large envelope inscribed with "O.H.M.S." on its front, I made my way all over the building. I was greatly impressed by its solidity, its granite walls, and what appeared to me to be its complete lack of structural material which would burn. However each office into which I penetrated was surrounded by wooden presses and shelves which held substantial bundles of papers and files. It might also be presumed that the presses contained papers and other inflammable material.

Immediately after my examination I took Commandant Tom Ennis of the 2nd Battalion into my confidence and asked him to make a similar examination and let me have his views. He carried out his task by methods similar to my own, and his report more or less confirmed my views.

My next step was to secure plans of the building. These were secured for me by the Officer Commanding the 5th Battalion, Liam O'Doherty. A perusal of these indicated the magnitude of the task. There were three floors to be dealt with, as well as the basement floor, numerous corridors and hundreds of offices. The staff probably numbered upwards of one hundred with the control of large numbers of telephones. In the course of our investigations it was discovered that there was a direct line to the Castle for emergency uses. There was also the problem of the general public who were continually entering and leaving the building. There were no military guards on the building, they having been withdrawn some short time before. There was, however, a number of police patrolling both the front and the rear of the building. All

these and many other points needed careful consideration. I spent nearly three months on the preparation of the plans. They were in my mind day and night. They were altered dozens of times, as weaknesses or better points occurred to me. Finally they were submitted to a sub-committee of the Army Council for their approval or otherwise. This sub-committee met at six o'clock one Sunday morning in May in 6 Gardiner's Row, which was the headquarters of the Dublin Brigade. Those present were Richard Mulcahy, Chief of Staff, Michael Collins, Director of Intelligence, J.J. O'Connell, Acting Chief of Staff, and a man named Dowling. I do not know who Dowling was. I got the impression that he was a specialist in engineering - a professor perhaps.

The plans in general were accepted, but one portion which arranged for the throwing up of barricades in the vicinity of the various city barracks was objected to. This operation was designed to operate only if any attempt was made by the enemy forces to leave these posts during the twenty minutes from 12.55 to 1.20, when it was hoped to have the destruction of the building and its evacuation completed. It was solely designed as a delaying action and to give the men operating within the Custom House an opportunity of retiring in safety when their task was completed. The barricades were to have been covered by rifle-men operating from a distance of 200 to 300 yards. The Director of Intelligence's objection to this part of the scheme was very strong. He regarded the throwing up of barricades all over the city as being suggestive of a general uprising, and finally stated, in reply to my arguments, that if it could not be carried out without this precaution it should not be carried out at all. Having withdrawn my arguments in favour of that part of the plan, the date the 25th May was agreed upon for the carrying out of the operation. I should mention that the barricades would have been of the mobile type,

that is, large carts and vans which could be moved into position and the wheels removed.

My next step was to inform the senior officers of the Brigade of the proposed action, together with an outline of the plan. They on their part were to start on the selection of their officers for the various tasks which they would be called upon to carry out. In the course of a number of meetings the whole plan was gradually unfolded.

As the target was in the 2nd Battalion area it was decided that the actual destruction of the building would be entrusted to that unit. Commandant Tom Ennis was appointed to take sole control of the party within the building. The 2nd Battalion was reinforced by the addition of the "Squad", a party of about twelve men who were attached to the D.I.'s department, as well as some men of the Active Service Unit.

To the 1st Battalion was allotted the task of protecting the outside of the building. In the event of a surprise attack by enemy forces the Battalion was to engage them with grenade, rifle and machine gun fire. This was a later addition to the plan which I had submitted to the Army Council sub-committee. I had hoped to be able to tell the men who had to enter the building that they would be completely protected against surprise by reason of the ring of barricades to which I have already referred, but, following the elimination of that part of the plan, I decided on this last minute, so to speak, form of at least partial protection. In addition to this task, the 1st Battalion was also to deal with any fire stations in their area. In other words, they were to put all fire fighting appliances out of action by the removal of vital parts of their machines. The 3rd and 4th Battalions were to deal in a similar way with the stations in their areas.

To the 5th Battalion, the Engineers, was given the very important task of cutting off from all communications, telephonic or otherwise, the Custom House with the outside world. This was a highly technical job and the most skilled men of the Engineers were called on to carry out this work. Communications could not be cut until the last minute as otherwise suspicions would most likely be aroused. As quite a number of manholes and high telephone poles were involved, the difficulty of their task can well be imagined.

The preparation for the main task of destruction brought about the necessity for a number of lesser actions. For instance, I decided right from the beginning that in no circumstances was petrol to be used. This necessitated the commandeering of a large quantity of paraffin oil and the transferring of the oil from steel casks and tanks to petrol tins. It also necessitated the holding up of an oil concern and their staff for some considerable time, the commandeering of motor lorries to bring the tinned paraffin to the Custom House precisely on time. When this lorry arrived at the back entrance to the building, which is opposite Lower Gardiner Street, the men detailed for the inside operation entered, at the same time taking with them from off the lorry a tin of paraffin. The building was also entered from the Quays and Beresford Place entrance opposite Liberty Hall. In this way the number going in by any one door was not excessive, and it was hoped would not arouse suspicion. The immediate job of these men on entry was to control all telephonic communications as an added safety device, even though these had been cut by our Engineers.

Within the building each Captain had been allotted a landing and all the offices on that landing to deal with. His job was to see that every person employed on that floor was sent

down to the main hall where they were kept under the vigilant eyes of the men of the Squad and the A.S.U. With this part of his task completed he was then to see that every office on his landing was thoroughly saturated with paraffin oil. This could not have been done if petrol was used, as the gas manufactured by the contact of the petrol with the air would have made a very dangerous explosive mixture. When the job of saturation had been completed, the officer was to report to Commandant Ennis on the ground floor, and the actual firing was to take place on an order given by him consisting of a single blast on his whistle. Two blasts were to signify the completion of the job and the withdrawal of all men to the ground floor.

Everything went perfectly as per plan, except that just before all the floors had given the Officer Commanding the "O.K." or "All ready" signal, someone blew two blasts on a whistle and all sections retired to the main hall. One officer reported that he had not completed his task of saturation. The Commandant sent him and his men back at once to finish the job. The few minutes loss here was the difference between the successful retirement of all the participants and the arrival of large numbers of enemy forces in lorries and armoured cars. These forces swept into Beresford Place at exactly 1.25 p.m., just five minutes after the time allotted in the plan for the completion of the operation. They were immediately engaged on entry to Beresford Place by the 1st Battalion units with volleys of revolver shots and the throwing of a number of hand-grenades. For some unknown reason the machine gun which our men were to have mounted inside the Custom House doors at the far end of Beresford Place did not come into action.

Just before the entry of the enemy forces I was talking to Captain Paddy Daly just outside the main back entrance. We

were discussing the delay in the men leaving, as 1.20 p.m. had just passed. The sudden entry of the enemy put an end to our discussion as at this point they were firing wildly from the different lorries as they came through. Captain Daly made away towards Abbey Street. I made towards the support of the loop-line bridge opposite Brooks Thomas's building stores. As I reached the road here I came under fire from a lorry of Black and Tans, but, due to the speed and movement of the lorry, the firing was erratic. As I reached the pathway, however, the lorry had come to a sudden halt. I was still being fired on and at the same time there were shouts of "Hands up". At this point I saw a young Volunteer jump out from the cover of the bridge supports and throw a bomb into the middle of the Black and Tans lorry, with disastrous effects to the occupants. I was later told that this Volunteer was Dan Head and that he was killed either then or some time later during the action.

By this time the Squad in the Custom House had gone into action with their parabellums and Mauser automatics, with still further disastrous effects to the Black and Tans who were attempting to storm the main back entrance.

Before I managed to get away I saw several bodies lying around the entrance immovable, and, as far as I could see and judge, dead. Those who were blown out of the lorry with which I was concerned were lying around apparently unconscious on the ground, if not dead.

I eventually got out through Gardiner Street and Talbot Street and back to Abbey Street, where I met Captain Daly again just outside the Abbey Theatre. Here we were informed that Tom Ennis, who had shot his way out, was taken away in an L.M.S. lorry, seriously wounded.

At this time enemy reinforcements were coming up in lorries,

together with additional armoured cars. We then knew that the only hope for the men inside was to escape by the Custom House Docks, a slender enough chance considering the strength of the forces now on the scene. Actually a goodly number did escape by various ways and ruses. Some were killed in their attempt. Altogether we lost five killed and about eighty captured.

Some short time later I received a message to the effect that Tom Ennis had reached his home in Croydon Park House, Fairview, and that he was in a very serious condition. Captain Daly and myself immediately went to the Brigade First-aid post in Gardiner's Row, where we collected some first-aid equipment, and cycled to Tom's house. His wife, who was nursing a young infant, brought us to Tom's bedside where we found him in a semi-conscious condition. He had an awful-looking bullet wound in his groin. The bullet entered from the buttock and made its exit through the groin. In its passage it was apparently deflected and tumbled on its way through, as the exit wound was a large gaping hole, with portions of a bone protruding. This looked so bad that I at once ordered Daly to get into immediate touch with Michael Collins's motor driver, Batt Hyland, and ask him to come over at once. While awaiting his arrival I gave first-aid treatment to the wound, having earlier on in my Volunteer career done a course in that service.

When the car arrived, Daly and I had considerable difficulty in getting Tom down the stairs from his flat, every movement causing him excruciating pain. The car then made its way very slowly to O'Donnell's Nursing Home in Eccles Street, where all our Volunteers were treated. On our way there we twice had to pass through police cordons, once at Ballybough Bridge and later on on the bridge on Jones's Road. On both

occasions the police, after peering into the car, gave us the all-clear and passed us through. I think they sized up the situation and decided on a non-interference policy.

On arrival at the Home we had to carry Tom to the very top of the building. He was then only barely conscious. He was attended almost immediately and was operated on I think that night. He spent a considerable period of time in that Home. In the course of one of my visits he told me that the doctor assured him that the first-aid attention which he had been given helped considerably in saving his life. I merely mention this to show that the special services in the Brigade were of considerable and genuine value, especially when it was not always safe to call in outside help without some knowledge of the individuals called on.

Everything within the four walls of the Custome House building was reduced to ashes. The fire was still burning ten days after the attack. The fire Brigades were unable to go into action for a considerable time. This delay, as well as the use of paraffin oil, played a decisive part in the total destruction of the inside of the building.

That evening the Dublin Brigade went into action in a number of places in the city, mainly as a gesture of defiance as well as to show that our heavy losses that day did not impair our ability to carry on the fight.

The Nuns of the Mater Hospital later told me the story of the death of Sean Doyle. As he lay on his deathbed they said his one worry was, "Are the boys beaten?", and that night as the sound of nearby explosions shook the air, Sean's face,wreathed in smiles, turned to the Nun who was attending him, and he feebly whispered, "Thank God, Sister, the fight goes on". That simple statement of a man who had given his all for the cause of

Ireland symbolised the determination of the Irish people down through the centuries.

CHAPTER XI.

ATTEMPTED RESCUE OF SEÁN McEOIN. BRITISH RAIDS BRIGADE H.Q. INTRODUCTION OF THE THOMPSON GUN.

Early in the Spring of 1921 I was somewhat concerned at the fact that lectures which had been delivered to Volunteers throughout the country were not being held as often as previously. This, to a large extent, was due to the greater activities which were being forced on the Director of Training, J.J. O'Connell. He had been appointed Assistant Chief of Staff some time previously, and, in a discussion with myself on this question of training, he suggested that I should be on the look out for someone to replace him as Director of Training, someone who would be continuously available for the giving of these lectures. I had been hearing from Charlie Dalton, a young Volunteer of the 2nd Battalion who was also being availed of for intelligence work by G.H.Q., of the outstanding ability of his brother who had fought through the Great War. I learned from Charlie that his brother was sympathetically disposed to the Volunteer movement. I asked Charlie to bring his brother, Emmet Dalton, along to me for an interview.

At the interview I asked Emmet Dalton if he would be prepared to deliver a series of lectures to the members of the Dublin Brigade. This was merely to test his abilities in respect of his powers as a lecturer and his knowledge of matters which would be of some use to the Volunteers. J.J. O'Connell came to the first of these lectures and was generally impressed by the manner of Dalton's delivery, as well as by the extent of his knowledge. O'Connell continued to attend these lectures for some little time and then he mentioned to me that he thought Dalton would fill the bill from the point of view of suiting for the lectures for the

all-Ireland classes. O'Connell, no doubt, reported similarly to G.H.Q. Some time later Dalton was appointed Director of Training.

Before this appointment actually took place Michael Collins mentioned to me the fact that he was working on ways and means to secure the release of Sean MacEoin. He outlined a very simple plan, which necessitated the entrance to Mountjoy Prison of two individuals. These individuals were to be admitted through the female entrance to the prison. They were to go to the prison hospital, and at a certain hour stand under a particular window prepared to receive Sean MacEoin who was to escape through that window. Captain Paddy Daly and myself were selected by Michael Collins to carry out this task. We, in his presence, had discussions with some wardens from the prison who gave us all the necessary details in respect of our task. It seemed, with their help, a very simple task.

On the evening on which this task was to be carried out, Daly and myself were in a house in Phibsboro' when a warden reported to us that MacEoin had tried himself out in respect of climbing up to the window, but, because of his general weakness, he was unable to succeed. Again, because of this weakness, this effort was called off.

Following this failure Collins had another talk with me in which he unfolded an extraordinary plan consisting of the capture of an armoured car which appeared regularly in the Dublin Abattoir. The only thing which was missing, he said, was a person who would be capable of playing the part of a British Officer. I immediately informed Collins of the fact that we had a man giving lectures in the Dublin Brigade who I thought would fill the bill admirably. Collins asked me to

arrange for an interview with this person. I arranged the interview and Collins was immediately struck by the fact that this man was, as he said himself, "made for the job". Emmet Dalton was the typical British Officer, very neat, debonair, small fair toothbrush moustache, and spoke with a kind of affected accent, which was entirely suitable for the character which he had to impersonate.

From this onwards Dalton reported regularly to Michael Collins, and the plans developed to the stage when the actual attempt was made, which was only frustrated by the illest of ill-luck.

Dalton had not been long giving the lectures when the Brigade Headquarters was raided. We had a system there by which the Brigade Staff could always be warned in the event of a raid; it consisted of an electric press-button situated in a portion of the hall where the caretaker of the premises was always standing. In the event of a raid, this man, standing with his hands behind his back, only had to press the button in the wall and the buzzer sounded in our room. Immediately all papers would be transferred to a secret cavity in the wall and the office would assume the appearance of an office of the Irish Engineering Union, which owned and occupied the building.

On one such occasion when the British military raided the building, Dalton, myself and Kit O'Malley, the Brigade Adjutant, walked out of the building under the guidance of Dalton, who again, because of his general appearance, deceived the officers in charge of the raid into the belief that he too was a British officer and that he was engaged on work about which the least said would be in the interests of all. There can be little doubt that, due to Dalton's presence, we managed to evade arrest on that occasion.

The part of the building we had could not be got to very easily and was easily missed. When the British raided the house on this particular occasion they did not notice our part of the premises. We waited for some considerable time after the buzzer had sounded and nothing happened. We had cleared everything into the little cabinet which John Russell had made in the wall, and were waiting for the door to burst open but nothing happened. Dalton then said, "I think the best thing we can do is to go down and brazen it out", and we agreed and said we would follow. We went down and a soldier halted us by putting his gun up. Dalton went over and said a few words to him. What he said to the soldier I do not know, but the fellow nearly saluted him, put his rifle to the ground and went on talking. The soldier then went to the door and brought back a British officer, similar in type and appearance to Dalton himself. This officer and Dalton conversed for several minutes, and O'Malley and myself noticed that they had got to the stage of laughing at some event - probably something that happened in the Great War - which was being retailed. Eventually Dalton said, "Come along, men", so we followed him out and down the steps. We were turning in one direction when the officer in charge of the raiding party suggested that we had better go in another direction - for what reason I do not know. We were again held up at the corner of Findlater's Church and another similar interview between Dalton and another British officer took place. Again we were passed through.

We continued on up Frederick Street, and, seeing that the cordon continued around into Dorset Street, we moved up Blessington Street, making a detour, and eventually arrived back in the vicinity of Brigade Headquarters about three-quarters of an hour later. By this time the cordon had been withdrawn, but from enquiry which was later made it was

apparent that the British had some indefinite information in respect to Brigade Headquarters, because the complete block, consisting of Gardiner's Row, Great Denmark Street, Temple Street, Dorset Street, and North Frederick Street, had been cordoned off.

On our return to Brigade Headquarters the man in charge, Tom Hannigan, informed us that while the raiders had made a thorough search of the building they had failed to locate the Brigade offices. We were convinced that the British had got some knowledge about the place from somebody, but that they did not get sufficient information. The whole block was surrounded. There were a couple of raids of little or no inportance, but this was the only raid on Brigade Headquarters which appeared to rest on information supplied.

The fact that Brigade Headquarters premises survived the whole period of the intensive campaign against the British is extraordinary, in view of the fact that numerous men coming from the country for interview with the various departments of G.H.Q. had to be "vetted" in Headquarters before they were given the address to which they should report.

Brigade Headquarters was at No. 6 Gardiner's Row, known as the "Plaza". The former Brigade Headquarters was situated at No. 35 Lower Gardiner Street, which was the property of the Dublin Typographical Institute, and was used to such an extent that it became heavily suspect, and on numerous occasions Volunteers on duty outside reported very suspicious activities on the part of individuals. On at least a couple of occasions arrests of individuals of this type took place, but after interrogation by the Intelligence Staff of the Brigade they were released. There can be little doubt that it became vitally necessary to make a change, and this change was made from Gardiner Street to Gardiner's Row. The change took place just

before Christmas of 1920, and the Plaza building survived throughout the whole period of the Truce.

The Thompson guns were introduced in November or December 1920. The first introduction of these guns followed the arrival of two ex-officers of the American Army, one was Major Dineen and the other, whose rank I forget, was named Cronin. These two men were made available to the Brigade for the purpose of giving lectures and instructions in the use of the Thompson sub-machine guns. The lectures, which were given to selected men of the Dublin Brigade, consisted in the main of taking the gun asunder, becoming acquainted with the separate parts and securing a knowledge of the names of these parts, the clearance of stoppages, as well as the causes of these stoppages. In the early stages it was not possible to give practical demonstrations of the shooting powers of these weapons, but the handling of the guns, together with the methods of sighting, made the men reasonably proficient.

The guns were first used on the new railway running parallel to Whitworth Road, when a troops train, carrying numbers of enemy troops, was fired on. One pan of ammunition was used on this occasion, and an attempt to use a second was frustrated by a stoppage which was not cleared in time to resume firing. Subsequently these guns, of which each Battalion had at least one, were used on different occasions in particular ambushes. On almost every occasion stoppages were reported.

During the Truce lectures followed on the practical use of these guns, and the quick clearance of stoppages was one of the features of an intensive course of lectures which took place in the training camp in Glenasmole, County Dublin. The

two officers continued to deliver these lectures, and their power and ability with these guns was always a cause of amazement to their pupils. They gave several demonstrations of firing these guns from various positions, always with tremendously impressive effect.

Harry Boland, who was then representing the Government in the United States was, in the main, responsible for the importation of these Thompson guns, as well as for the visit of the American Army officers mentioned.

CHAPTER XII.

REORGANISATION AND THE TRUCE.

Following the action at the Custom House and the capture of a large number of highly trained officers, N.C.Os. and men, it was found necessary to carry out an almost complete re-organisation of the various units of the Dublin Battalion. This, of course, necessitated the appointment of a considerable number of new officers, and naturally while this re-organisation was taking place, actions as we had known them before almost ceased, with the exception of those carried out by the remaining members of the Active Service Unit. As time went on the Brigade units gradually assumed their old aggressiveness, and by the time the Truce was approaching a number of reasonably important operations were being planned. However, because of the nature of the negotiations which were proceeding between the British and their representatives, these were called off, and on July 11th at twelve o'clock the war as we knew it was brought to an end.

Our general instructions from the Chief of Staff was that we were to intensify our training, and, with this instruction in view, training camps were operated all over the country. In Dublin the Brigade Headquarters training camp was situated in a large house in Glenasmole, known as Cobbs Lodge. It was the property of a Mr. Howard Healy and was taken over by the 4th Battalion early in the Truce. Because of its size and suitability for practical instruction in the use of all weapons of war, the Brigade decided to acquire it for Brigade use. Actually, as time went on it became more of a General Headquarters training camp, as men were brought from various parts of the country to undergo courses of instruction, especially in the machine gun from

the American officers who were engaged on that task. This course was brought to a conclusion in the late autumn of 1921 and was not resumed at any later date.

Signature Richard Maynard

Date 24th January, 1950

J. V. Joyce. Witness.
Colonel.