ROINN COSANTA.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 350

Witness

Mr. Peter Reynolds,
31 Merrion Square,
Dublin.

Identity

Dispatch Rider, Dublin,
Easter Week, 1916.

Subject

(a) National activities 1913-1921;
(b) Dispatch work, Dublin, Easter Week 1916;
(c) I.R.A. activities, Dublin, 1919-1921;
(d) His imprisonment and release, 1921.

Conditions, if any, stipulated by Witness

Nil

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STATEMENT BY PETER REYNOLDS

77, LOWER GARDINER STREET, DUBLIN.

1913.

It was a very cold night when I entered a meeting in the Rotunda Picture House in O'Connell St. The meeting was called to establish an Irish Army. I joined and signed the form and took the oath on 1st December 1913. Then I became an Irish soldier. A very large number of men also joined. A hall was hired at No. 5 Blackhall Place which was afterwards called the head-quarters of the 1st Battalion of the Irish Volunteers. We did not do much.

1914.

We started to drill and the police began to take notice. We started to drill with wooden rifles and we quickly got to perfection, but we wanted real guns; so a gun-running expedition was organised by the late Mr. Darrell Figgis at the end of July 1914, run on similar lines to the one run by Sir Edward Carson. Our rifles were of the old German Mauser type. I remember firing one round from my Mauser and the rebound nearly knocked my shoulder out. The bullet penetrated a beam of wood 10 inches thick and lodged halfway in a brick wall.

At the Howth gun-running most of the police refused to disarm the Volunteers. On the Saturday before the gun-running I had a message to deliver from Countess Markievicz to Captain Monteith (who afterwards became famous for his exploit with Sir Roger Casement in connection with the landing in Kerry, for which Sir Roger Casement was executed, and Capt. Monteith escaped, with a large sum offered for his arrest, dead or alive). I left the house on a motor cycle at 2.45 p.m. to meet him at Nelson's Pillar at 2.50 p.m. While crossing from Little Mary St. to Mary St. I had a very serious collision with a tram car. My motor cycle was wrecked. I was carried on a stretcher to Jervis St. Hospital. After dressing me they wanted me to stay. I refused and made my way to Captain Monteith and delivered my verbal message, which I cannot now recollect, and went home with my head and arm in bandages. Next morning while sitting at the

window awaiting events a man named Coburn called in a motor car and told me the guns had landed and were being taken away. He said some of the police were attempting to disarm the Volunteers, but the most of them had refused. I went with my friend in the car to Malahide Road and helped the Volunteers to load the rifles into a motor van. I got one home myself. I saw the King's Own Scottish Borderers at the end of the road at Clontarf, and the D.M.P. constables standing against a wall.

On August 4th 1914, war broke out and the Irish Volunteers continued drilling, this time with real modern rifles.

1915.

During the year there was a lot of raids and arrests and the Volunteers were buying rifles and revolvers and getting them any way they could. I remember guns being brought over in a coffin from England. The name of the supposed corpse was Michael Hennessy, who died Feb. 5th 1915, aged 42 years. A woman and two men came with it, supposed to be his daughter and two sons. The coffin was deposited with Andy Clerkin in Pearse St. But I may state that ruse only worked once, for when the authorities heard of it every coffin and box was examined. During all this time several arrests were made including many leaders.

Captain Monteith was ordered to leave Dublin. I was in his house having a friendly chat when his wife, looking through a window, saw two detectives coming towards the house. She told him. He said "If they are going to arrest me there's going to be trouble". He drew a large revolver from his pocket. His wife pleaded with him not to have any shooting and to listen to what they had to say first. He consented, and was I glad! They knocked at the door. Mrs. Monteith opened it and the two detectives came in. "Mr. Robert Monteith" one of them said. "Yes, that's me" said Mr. Monteith. The detective then began to read out his deportation order and Mr. Monteith strongly protested, but stated "As long as you don't send me out of Ireland, I'll agree". But he said to them "past that and youre

dealing with the wrong man". So Mr. Monteith was sent down to a place called Athboy about 40 miles from Dublin.

An incident worth mentioning happened to me while I was working for Mr. Monteith on jobs and messages. About 8 weeks before Mr. Monteith was deported I had an appointment to meet Captain (as we now called him) Monteith at the corner of Capel St. and King St. at 12.30 a.m. I left the house at 11.45 p.m. to make sure I would be in time and also in case the motor did not start right away. I could easily do the journey in about 5 minutes. I got over to motor cycle where I had it stored in a timber yard and started it and as I got on the saddle, two detectives appeared from nowhere and caught me by the arm. "Going for a joyride" says one. "No" I said "I'm going to visi a very sick friend", although I did not know where I was going as soon as I would meet Capt. Monteith. "Where does this sick friend of yours live?" said the other detective. I replied "Glasnevin". "Well," said one of them "We'll go and see how this sick friend of yours is and if he is better". I said "Its better manners to wait until you are asked to a person's home". "Oh, well, we're asking ourselves and better move off as it's getting late". I restarted the motor cycle and off we went, one on the back, the other in the sidecar. I began to think out a plan of how I would get rid of those two gentlemen and I had not much time as it was then just 12. It was in the early days of motor cycling - 1915 - and very few motor cycles had electric light on them. They were all - except new cycles - fitted with carbide lamps. I had a carbide lamp fitted with a rubber tube running down to the generator under the saddle. As I raced along towards Glasnevin I thought of an idea. It began to drizzle rain, so at Glasnevin I squeezed the tube of the lamp with my knee, thus putting out the lamp. Both the my hands were visible so I could not have put out the lamp with my hands. I told them the rough road was responsible. I pulled up and asked for a match to relight the lamp. One detective did not

smoke, the other had only one match left, so he lit the lamp. I then turned on the gas full and the force was too much and the lamp went out again. They told me to continue on as they were policemen. I refused to travel on such a dark night without a light as I would be summoned. They both got off the motor cycle One went over to a house where there was a light. I asked the other to give me a push over to the house. I had the exhaust valve lever in my hand ready to drop on full compression and he did give me a good, hard, willing push and I dropped the lever and jumped on to the saddle and made back towards Capel St. with the two detectives running after me in the pouring rain. I went very fast in the dusk down to Capt. Monteith and I was about 6 minutes late. He admonished me and was very annoyed until I hurriedly told him what happened. Then he smiled and said "You are in for it tomorrow". Well, we did our work and, strang to relate, everywhere I visited was raided the next day by the police. My house was raided at 8 a.m. the same morning. During the day, about 12.15, the two detectives called into my shop. "So you think you're clever" said one. "No" I said, "but I did not like entertaining you on such a bad night". "Well, get your coat on as we are going to entertain you in the Bridewell". I asked them the charge; they would not tell me. I protested at being arrested for nothing. "For nothing" they said "did you not ride a motor cycle between the hour of 12 and 1 a.m. this morning without a light?". So I got my first visit to a prison cell and it gave me no encouragement when I saw the number of it was 13. I was not long there when I was brought before a magistrate. The charge was proved and I was fined £2. which was paid by the Executive Committee of the Irish Volunteers.

1916.

Here was the beginning of the end, and the year the foundation stone was laid for a free Ireland. During the early part of this year we had night manoeuvres. Every Irish Volunteer was called out at 1 a.m. to his drill hall to take part in mock street fighting. This was carried on up to 3.30 a.m. Many of the men had to start their daily work at 6 a.m.

and 7 a.m. The police were not aware of what was going on and any that did were afraid to interfere. I was stopped by a police sergeant on my way home. He asked me where the fun was and was the toy loaded - referring to the revolver I had in the holster under my coat. I told him if he was wise he would forget it and two men would live longer lives. He laughed and said "Good morning, Reynolds". I went to bed for a few hours thinking every minute that the sergeant would come back with the flying squad or the military and pick me up, but my luck held out and all went well. Thinking in bed of what the next plan of action would be - during the week about the end of January 1916, I bought some short Lee Enfield rifles for £1 each from soldiers, as the barracks was at the back of my shop. I gave them all to the Volunteers. One day an English soldier told me I was being watched. I told two of my pals and we made arrangements to buy them outside the shop about 500 yards away in the dark nights. One night I had an appointment with my two pals - Jack Shaw and ~~Tommy Reilly~~ Tommy Finegan - to go up to a place called Blackhorse Lane, outside a military barracks, for rifles. We got them and I put them into the sidecar and drove off and put them into a timber yard where I kept the motor cycle. I heard two hours after that my two pals were caught. I attended the court. Although no rifles or revolvers were found on them they were identified as the two men who came there every night and gave things to a motor cyclist. They were told they could go home if they told who the motor cyclist was. They laughed and said "don't make us laugh". "All right" said the magistrate "I'll have a laugh; 6 months' hard labour". They went down the stairs still laughing. One (Mr. Shaw) later held the honourable position of Dublin City Marshal. The last two rifles I bought I hid them in the timber yard opposite my shop. The yardman was locking up the yard. I put the two rifles in the timber and we locked up. I reported what happened and the plans were changed and that night at 11.45 a man named Fitzgerald and two others came in a motor car and drove straight to the timber yard. It being closed, they went around to the back. I had a key and two

men took the rifles to the car and drove off. Next morning I went over as I did every morning for my motor cycle and side-car and to tell the yardman we took the rifles away. As soon as I got inside the little wicket gate two detectives came out and caught me by the arm and said "We'll relieve you of those rifles you have there. Will you save us some trouble and get them for us". I pretended to be surprised. "What rifles are you talking about?". "Come now" said one "I'll show you under those long planks there" pointing to the exact spot I did put them the night before. "All right" I said "I'll show you. Give me a hand". I spitefully removed every plank, mixed them in all sizes and thicknesses and scattered them all about the yard "Now where are those rifles or whatever you're talking about" I said, after removing every plank. They gave the yardman a very wicked look. I said, sarcastically , "If you have any to sell, I'll buy them". I was told to shut up. They were in a very bad humour and they were amazed and so was the yardman. They asked me what I came over for. I said "for my motor cycle" I knew the yardman had informed about the rifles as he was a very nervous man, but I meant him to pay for it and he knew it. I was going away when the detectives told me not to go. They gave the yardman a good telling-off for fooling them and brought me to the police station. They could put no charge against me and could not very well detain me. They tried to frighten me into telling them where I took the rifles to. I told them the yardman was having a joke and was laughing at them. They asked me again and I used the first slogan of the I.R.A. "I don't know". I was put into cell No. 15, Bridewell Police station. After protesting against this treatment as a good citizen I was released after two hours. There was a close watch on my cycle shop for days and nights after.

The yardman got a terrific beating up by some men, which left him on crutches for months from which I don't think he ever recovered.

On Feb. 20th 1916, I was sent to a house in Ballybough. I had my daughter aged 1 year 9 months in the sidecar. I stopped to pump up the tyre when a police inspector came over to me "Hello, Reynolds" he said "going for a run". "Yes" I said "I am going to my sister". "That's a fine baby you have; is that your daughter?". "Yes" I said. "It's terribly cold to have her out in this open car". "Ah" I said "it will make her hardy. She is well covered". "So I see" he said, and he pretended to cover her. I left the pump down and went over to him. "I see she has some hardware under her" seeing a biscuit tin full of old revolvers and all sorts and sizes of ammunition. There was another wooden box under the nose of the sidecar. I remarked in a very shaky voice "Inspector, we are being watched; if two men want to live, you go one way, I'll go another". "Look" Reynolds "I'm on your side, but don't tell anyone". I very much doubted him, but he went away. Years afterwards I heard he was really working for the Volunteers and he got great promotion.

The general mobilisation took place on Sunday 23rd April 1916. Great confusion and military activity went on that day. I was out with my brother in the sidecar of the motor cycle early on Sunday morning when I met Mr. Michael Staines, one of our officers (who afterwards became the first chief commissioner of police under an Irish government). He asked my brother to get out of the sidecar as we had some very important business to do. My brother got out and Mr. Staines got into the sidecar and Mr. Sean Heuston (who was afterwards executed) got on the back carrier. I was directed to drive to Mr. Eamon Ceannt's house (also executed) on the South Circular Road, Dublin. Then we drove to Mr. MacNeill's house and, after what I took to be a very hot argument, we then went to St. Enda's. We came back to town. I had tea with Mr. Staines in Westmoreland St.

It is a wellknown fact that every Irish Volunteer bought his own uniform and equipment. Those who could not pay in cash could pay so much every week. Some of the men did not care

about uniform or clothes as long as they had a gun. I still have my subscription card made out by Peadar Mackem, who was killed in action, also his brother. I bought a Smith & Wesson automatic revolver. I had a leather belt on me with a cycle toolbag each side of me filled with ammunition.

On Easter Monday morning, 24th April 1916, at about 7.30 a.m. I was in bed when I heard a loud rapping at the halldoor. I grabbed the gun and said to the wife "This is it". I looked out of the window and was relieved to see it was our own Comdt. Edward Daly (executed). I opened the door and he said "Get your clothes on quickly and come over to the drill hall" (No. 5 Blackhall St., headquarters of the 1st Battalion). I, for the first time ever, asked him where we were going. "Well" said he "we are going on a long journey and we may never come back" (unfortunately he never did, as he was executed). We went over to the hall and we saw it packed with men, who were given a little lecture by Comdt. Daly. He said "Men, we are moving off today to fight for Ireland". There were loud cheers. "We are going to fight the greatest power on earth and, let the battle be short or long, fight a clean fight, no brutality and don't stain the flag of Ireland. There are several married men here with responsibility I would ask them now to step out; also any other men with responsibilities. We will not look on them as cowards. But don't start out now and then desert. We will think all the more of those men". I asked the Commandant's permission to go back to my shop for my revolver and ammunition as I was in such a hurry over I forgot them. He gave me permission as it was only 5 minutes' run. I went over and, coming out of the shop, a police inspector asked me if I was going on a holiday (the police were always around my shop). "Yes" I said. "I see you have plenty of refreshments round your belt" noticing the two tool bags and their contents. I said "Inspector, if you want to live a long life, say you saw nothing". "All right, Reynolds" he said "have a good time". This inspector knew a lot more than he pretended to his superiors previous to the taking over of the

police by the Irish Free State government.

When I got back to the Hall they were all ready to move off. "Now, boys" said Comdt. Daly, "many of you were looking forward to this day; now you have it and here goes in the name of God" and off they went. About 15 out of the 400 remained behind. Comdt. Daly called me over and sent me up to Doyle's corner to a barber's shop for our Captain - McCormack. I went to this barber's shop and asked for Capt. McCormack. He was shaving a man and I told him Comdt. Daly wanted him down to the Hall at once and I was to wait for him and bring him down in the sidecar as we were to attack the G.P.O. at 12 sharp. He told me to go. I said I would wait for him. "You go" he said. "These are my orders. I will be down later". "My orders are, Sir, the orders of my Commandant and those orders apply to you, Sir, as well, that you are to come with me in the sidecar provided." "Now" he said "as your superior officer you will take orders from me". "Yes, sir" I said "after the Commandant's". He said he was not ready to go yet anyway, but he would be down very shortly on his bicycle and "its better for you to go and not keep the Commandan waiting". Well, there was nothing else for me to do only go without our captain. When I returned to the Hall the Volunteers had left for the Four Courts. I went out to the motor cycle to detach the sidecar as it would be no use as a dispatch machine with a sidecar, when an officer came running out after me and called me back. He told me to pull the machine close to the Hall, so I pushed it up on the path. Another man came out - I did not know who either of them was. They put a lot of gelignit sticks and two maxim guns into the sidecar and dispatched me at once to the G.P.O. The gelignite and other things were taken off the car. The gelignite was taken over to Nelson's Pillar where picks and shovels were at work at the bottom of the Pillar where the gelignite and stuff was to be used to blow up Nelson's Pillar. I got away from there and helped some men to overturn a tramcar at Earl St. corner to act as a barricade. I was calle back and told the to move the machine quickly. I did not wait

to be told twice as I was thinking that the weight of Nelson's Pillar on my motor cycle would not improve its appearance. However, the charge of gelignite failed to explode owing to dampness and Nelson's Pillar was left alone, as one of the men told me. The first shot was fired at 12 sharp by Commandant Patrick Pearse from the G.P.O. I was told by an officer there was no more use for the sidecar, but there would be plenty for the motor cycle. I was told to detach it and to change from uniform into civilian clothing as I would be only a target with the uniform.

I raced home on the machine and while my brother was detaching the sidecar, I was changing my clothes. My other brother was an N.C.O. in the Connaught Rangers and was home on leave (wounded at Givinchy). I went back to the new headquarters, G.P.O., where firing had just begun. I was sent with a dispatch to the College of Surgeons, Stephen's Green. On my way up Grafton St. people were here and there in groups wondering where all the shooting was going on. Some thought it was only a mock battle or manoeuvres. I got up near the top of Grafton St. when I met an old officer of the British Army on horseback coming towards me. The garrison at Stephen's Green let him pass as he was so old, or else because he was unarmed; or he may have come out of Harry St. or Duke St. Anyway I pulled the motor cycle across his path and advised him not to proceed down Grafton St. He was very indignant and said "Be off, you young scoundrel. How dare you obstruct an officer of His Majesty's forces. Officer, arrest this man" he called over to a policeman who was trembling all over. A good few people had gathered around as no one up that end of the city really knew what was going on. The police man pushed in and said "Come on, young fellow, what's your game?" "This" I said, before he got too near, producing a very useful parabellum revolver fully loaded. "Now, you be off and very quick too". He did get away, especially when he hard a shot very near at hand. "Now" I said to the old warrior "I should let you have the contents of this" pointing the revolver at his head.

"Why, damn your soul, I've a right to put this through you" putting his hand on the sword. I pointed the revolver again at him and was about to fire when two women saw people running and fainted. "Oh, all right" I said, "go on, someone else will do it". All this happened inside five minutes. I then went on my way to Stephen's Green and delivered my dispatch to Countess Markievicz and returned to the G.P.O. People realised now that something serious was going on. Down near College Green I saw a horse and soldier lying dead on the roadway very near the College gates. I immediately recognised the officer with whom I had the argument less than two minutes previously, at the top of Grafton St. The shooting was going on very lively by now. The military made an appearance here and there and a battle rage for a few minutes every now and then. I reported back at headquarters, G.P.O. I was being sent to Comdt. de Valera with a dispatch - he was at Mount St. Bridge area. As I was going Comdt. Connolly (who was badly wounded and executed afterwards) called me back and he had a short conference with Comdt. Pearse which changed the course of my life. They decided to send another man named Costello, who was shot coming back after delivering his dispatch on a push cycle. I was sent to reconnoitre along the north side of the quays of the River Liffey. I reported progress and what I saw together with any verbal messages. I was covered by the Volunteers who were stationed in various houses and positions along the quay. I remained in the G.P.O. all night doing some shooting and finally had a little rest for about two hours.

Next day, Tuesday April 25th, I was sent with a dispatch to the Four Courts - a very large building on the north side of the River Liffey, used for all law work. I gave my dispatch to Capt. Fahy (Speaker in An Dail for 15 years). On my way back a bullet penetrated the front headlamp of the motor cycle - my first baptism of fire. I got back to the G.P.O. safely and was then sent to the back of the G.P.O. after a lull in the fighting

which lasted three hours. I was then sent by Comdt. Pearse to the Four Courts again and returned even safer than the first time I was then sent to our Commandant Daly at North King St. where heavy fighting was going on. I gave him the dispatch and he seemed very pleased and sent me back with a reply to the G.P.O. This time it took me about two hours, whereas it could have been done in about 2 minutes, as I had to push through some very awkward barricades that were growing like mushrooms. I got out on to the northern quays when I heard a whizz. I had to run the motor cycle up on to the path and straight into the hallway up against the stairs. Some man ran down the stairs, lifted me up and asked me was I hit. I didn't know whether I was or not. By luck I happened to know this man, a Mr. Coburn, who owned several boot shops in the city. He kept watch on the halldoor until things got a bit quiet, and I turned the motor cycle in the hall to face the street ready for a dash out. I started the motor in the hall and I was in luck, nothing was broken or damaged. It went very well. Mr. Coburn shouted all clear and I was on my way back to the G.P.O. As I got to O'Connell Bridge a bullet flew past me from the south side and went through Butler's musical shop window and into a big drum. The Volunteers were in occupation of the upper part of the shop and overlooking O'Connell Bridge. They again covered me while I dashed around the corner to the G.P.O. I handed in my message to Patrick Pearse and he said "Well done". I got a few hours rest here - if you could call it rest. I was again called upon to go to Church St. area, but it was immediately cancelled until next day to see how things were working out. The British military were getting very lively by that time. Night came and the usual intermittent gunfire just reminded us that we were not at a garden party.

Next day, Wednesday, 26th April, was also a very lively day. At about 10 a.m. I was called to go to Church St. area again to Mr. Eamon Duggam who was in Father Mathew Hall. I gave him my

dispatch from Comdt. Pearse and he shook hands with me. We chatted between fire for about an hour and off I was again on that awful run of less than quarter of a mile. On my way back a bullet again hit the machine, this time the back mudguard which was of the old pattern style made very high. The bullet went right through, just missing the tyre, but I got to the G.P.O. all right, how, I don't know. If I had left the motor cycle at home I could have done the journey quicker walking. I was then sent to the Four Courts garrison again to another part of the building, this time to a Capt. E. Morkan (now Col. Morkan, E.S.B.) with a dispatch asking how they were off for ammunition. I got the reply and delivered it safely to the G.P.O. There was a brief lull in the fighting in the evening, but at 6 a.m. next day, Thursday, there was a big burst up and shellfire began to pour in. I thought this was the end. I fired from a short Lee Enfield at a sniper at the corner of D'Olier St. and Westmoreland St. who was on a roof. But the angle was too dangerous for any of us until a Volunteer named Carroll, who was left-handed and a very good shot, took aim and potted this sniper and he tumbled off the roof over the parapet on to the street below, about 50 feet, dead. The British were shelling the G.P.O.

I was called for again and sent with a dispatch from Comdt. Pearse to Capt. Cosgrave at the S.D.Union garrison, the furthest away from the G.P.O. The firing was pretty brisk all along here, but I had to deliver this dispatch to Capt.Cosgrave to give to Comdt. Ceannt (afterwards executed). I had to drive terribly fast for two reasons - one was, the dispatch from the Comdt. at headquarters was very urgent; the other was, the faster I went the less chance I had of being hit. So, as they say in America, I stepped on the gas as I rushed from the G.P.O. I never was a speed merchant, but to me that day I thought I was doing about 200 miles an hour. Between fright and the importance of the dispatch I tried to burst the machine or

myself; but when I came to my senses I found I was doing only about 45 miles an hour, but I got there safely by a miracle after losing a few lbs. weight. I had only got in when a hail of bullets came rapping at the gate, so to go out that way again meant certain death and was out of the question. The men broke a hole in the wall big enough to let the machine and me out the back way over some paupers' graves and broken stones. It was like trick rough riding to get through. I did get through; the old motor never let me down. As I got to Dame St. things were really bad. I took one of the narrow side streets that led to Fleet St. and from there to the south side of O'Connell Bridge and one great effort, dō or die, and across the bridge, and once across and I was safe. And was I glad? I gave my dispatch to Comdt. Pearse in reply to his and he smiled and said "Brave fellow" as he was reading the dispatch. He then told me there would be no more dispatches as the streets were too dangerous.

Many years afterwards when Capt. Cosgrave was President of the Irish Free State Government I wrote to him and asked for an interview with him. He replied as he did not know me, nor what I wanted him for, he could not grant my request for an interview. I wrote again explaining about the dispatches I delivered to him and Comdt. Ceannt in the S.D.Union garrison from Comdt. Pearse. He wrote a reply and asked me to call to his house, Beechpark, Templeogue, Co. Dublin. When I went his maid showed me into a large room and President Cosgrave came in. Without asking me to sit down or who I was, he said "what do you want?" I said "Sir, as many men are applying for pensions for their services in 1916 and 1920-21, I am applying and I want a note of reference to prove I was in action in Easter Week 1916". I again reminded him of the dispatches and the time the gate was riddled with bullets just as I got in. Then he began to remember. "Yes" he said "it's over 20 years ago; now I remember". He told me to sit down and we both fought our battles all over again with our tongues. He got very interested when we both recalled incidents. Then I asked him what very important dispatch was sent to him

from Comdt. Pearse on Thursday of Easter Week 1916. He told me the reply was more urgent, that things were going bad at head-quarters, how many men of the S.D.Union garrison were killed and about how many more men we had under arms. Mr. Cosgrave told me he wrote out the reply in numbers, such as - No. 1,sorry No. 2, about 40; No. 3, about 70, and so on - of course on small slips. He was pleased to recall some incidents and was very grieved to recall others. He pulled out a press, opened a bottle and gave me a glass of whiskey. After I drank half of this he said "Tell me, Reynolds, how did you ever get out of the S.D.Union and get back to the G.P.O." I told him about the men breaking a hole in the wall and I getting out over the graves. I related the whole story to him and he congratulated me and wrote out a very good certificate which helped me to get the pension from the Irish Government.

I told him I went back to the G.P.O. and escaped a good few shots on my way there. I told him most of the Volunteers knew me, but the British military were not so sure as I was in civilian clothes, but neither was taking any chances, only takin a pot at me now and again. But the reply had to be got back quickly. "Well, Reynolds" Mr. Cosgrave said "you were blessed with luck. I never thought a man could travel a few yards in the firing that was going on, never mind travelling 1½ miles". Mr. Cosgrave told me Comdt. Pearse was about to surrender, but my dispatch encouraged him and enabled him to hold back his surrender until Saturday. That was why the dispatch was so urgent. I told him I was all-in when I got to the G.P.O. and I had only about 20 rounds of ammunition left for my revolver, no more could be got; but I made up my mind on that Thursday night if there was going to be a general surrender there would be one short; so I hugged my revolver and my 20 rounds of ammunition as if they were 20 hot cross buns. The order was given - every man for himself - as the building was on fire in places. I could not get at my motor cycle as it was pushed up against a wall; if I did itself it would be no good. (There is a photo

of the motor cycle in burning building in the National Museum, Kildare St. Dublin.) The British were now shelling the G.P.O. so the next dispatch was my own, as the G.P.O. was getting too hot. I escaped across to Moore St. and around a lane opposite where The O'Rahilly was killed and down there I got into a hall-way and soon afterwards three more of our men came rushing in. The British then brought two or three machine guns up Moore St. to meet any more of our men escaping. One of our fellows was on for making a fight for it; after some persuasion we told him four against twelve or maybe twenty with machine guns would be madness. We went up through the house looking for something to eat; one fellow got a loaf with a small portion cut off. It was so hard that we had to put it under the pipe and wet it to soften it. We poured sugar on our wet bread and eat it.

One of the men peeped out of the window and saw a British officer standing with his back against our halldoor giving orders to his machine gun crew. I thought there was one bullet to be used and used quickly, so we decided to go down and silence this officer and his guns. I went down the stairs very quietly and the other man came with me. The other two remained at the top of the stairs. A hot short argument arose as to who was to shoot this officer; everyone of us wanted to do it, but it needed only one. One man knew me and said "Reynolds, you are a married man with a wife and two children; I'm single and I'm going to shoot". I said "I am in command here. I brought you here and I am attached to general headquarters and you obey orders". Two of us went to the halldoor; the one who was with me wanted to open the door suddenly and shoot the officer and have a fight. I said "No, they would all be after us and we would not stand a chance". So I got all three to go up the stairs and I peeped out through the keyhole. Everything was black. Then I heard a voice "Fire, damn you, fire". I stuck the muzzle of the revolver through the keyhole and fired. He fell flat on his face. I ran up the stairs as quickly as I could. The soldiers did not know where

the shot came from that killed the officer. There was no one in command now and the soldiers got a bit panicky; two of them were shot in the commotion. I do think if we had attacked them when we were going to we would have had those guns, and I was to blame for that blunder. I was thinking of the number of men and the equipment they had towards four half-starved badly equipped men. However, we silenced the guns and that was something.

We all made our way across houses and roofs and parted company. I made my way all through back yards and places until I got to Capel St. and my an extraordinary piece of luck I saw my brother who was roaming about looking for me. He was a N.C.O in the Connaught Rangers and was home, wounded, as already explained. He had a British military pass which enabled him to go anywhere, as the streets were surrounded now with military. A lot of our men were arrested by this time. My brother, Michael, brought me into a hall. "Here, take this" he said, giving me a British military pass. He was only 1½ years older than I. The cordon of police and military gave passes to ex-British soldiers and women to get food and other things. The pass allowed me to pass out through the line of police and soldiers as I had no uniform. I could have slept on a bed of nettles I was so tired. My brother was arrested by the military but after showing them photographs and papers he was allowed to go. Having a cycle and motor cycle shop I was not long in rigging up a combination to take me out of King St. I got one together and put my wife and 2 children in and drove up Manor St. through Prussia St. and at the North Circular Road there was a double line of soldiers and police. An Army officer and two men closed in on the machine, told me to get out and searched the side car, put my wife and children against the wall. I showed them my brother's pass and they asked me had I any other papers. I said "No" and lucky enough I had none. They asked my wife and all she had was an envelope with Mrs. P. Reynolds, 64 Nth. King St. on it, same address as on the card, only his name

was Michael. "Where's the P. Reynolds come in here, Ma'am" said the officer. "My name is Pauline" she said. I was going through when a policeman was called to see if he knew me. I nearly fainted when I saw him as I knew him very well. He gave me a very sharp look, bending down he winked at me and said "This man is all right, you may let him and his family go". I used to do all the cycle repairs for the policemen in Manor St. Station, also the Post Office cycles. I never forgot that good turn the policeman did. I drove straight on to Blanchardstown, about 5½ miles from Dublin, and had a good sleep. On the Friday, from where I was you could see the city burning. Then a general round up of all Volunteers and suspects was ordered by the military; so I thought if I could be 500 miles away instead of 5 I might be safer. I always thought one man at liberty is worth 1,000 locked up. So I was on the move again to a place called Culmullen, Co. Meath. As I would be roaming the country I thought it best and safer to leave my family there with friends. In assembling the sidecar I put two nails through the side of the sidecar under the mudguard and neatly concealed my revolver fully loaded; why, I don't know; but I would have sworn I did not know it was there if it was got, but it was not. So I made up my mind now if there was going to be any single handed arrest made, well, I would make a fight. My wife would not have travelled in the sidecar if she had known that, as she hated firearms. I arrived in Culmullen, about 15 or 16 miles from Dublin, safely. It is a very remote and quiet place. I knew some farmers there by the name of McKeever. There were two brothers and another fighting in Wexford. Well, I knew I was safe there for awhile. Mr. McKeever made me very comfortable and fed me very well.

After about three days I was playing with his dog when I saw four R.I.C. men coming along the road with short rifles on their shoulders. I was certain they were after me. I went back quickly into the house and told Mr. McKeever. "Get to

the top loft quick" said one of the McKeevers to me. I did so. They searched two or three houses as they came along; then they came to where I was staying and asked for Mr. McKeever. He came out. "Good morning, men" said he. Without answering they asked Mr. McKeever if there were any rebels or Sinn Feiners stopping in the house. "No" says Mr. McKeever, "why do you ask that". Well, we see there's murder going on in Dublin and the Sinn Feiners are escaping all over the country. Did any of them come in here". "Not at all" said Mr. McKeever. "Come in" he said to the policemen "and have a good look around". A most daring thing to do, unless he was prepared to swear he never saw me going into the farmhouse. They went into the kitchen and looked around and took an old shotgun from over the fireplace. There was no ladder to the loft as someone had taken it away, but if they had come up I'm sure three out of the four would never have lived. I had the parabellum revolver fully loaded beside me. They left the house and said good-day Mr. McKeever.

By this time practically all the Volunteers were arrested and being sent away to camps and jails. All the leaders were executed. The Volunteers were kept in prison. Many were released on health grounds and many, who took no part in the fighting, were released. There were a great many released at the end of 1916. And so ends my part in the 1916 Rising.

1917.

The Irish Volunteers, in spite of camps and prisons, were determined as ever to continue the fight. Meetings and concerts were held to keep the men together. Many raids and arrests were made, more men were deported and a Captain Ashe was arrested for his part in the Ashbourne Police Station fight. He went on hunger strike and died in the Mater Hospital as a result. We had one of the greatest funerals ever seen in Dublin. He was left in the City Hall lying in state with a guard of honour night and day. I did guard all night and next day I was one of the picked Volunteers to act as pall-bearers who carried his coffin

from the City Hall to the hearse and from the hearse to his last resting place in Glasnevin, September 1917.

A large picture of me and the other five men carrying the coffin can be seen at the National Muesum where I have it on loan. All shops were closed while the funeral, which took over an hour, went past. Then things got quieter except for an odd raid and some arrests.

1918.

I did no active work in 1918 until the General Election, when the issue was, would we have a patched up Home Rule Bill or would we have an Irish Republic. The Home Rule Party who were opposing the Republic were all free; they followed the leadership of John Redmond. The Republicans were nearly all in jail. The British Government was sure the Redmondites would get in and take their seats in a British Parliament. They also had an idea that some of the quieter Republicans or Sinn Feiners would take their seats in Westminster and released many of the men who were nominated. It was during this election that I was called upon by Ireland's first President, the late Arthur Griffith, and leader of the Sinn Fein movement, Mr. Darrell Figgis, one of the leaders of the Howth gun-running mentioned earlier in this story, Senator Keane and another gentleman, to drive them to Longford, about 72 miles from Dublin, to help Mr. Joe McGuinness in his election campaign. He was still in prison; the British Government refused to release him. The British Parliamentary Party nominated a Mr. McKenna, a pig-dealer. I drove the four gentlemen mentioned down to Longford in a large covered-in Daimler. As I entered Longford a bullet was fired and it entered the back tyre. I pulled the car up quickly and was going to get out a have a fight. Senator Keane also wanted to have a go, but as Mr. Griffith was a pacifist, he persuaded us not to, as that was what they wanted, so I gave in a drove on on a flat tyre. The Longford slogan was "Put him in to get him out of prison". The result of the election was a huge success for Sinn Fein; almost all the Sinn Fein members

were elected, and not one took his seat in the British House of Commons. They stated in a body they would only sit in a parliament of their own, but not in an Imperial parliament. It was then decided by all the new members to take an oath of allegiance to Ireland and an army was formed again which the whole world knew afterwards as the Irish Republican Army. A first class secret service was organised and commanded by Michael Collins. There was also a flying squad; their duties were to report on anything for or against the I.R.A. and to get guns and ammunition any way they could. They were a very active and very dangerous lot of men to be near. Then there was a Purchase Brigade to buy, steal, rob or use violence to obtain guns and ammunition. Money was no object in paying for them as it was pouring in from America and all over Ireland. Many rifles were purchased from British soldiers for £1 and £2.

1919.

Houses in & around Dublin where guns were supposed to be were raided. Many British officers' houses were raided by the I.R.A. Here is a true story worth recording: I remember meeting a servant girl and I got to know from her that she was working in a British Captain's house in Glasnevin. I reported this to headquarters and I was told to meet her again and get some more information from her and see if she was in sympathy with the British or the I.R.A. I found out she was a Sinn Feiner. I was told to take her to a show or pictures, all my expenses would be paid. My wife would be informed of my movements which were strictly honourable, except to get information where all the guns and ammunition were kept. This was the plan that was adopted after she had told me there was plenty of revolvers and bullets in his room:- I was to take two or three men with me next night at 9 o'clock sharp. I was to watch her window which she showed me. If the blind was pulled down I was to go to the halldoor and she would let us in. As soon as we would get in she would direct us to the place where all the stuff was kept, then she was to tear her apron and upset chairs as if she made a

struggle; we were to tie her up, cut the telephone wires and leave her tied to a chair lying down; then when the Captain would return he would not think she had anything to do with it. Well, our plans failed the first night, as no blinds were drawn. One of the men wanted to go over and fight it out, captain or no captain; but I said we had orders that there was to be no shooting under any circumstances, unless of course the other fellow shot first and only then. We went back disappointed, but came again next night as arranged, same place and time. We went next night and were getting restless at about 8.55; then 9 o'clock struck; no blinds moved. Just as we were going to 8 call a conference about what to do the blind in her room was pulled down. I went over to the door and rang the bell. I had no gun or papers of any description on me. When I got in and saw all clear I let the other three men in. We started a hurried search and got two German helmets (we left them there), a field telephone in a box, 6 revolvers, some working, some not, a box of .303 ammunition, 1 large .45 revolver in perfect order, 2 baynnets, a short Lee Enfield in perfect order. In all it was a raid well worth waiting for. While one of the fellows was tying up the girl gently I heard a sound in the scullery. I looked at the girl and grabbed one of the fellows revolvers and called over the other two men who were filling their pockets with ammunition. Then again there was a loud noise in the scullery and we all rushed over towards it with guns in our hands and shouted "whoever is there come out and come out quick with your hands up". I asked the girl was the captain in there. She said "No"; he and a friend were gone to the Theatre Royal. One of the fellows said "under cover" and he banged open the door but could not see anyone, but on the floor was a large whit jug broken in bits and milk spilt all over the floor. The cat was at the milk and turned over the jug and knocked it on the floor. The cat made a wild dash out when the door opened, and did we get a fright! We all got away safely with our goods and gave them to headquarters. Long afterwards the girl was

awarded her share for her silence and co-operation.

The next morning's papers contained an amazing account of how half the I.R.A. raided Captain Dorando's house in Glasnevin and tied up the maid and after beating her nearly to death, took away a few souvenirs of the late war, and few old revolvers and a German field telephone which was of no use; also several littl trifles. They searched the house for money as well after cuttin down the telephone wires. No doubt the paper says a brave deed by a lot of cowards on a defenceless girl. Such was the report.

1920.

The next sensational step by the headquarters staff was to raid all police stations and burn them down. Police stations began to get a very hot time early in this year and the police could not keep the I.R.A. in check. Many police stations were burnt down. In some cases police offered resistance and there were casualties on both sides, although on our side very slight, as the I.R.A. always worked by surprise. Most of the R.I.C. walked out and threw their guns on the ground as the R.I.C. were an armed force. Special attention was paid to outlying districts where these men were and many a story was told of ruses by I.R.A.men to get into those police stations to see the lie of them and what way the police were armed. Many people would want to be miles away from these places, but here you had men simply longing to get into one or two. Maybe a drunk, or maybe a row near the station, or perhaps a small pane of glass broken - paid for next day - all just to see where the guns were kept - 2/6d and 5/- fines, which were paid almost as admission charges, all to see the inside of a police station. The situation got so serious that Dublin Castle had to send to England for more troops or would-be police. There were a few hundred sent here dressed in khaki trousers and black coats; others had khaki coat and black trousers. They were not long here before they got the famous or infamous name of Black and Tans. It is believed they were a lot of hardened criminals let loose from the prisons all over England and indeed if anyone met

them they would at once agree. They were paid £1 a day, free clothes, beds and food, but they were a tough lot to deal with as you will see later. They got full use of the gun and they used it too. They always went about in a fast lorry; they drove through the streets and roads like a lot of madmen. They would pull up suddenly and hold up every man or woman and ask questions about the I.R.A. and if they did not like you in you would go to the lorry and off to jail or camp.

The I.R.A. did not like the game and so a good few of them were silenced. They were going back to England at a fast rate neatly in a long shaped box. Then they began to get nasty seeing so many of their men going home without leave, and started raiding houses on their own. They got a list of Sinn Fein leaders and started on them, giving them a rough time if they got any of them. They raided my house at 12.30 a.m. on 12.11.20; they burst in the hall when all in the house were asleep. They asked for me; I was not there. I had started to be like many of my comrades "on the run". On 20.11.20, they again raided the house, this time accompanied by the military, which was a good sign. They were collecting names and addresses of the leaders of the I.R.A. Whoever said "there's no place like home" was wrong, at least during those time; it was "there's no place like someone else's home". When they raided my house on 20.11.20 my wife was after giving birth to a baby girl. The Black and Tans were making a lot of noise. The nurse and doctor went to the door and told the Tan officer about my wife. He laughed and disbelieved the doctor and nurse and told them he heard that before. Then a British military officer came on the scene. He opened the door, saluted my wife and ordered all men out of the house, Black and Tans as well. The Black and Tan officer at first refused to leave, saying his orders were to search the house. The military officer said: "I'm in charge here and my orders will be obeyed" holding his revolver in a very threatening manner. My sister ran between them and begged that there would be no trouble.

The Military officer said "there will be no trouble, madam, go in a look after the patient". My sister missed a gold watch from the mantelpiece in the next room and told the military officer. He came down the stairs and ordered all the men out of the lorry and asked for the last two men that left the room. Two men came forward and they were asked about a watch. At first they denied it. Then the officer made a friendly little speech which had the desired effect and the two men gave up the watch. My sister pleaded for them and the officer gave his word that they would not be punished.

On two other occasions raids were carried out in my house, but, luckily, I was never there. My brother was arrested at 1.10 a.m. on 1st March 1921. He never had anything to do with politics. They brought him to the Royal Barracks (now Collins) and detained him. On one occasion I was coming up Smithfield when a man named Daly came running towards me. "Don't go up there" he said, "the Tans are all in your house raiding it". I said I was going up to see my wife. "For heaven's sake, Peter, don't go any further than where you are, come on in here" he said "until they go". I went into a horse's stable and in about 10 minutes I saw the two lorries going down Smithfield back to the barracks. He put my hat and coat on him them and went back into our house; in case they might be watching, he came to the door and gave the all clear signal and I went in.

I went to London on business and while I was away my cycle shop was managed by a nephew of mine, Benny Matthews. He wrote to me to an accommodation address and kept me informed of events. I used his name while in London. He signed his name "Bee". I was stopping with a sister-in-law named Mrs. Pink. No letters were ever addressed to the house. The lady in the newspaper shop charged me 2d for every letter. I often gave her 4d or 6d to be friendly with her. I did not tell her anything only that I was not living with my wife. One evening I went to see if there were any letters. She told me to get out

quickly and come back in two hours. I could not understand her as she knew nothing about my business. Anyway, I did what she asked me about going out. I felt very uneasy for that two hours and I was mistrusting the lady in the shop. I did not go back in the two hours, but waited until the shop was closing. I went in and the lady gave me two letters; one was from my wife, the other was from Bee, telling me the house was raided again and how were things over here in London, and did I come across anything useful. The lady told me that two gentlemen called and asked when Mr. Matthews would call for his letters; she said different times. They asked her what real address did I give and, of course, she said,"I gave them your address that you told me when you came first". I had given her an address about five miles outside London. I told the lady I was very grateful to her and gave her 2/6d and said I would call again next day at 12 o'clock. I did call, but not to the shop. I stayed a safe distance away where I could see and not be seen. After waiting about from 11.50 to 12.15 I saw the two men come out of the shop. I then rushed to the nearest Post Office and told Bee to hold everything. I was moving to a new house. I went to the North End Road, Chelsea, near Chelsea Football ground. Well, I thought I was clever; but I found after telling the man I would call next day at 12 for letters that I was being watched. I called very early next day and I was glad - no letters. The man said there would be sure to be letters at 11 a.m. and would I call for them. I said I would; but I made for Euston Station that night and returned to Dublin, in March 1921.

Next day being Wednesday, we closed the shop at 1 o'clock. I went into the shop and had a long chat with Bee. I had my nephew John Dunne sitting on a motor cycle; he was just 11 years of age. (He won the Leinster 200 motor cycle race in Dublin some years after). I looked over the books and was answering some letters. At 3.15 a gentle knock came at the front door. I half opened the door and one big tall fellow asked was Mr. Reynolds

in. I said "No, as this is his halfday and he always goes out". "I want my cycle repaired and one pair of tyres fitted". I said "bring the cycle in". The other, a little fellow, said "It's at home, but you can take the address and send for it". "Right" I said "come in, gentlemen". I went over to my desk to take the names and I heard a very stern voice "put your hands up". I had just said to my nephew "Some day, son, you will be famous riding one of these" which came true, as 17 years later, as stated, he won the 200 guineas Leinster Cup and many other trophies when he went to live with my sister in Liverpool. The boy started to laugh when he saw the revolvers; so did I, as I thought it might be some of our fellows having a joke. "Go on" said the small wicked fellow "keep them up". I got frightened then and realised they were real Black and Tans, as no one or car passed the door since they came in. "Search him" said the big fellow. He did give me a good searching and also searched the boy (11 years) sitting on the motor cycle. The big fellow blew a whistle and immediately two armoured cars came up in opposite directions and almost crashed into each other, also two lorries full of Black and Tans. They jumped out and ran into the shop. "Is it him" said the officer in charge. Before waiting for a reply he asked me my name. I said "Benny Matthews, they call me Bee". "You're a liar" he said "we have Benny Matthews arrested". As it was his halfday and he was gone home I thought it was true, so I knew they would find out and I gave them my right name. "Come on, put him into the lorry". I asked if I could go up the stairs to see my wife first. "Yes, I'll go with you" he said. Up we went and the moment my wife saw the Black and Tans and me with them she almost fainted and cried very much. I told her to cheer up, I would not be long. She asked the officer where they were taking me to. He said he did not know - sealed orders. That was worse for my wife, not knowing where I was going, and hearing so much of unfortunate men being taken out of their homes and never being found alive again. Many were told to jump for it and would be shot, the excuse being they tried to escape.

I was taken away in a lorry and escorted by an armoured car. They had two bloodhounds with them when searching the house. I don't know why all these precautions were taken as I was only just an ordinary volunteer.

I was brought to the Royal Barracks (Now Collins). While driving along the northern quays to the barracks, one of the Tans in the lorry said, joking "Say, Paddy, what would you do if there was an ambush" as there were ambushes all over Dublin at the time. "Well" I said, trying not to be nervous, "I'm no good at swimming, but there's always music when you drown, Besides I'd like to be all there whether I go up or down, so I would make one big dive into the Liffey". But still I did not meet a bad lot, or else I was lucky. They gave me two cigarettes which alone nearly killed me trying to smoke to please them, as I do not smoke at all myself. I was put into a cell, No. 8, beneath the street. After being there 20 minutes I was called out; I thought I was being released. but No, I was taken out and searched; all my belongings were taken from me and I was put back again to cell No. 6. The days there were terribly long as I had nothing to do only peep out to see daylight and then could only see the clock. It was terrible punishment there. I was taken out again and put into cell No. 1. Soon afterwards a soldier came in. "Come on, chauffeur" said he, "You're in the wrong house". "I'll soon be somewhere" I said. "You will" he said, "you live a few doors away". I was put into cell No.4. He was just about to shut the door when an officer came in and said "Hello, Reynolds, I see they got you at last". "It looks like it" I said, "or else I would not be here". "They were a long time looking for you" he said. "What did they want me for"? "Now, don't be acting the fool", he said, "every one of these fellows here know you. You have been away for a long time now. You are a nifty customer, but we got you as we will get the rest" "Well" I said, "you are paying me a great compliment, for what am I being arrested, and now that you have me what are you going

to do with me". "You'll soon know" he said. Here I pay the military a compliment that you could speak to them and even answer back as long as it was not too rough. But if it were the black and tans, you could not open your mouth but you would get the butt end of a revolver stuck into your head. I took up a piece of newspaper from the ground and began to read it. In about half an hour a sergeant of the Military Police came in "So they got you" he said. "So the officer said just now". "What officer" he said. "Your officer has just been here". "Was he?" he said. "Well, I knew they would get you. They left for your shop from here. Were you in or did they pick you up". "Both" I said. "Well, by God" said he "you are in for it now. What a clever fellow. You thought you were getting away with an armoured car. You are a cowardly pup" said he. "I admired the way the armoured car was taken, but the shooting of two innocent soldiers who were unarmed was a bit thick. You used to talk about Irish chivalry and good fighting men". "Yes" he continued "good murderers". He swore himself blue in the face; then he snapped the piece of newspaper out of my hand and tore it up and threw it into my face calling me all sorts of names. "Why don't you come out and fight" he said. "Well, why don't you say something" he shouted. "Well" I said "this is the first time I ever knew an army to send out an armoured car with two, three or four soldiers in it unarmed". "How did you know they were unarmed". "You just told me" I said. "Well" he said "you won't be shot nor hung, but you will be poisoned; your food will be poisoned and it will be too good for you". I thought it best to remain silent, although I did not know what on earth he was talking about when he mentioned the armoured car. If I did I would have been more silent than I was. Finally, he went away and I was left to reflect on being shot, hung, poisoned or penal servitude - a very nice quartette! Anyway, by this time I was so hungry, if I got some grub I would gamble on it being poisoned or not I would eat it. I got a cup of tea, two ounces

of bread and margarine. Later in the day, when dinner was served, I got very nervous when I saw that beautiful sergeant peeping through the peephole. Candidly, I was so nervous I did not eat it as I had got some tea and bread not long before. That was 26th March 1921.

I remained without food until next morning when I was calle up at 6.30 a.m. and what they wanted with me up at that hour in the morning I did not know; but it was just as well to be up than lying on hard boards for a bed with one blanket over me and two under me for a mattress. Breakfast was served at about 7 a.m. which was two ounces of bread and margarine which you could hardly eat. Then all was quiet until 12.30 when dinner was served, which was potatoes and steak which was all cut up small. I was supplied with no knife, fork or spoon. I had to use my fingers, but I did not eat it this time. After dinner an officer came around and asked me were there any complaints. I said No. I was afraid to say anything of the sergeants' threat to poison me because many a poor fellow got a terrible beating up for complaining; such was life in the Royal Barracks.

On 28th March 1921 I was taken out and a pair of handcuffs put on me. I was marched between seven armed soldiers across to Arbour Hill Detention Prison. Here I thought my last days had come. At first I thought they were a firing squad, but I was partly relieved when I saw where I was going. We had to cross a main road from the barracks to Arbour Hill Prison. While crossing there all traffic was stopped. There was always a crowd of women and girls trying to get a peep at their brothers or husbands. One young woman there screamed as she saw me marching between the soldiers "Oh, there's Mr. Reynolds; that's him; his wife is looking all over Dublin for him". My wife up to that time did not know where I was nor would the military give her any information. This woman was seized by the soldiers and taken away and questioned as to what she knew about me. She told them she only knew me by the cycle shop

I owned. They asked her did I sell or repair any motor cars. She said No, only bicycles and motor bikes. When she saw two soldiers coming towards her with revolvers in their hands she fainted. When she came to they released her. She told me herself about one year afterwards.

I was brought before a military officer and a Dublin police sergeant. "What's your name?" the officer said. "Peter Reynolds" I replied. "Oh, good Lord" said the police sergeant "your people are looking all over Dublin for you. Where were you?" "In the Royal Barracks" I said. "Well, you'd better let your people know where you are". "Thanks, sergeant" I said "I'd be very pleased if you would please remove these handcuffs and I will write a short note in front of this officer telling my wife where I am and that I am all right". "I'm sorry, Reynolds" he said, "the military have you now and you are their prisoner. If you ask the officer he might do something for you". I did ask him and he asked me how long were they on me. I said one hour an a quarter. "Well", he said, "that's too long and, besides, your chance of escape is very poor. You can put them on again as soon as you write to your wife". He gave the order to two soldiers to remove the handcuffs. I looked around for a bit of paper to write to tell my wife where I was. At that time no man knew where he was being sent or how long he would be away. But I was out of luck; before I got time to write that note I was handcuffed again and taken into another room amongst a guard of seven soldiers. Then the officer in charge came along and shouted "quick march". We marched off and I was the only one of eight who had the right step. I was taken back to Royal Barracks and put into cell No. nine. Shortly after, when I was sitting down, tea was served and extra bread; it was the first real meal I enjoyed as I did not see the poison sergeant hanging around. I eat very contented. After being there for about 2½ hours I heard a kicking at the wall of the cell next to me. I kicked back and

and went to the peep hole and shouted "Who's there?". Then a gruff voice shouted "Stop that shouting or you'll soon see who's there". There was nothing to do only hang on and have a go later. I then had a very close examination of the cell and at the far right hand corner I saw a small sort of a window - a kind of ventilator. It was very thick glass about 8" x 6". I rubbed all around the glass and put my mouth down to it and said "Who's there?". "Reynolds" he said. I could hear him plainly as the place was so silent. He must have concentrated on that window for over two hours. "My God" I said "is that Paddy?". "Yes" he said, "Is that Peter?". "Yes, Paddy" I said. "Well, by heavens, Bella (my wife) is looking everywhere for you. She does not know where you are". "Look out" he said and there was silence for about one hour until the guard was gone. I knocked again at the window and told him "I won't be allowed to write". We both had a conversation, stopping every five minutes or so. He told me all that happened at home. I asked him how and where he was arrested. He told me they burst down the halldoor at 2 a.m. and ran all over the house and pulled him out of bed and planked him there. No charge, only they were looking for me. "Well" I said, "they have me over a week now". "Listen carefully, Peter" he said, "after you were taken from the shop, the boys got to know and rushed down to the shop to make an attempt for a rescue or to catch them. Some way it's very lucky they missed you. They would have blown up the two lorries". My mother nearly died when she saw her two sons taken away. A sergeant came along and put his ear to the peephole. I started to sing, pretending I did not see him and we remained silent. After an hour we started off again, asking how he came to be arrested and he not having anything to do with politics.

We went to bed. At about 1.20 a.m. the door opened and I was called out and told to bring my clothes along, also the bed clothes. I suspected they heard us speaking. I was put into Cell No. 6 where there was a drunken soldier shouting "to hell

with the King and his army" and tried to get into conversation with me. At first I thought he was only shamming, but I found out he was really drunk. I was taken away from him and put int Cell No. 3 with two men, and what a relief it was to have some one to talk to after nine days of silence. I soon found out they were two I.R.A. men. I was delighted and just started talking when the door burst open and a British officer came in all excited and said "Where's that man that was taken from No. 6 cell". "He's over there in the corner" said the guard. "Bring him out. Didn't I leave orders that that man was to be left to himself". They took me out and put me in No. 5 cell. I complained of the dirt of it and he banged the door. "I'll soon be somewhere" I said to myself. So I got down and got ready to have a sleep. I got the blanket and wrapped it all round myself as it was very cold. I slept all right and next morning I was told to get out and wash. There was always an armed guard to accompany you to get washed or to go to the bath-room, as other men were exercising around a little square yard. I expected about 3 or 4 hours exercise that day, but I was disappointed. I got just 20 minutes out of 24 hours. I was glad when Sunday morning came as I was sure to get out to go to church. But Sunday came and a sad disappointment. I was not allowed to go to Mass. It was not that I was so terribly religious, but to mix with some men would be a change. No, I was out of luck. I did not even get my twenty minutes' exercise that day. That day in March 1921 was the longest day in my life I could see nothing only the barrack clock through the railings in the footpath and to make it more miserable the clock struck every quarter of an hour. I could hear the lorries coming in and out all day and night. I thought they would never stop.

Twenty two years after I stood proudly on that very railings in full Irish Army uniform, fully armed, when the famous 26th Battalion of the old I.R.A. was going for a march through the city. I was saying to a comrade "If this was twenty

two years ago and I with the same army and the modern equipment I just wonder would I and many more be looking at that same clock".

I was taken out of my cell again next day, Monday, and the handcuffs were again put on. I was surprised to see my brother also brought out. We were put between seven soldiers each. An officer came to us in a very bad humour and said to us "If you attempt to communicate with each other or to make any signs, you will have to put up with the consequences. Do you hear me? he shouted. "Yes" I said. "Yes what" he bawled. "Yes, I can hear you". He must have thought I was going to say "Yes, sir". Well, how he thought we could communicate with each other was a chinese puzzle to me, considering we were both handcuffed and our hands behind our backs and he leading off the first of sever soldiers and I in the centre and same behind with my brother. As we were passing through the barrack square we had to pass where all the motors and armoured cars were lined up. We were halted in front of the armoured cars and an officer in civilian clothes came over to me. He asked my name. I told him and he looked at me very hard. "Do you know what they are?" he said pointing to the armoured cars. "Yes" I said "they call them armoured cars". "Exactly" he said. "You gave a good guess. Do you know anything about them". I said "No". "You're a liar" he said, and gave the order to march again. As usual, they were all out of step except me. I was taken back again to Arbour Hill and here again the same ceremony went on as the first time. While I was walking along towards the barracks I thought of all the fine men that had passed that way and here was I, just a private Volunteer, being looked after as if I was the leader of an army. As soon as we entered our names were taken and the handcuffs removed. We were then put into a special section of the prison where all prisoners were kept for courtmartial. I was put into Cell No.9. Half an hour after, dinner was served and I was very hungry. When a person is in dread fear he is not inclined to eat, and the terrible fear was all wearing away.

As I sat down to eat a soldier came in with a large box. "A bit of luck" said he, "Is your name Peter Reynolds?". "Yes" I said. "Well, there is a prisoner just after being released". "He did not give his name, but he said he saw you coming in and he asked me would I give you this parcel?". "Thanks very much, soldier" I said, "I hope he'll never come in here again!" Well, I eat fast and made a beast of myself. "Blimy" he said "Paddy, you were hungry". "I was" I said, "I did not eat a good feed since I came in here". "Did your people not send you any food, as all the other prisoners got parcels?". "No" I replied, "they do not know where I am". "Why don't you let them know?" he said. "How can I?" I said, "no paper, pencil or pen". He was a good type of Englishman. He told me a lot of prisoners were being released from time to time. "I will get you a pencil and paper and write a very short note and some of the released men will bring it to your wife". I did so and just put where I was and I was very well. The soldier gave the note to one of the men going home and he took it to my wife and she was relieved to know I was alive and well. I got a large food parcel next day. A week had passed before my wife and mother knew where I was until I sent out the note. Many prisoners had parcels sent into them and maybe had only just received them when they would be released. You might settle down to a long term in prison and suddenly the door might open and you would be sent home; and you might be looking forward to being released any minute and be informed that you were for courtmartial. Such was life in those bad days. I remember taking stock of my larder which was - 1 large cake, 1 lb tea, 2 lbs. sugar, 2 pots jam, 1 tin milk, 4 lbs. bacon, and fruit and sweets. I was much happier now; a few days ago I was starving; now I had plenty. I was gaining more confidence. My name was written in chalk over the door and I was not allowed to converse with anyone. I was allowed two hours' exercise in the morning from 10 to 12 walking around a passage 2 ft. wide, 50 ft. long. I got dinner, but was independent and did not take it as I had plenty of my own. One

One night I was asleep in the cell, I felt something running across my feet. I got a bit of a fright and jumped up, but I could see nothing. There was always a small gas jet left lightin outside the cell. I began to think it was my nerves giving way. I lay down again and in about 10 minutes I felt something on my foot. I looked and in the dim light I saw it was a mouse. I got my boot at the side of the bed, which was a board and a blanket on the floor, and threw it with full force at the mouse; of cours it missed and went with a bang off the cell door. The sentry outside jumped and looked through the peephole and shouted "What's up, mate?" I said it was all right, it was only a mouse. I lay down again, cursing the mice, and was just dozing when the same daring mouse came out again. I threw the other boot at it with a vengeance and missed again and banged at the cell door. The sentry shouted through the peephole "What monkey tricks are you playing in there; do you want to be bored (shot); get to it Paddy and go asleep!" "Blimey" he said "what a soldier; afraid of a mouse". "You're a better hurl jumper when you hear a noise. I don't see many V.Cs. on your watch chain". "O, shut up, for ..... sake, and go asleep".

When the orderly officer came along next day I told him about the mouse and he shifted me to cell No. 19 where I met a fellow named John Ansley, a signaller in the I.R.A. and a fine type of young soldier. He was humming some song when I entered. "Welcome stranger" he said and he sort of mistrusted me and I him until we exchanged confidences and I told him my name, "Yes" he said "I know your shop in Nth. King St. and I know you a long time, but I never had the pleasure of meeting you". "The pleasure is mine" I assured him and we got to be great friends and joined the army again in 1941. He told me of all his experiences and marrow escapes. He pointed out a young man in the opposite cell who was in for plugging a police inspector and having a revolver in his possession and was to be courtmartialled next day; but both of us slept that night as if we were going to a wedding next day. The ne

next morning we had breakfast together and talked for hours while waiting to be called out for something to happen and was just wondering if this Black and Tan war was ever going to end. We were not too badly off now as both of us had someone to talk to, but we were cut off from all the other prisoners who now numbered about 432. My brother was in the cell next to us, No. 18. During the night we managed to get a few words to each other until the time came for prayers. Then there would be dead silence and the rosary would be recited by someone outside and answered by us inside the cells. My cell-mate was taken away next day. I said goodbye and wished him the best of luck. He was brought back that night and I was very glad as I did not like the idea of sleeping by myself especially if my chum was bumped off and his ghost coming in at midnight to warn me. When I saw him coming in smiling I knew everything was all right. We had a short talk and decided to do something about getting some exercise. We complained to the adjutant and he promised to look after us. He must have forgotten us until we began to kick up a row by kicking at the cell door. Then we got one hour out in the open air. This was called the dangerous section. My brother was removed to cell 61, section No. 3, which was allowed to mix together. I, with a few more men, was cut off by 3 layers of barbed wire. We could see each other but dare not speak. My brother's parcel and mine were sent in separately. The next day another batch of prisoners arrived. Then began a lot of shifting and moving about; we did not care now as we could get out every day for 2 hours' exercise.

On 21st May 1921 I was in the exercise yard when I was called out for identification parade. The parade and identification was as follows:- 10 men at a time were lined up in a small yard. My brother and I were amongst them. The identification room was an old wash-house with 2 windows; an old brown blanket was put up against the windows from the inside with a slit in it about 2 inches wide and 6 inches long for the spy or whoever was

to identify you to look through. They could see but could not be seen. Each man got a number to wear. Mine was 28. The cards with the numbers on were about 6 x 6 with inch figures. My brother was picked out as if he were identified by someone inside and put back into his cell. I was then taken out and brought out to the Interrogation Office to answer questions

First interrogation.

I was asked my name and told to sit down. "Where do you live?" he asked. I told him North King St. He asked what I was arrested for. I said I would very much like to know myself. Although up to now truthfully I did not know what charge was being made against me, I suppose it was just the same to me whether I knew or not. He moved his chair over to me, the table dividing us. "Look here, Reynolds" he began "I want you to understand before spinning any yarns that there is not a movement of yours for the past six months that we don't know". "Then why do you bring me here to answer any questions?" I asked "We want the truth and nothing but the truth" he said "You know" he continued "we have the finest and best secret service in the world, and it will be best for you in the long run to tell the truth". "Now" he said "you are a cycle and motor cycle repairer". "Yes" I said "but why ask such silly questions when you know such a lot about me" I asked . He nearly lost his temper and banged the table with his fist and looked at me. "You're here to answer questions and not to ask them, and see that you do answer them". He opened a drawer in the table and took out a revolver. "Do you refuse" he said. "No" I said, but I thought I'd save you a lot of trouble". "I want none of your sarcastic remarks"he bawled at me. "Now, don't you repair motor cars?". "No, I don't" I said. "You're a liar" he said. "Thank you" I said. "I'm not here to be fooled. I want you to answer my questions truthfully". "I am answering you" I said, "but what's the use if you keep calling me a liar". "Why did you say you do not repair motor cars when here's one of your trade billheads, and it says on it 'motor cars repaired, exchange

or sold on commission'. Now, Mr. Truthful, what do you say to that?". "Well, a Mr. Dalton in a street around the corner repaired any cars I gave him. I got commission and any cars I got I sent them over to a Mr. McCann, an auctioneer, I've no garage for cars" I said. "Well, you are a good driver" he said. "Thanks for the compliment" I answered. "That's all I want" he said, "can you drive a Rolls Royce?". "Well, if I am what you say, I suppose I can, but why not a Ford?". "I said a Rolls Royce, did you hear me"? "Yes" I said, "they are the same as any other car to drive I suppose if I got the chance I could drive one". "But you must be a good driver when you have a certificate and a membership card of the Royal Irish Automobile Club". "I suppose they supplied you with all that information" I inquired. "No" he said, cooly, "but I told you we knew all about you". "Well" I said, "someone bungled the job, because I never knew there was such a thing as a certificate for driving in Ireland. I think they give them in London after they give them a test and pass out as drivers". "How do you know?" he said quickly. I said "I only think so". "Well" he said "we wont dwell on that any longer. All I want to know is that you drive a Rolls Royce car". I was still wondering all this time what he was getting at. "How did you enjoy your holidays" he asked. I was very surprised at such a question. "Grand" I said, "I had no holidays except Sunday and Monday. "Where did you go on Monday?" he asked. "To Howth and back, then to Kingstown and Bray". "Rather a lot of places in one day" he said. "No" I replied, "not with a motor cycle". "Who was with you?" he asked. "A friend" I told him. "Or was it a car you had on Monday?" I said "No". "Did you hear of anything sensational happening within the last few days?". "It does not surprise me what would happen in those days. Anything does and would happen in Ireland". "Did you hear the I.R.A. robbers stole an armoured car?" "Yes, I heard that; that wasn't sensational news". "Well, well, so it's not news

Well, you are a cool customer; you can play the game to perfection. What did you do with the armoured car you pinched?" "I pinched" I said, in surprise. "Yes, you" he said, "Now I do understand why all those questions about driving and Rolls Royces; so you think I pinched an armoured car. Well, I don't want to take the credit of another brave man or men for what I never did. I know nothing about the armoured car". "Shut up" he shouted at me and remained silent but continued opening papers. "What was the fastest you ever drove a car?". "About 50 miles an hour" I answered. "Now, how fast did you drive on Saturday week last?" he asked. "Drive what?" I asked him, "because I don't ever remember having a car out that day". "Are you sure you did not drive an armoured car at 50 or 60 miles an hour on that day?" "No" I said, "I did not". "What do you think of the present murders?" he asked me. "It all depends on who commits the murders or where they are committed. Besides, those things don't interest me". "Well, what do you think of the war here, or trouble or rebellion?" he asked. "Well, it's quite obvious to you and everyone else what the war is for. I'm a business-man and wars don't interest me". "You read the papers?". "Yes" I said "most people do".

"Now, Reynolds, you are not so bad after all. I suppose you would like to go home". "Sure" I said. "All right, I'll see what I can do for you, you can go now". I felt rather pleased at our interview and I said to myself "After all, that officer was not a bad fellow." I thought when he found out I had nothing to do with the stealing of the armoured car to release Sean McKeon from Mountjoy that I would be let free.

After this friendly argument lasting 1 hour 5 minutes, I was put into cell No. 18. The next day a man was sent in along with me, and he shook hands and said "I'm going to chum in with you" (Cead mile failte) "A hundred thousand

welcomes" I said, and "I'm very glad to have company". "My name is Christy Doyle" he said. "Mine is Peter Reynolds". "Who is the fellow next door" he asked; "he was a fellow who was brought out last week for trial and was sent back". "Let off" said he. "No" I said. "he pleaded guilty to having a revolver and got 10 years". "Good Lord" he said, "and is he going to spend 10 years in this dump" he said. "I don't know, because I don't run this dump as you call it". I was beginning to get used to prison life. "Well, who's the guy next door the other side" he asked. "Say" I said to him "you're looking for a lot of information for a fellow who is only here five minutes". "Look" he said "I was in another part of this prison and I was sent over here; if you don't trust me that's O.K. with me. I don't want to know their history. I'm all right, I'm in for breaking glass" he said, winking. Well, that was our code and he was all right. I told him the fellow next door - I heard - was concerned in the shooting of a Black and Tan. "Good" he laughed. "Not so good" I said, "the poor devil is going to England to do 15 years." "Holy smoke" said he "and the fellow who lives overhead, he's only doing 8 years for having a gun. Who's the fellow opposite with the goo-goo eyes" he asked. "I don't know, only the soldier sentry told me he was caught with a hand grenade in Camden St. He is getting shot or hung". "By G.." he said "we are in a tough spot. This is a dangerous quarter" I think. "Yes" I said "I think it is". "How long are you in for" he said to me. "I'm supposed to be a great hero. I'm supposed to steal an armoured car under the very eyes of the great British army, run away with it at 50, 60 or 70 miles an hour and release some bloke from prison. Now, chum, it's time I asked you a few questions. What are you in for"? I asked him. "Nothing" said he. "Good" said I, "You b.....y well deserve to be here". "Now why did they put me in here?" he asked. We got very chummy. I found out he was a gunman prisoner and for the short time we were together we were good pals. Then on the 2nd June 1921 I was brought

was here, he'd shoot his way out". "You know him, then" he said. "No, I do not" I answered. "Now, look here, this is a very serious charge; it is a capital charge of double murder and you know the penalty". "Yes" I said "I know the charge, I know the penalty, but I don't know who did it". "Will you engage counsel to defend you?" he said. "No" I said "I can make better use of my money than that". "But" he said "your I.R.A. people will pay all your expenses and it wont cost you a penny". "I wont trouble them" I said. "Now, why can't you be reasonable Reynolds, and tell us the truth: "Where were you on Saturday week when the armoured car was taken: if you did not do it, where were you on that particular morning?. "I was at home". "How could you be at home and away at the one time?" he said. "Who told you I was away?". "I do" he replied " and two other soldiers identified you out of 20 men. Of course, Reynolds, you are well known as a motor driver". "It seems very amusing" I said to him "I seem to be the only motor driver in Ireland, and that is not my business. I am a humble cycle and motor-cycle repairer". "All right, we'll leave it at that" he said. "You did not drive that car, nor did you shoot the two soldiers". "No" I said, feeling relieved. "Now you can go right home with a nice round sum of 500 one-pound notes in your pocket if you only just whisper who did it or who was in the party, and if anyone asks you where you got the money just say you backed a good horse or a double. Now that's a soft way out of it for you. Now, what is your final answer. Now, listen and listen carefully". He moved over his chair almost between my knees and was all attention. "Now" I said "Suppose I did know and told you, I would never reach home alive". "Don't be foolish" he said "how is anyone going to know?". "How" I said "your secret service may be the best in the world, but I would not like to put the I.R.A. Intelligence to a test on my carcass anyway". "Are you afraid" he asked."I've nothing to be afraid of" I answered. "Well, don't do anything for the next 2 or 3

days. You can think it over; in the meantime, you can prepare your defence". "It's ready" I answered him, "when that car was taken I was far away". I spent a very miserable 4 days.

3rd Identification.

On the 4th day I was again brought out and much the same went on as on the last two parades; but in those parades you might be picked out for some bombing charge or some shooting or ambushes that you would know nothing at all about and you might not be able to state where you were on that particular day or night. You might be miles away from the scene of the bombing or shooting and perhaps get 10, 15 or 20 years' imprisonment. Here's an instance. My brother was going over to Liverpool to my sister for his holidays and was in mid-ocean at 11 a.m. on the Saturday the armoured car was taken. Yet two weeks after he was one of the men who were identified as being on the scene and that he was with me. He had some difficulty in proving where he was at first, but he, being a railway worker, had a privilege ticket which permitted him to go over at quarter fare. His name and the manager's name was on the ticket. They investigated it and proved that he did travel to Liverpool on that day and therefore could not be in Dublin and on the sea at the one time. Another instance where a man was identified at our identification parades as being the man who was seen shooting a policeman and helping to blow up a police station, and the day it happened, he was already in custody three days. I just mention this to the reader to show how those horrible identification parades were being carried out.

After parade No. 3 being over we were put back into our own cells in an hour's time. I was put out of the special section. Several of my mates were sent to Wormwood Scrubbs Prison, London to serve their sentences of 5 to 20 years. After those quiet, but brave men left, there was a lot of shifting and moving about in the prison. When all settled down, next day at 10.30 I was

at ease and looking about to get something to read when the door opened and I was again called out with nine other men for our 4th interrogation.

This time it was a British Army officer that sent for me, and I was brought into the same room again. This officer looked at me as if he knew me all his life. He started off with "Are you not gone home yet?". I said "It doesn't look like it, but I am getting used to it now". He said "Sit down". "Oh" I said, "you're the officer that had me here first time; now I know you" (he was in civilian clothes the first parade). "Never mind the identification racket" he said, and I did not like the way he said it. I had a feeling that they were fed up with me and I was in for a rough time this trip.

"Now, Reynolds, since I spoke to you last I made a lot of inquiries and I found out a lot of information about you. To start with, he said, "if ever I met some liars in my life you cap the lot and, mind you, I did meet some liars in my day. Now, this is what? - June 11th 1921. I saw you on 18th May last. Now where were you from October 1920 to a week before you were arrested?" I said "some of the time at home, and some of the time in London". "What brought you to London at a time when the I.R.A. needed you most". "I went to the motor Cycle Show at Olympia. I go there every year". "Do you stop as long every year?" he asked. "No" I said. "Then why did you remain so long on this particular occasion?". Well, I made up my mind I was not going to tell him my business in London or tell any one else. "I asked you a question; why the h... don't you answer?". I was just thinking: "My wife was over there and she was very sick, so I stopped there until she was better". "Who managed your business while you were away?". "A young man named Benny Matthews". "Did you ever buy any firearms while you were on holidays?". "No" I said, "and if I did, how on earth could

I get them over here?". "Quite easily" he said. "Well, I would be very interested to know how any man could smuggle arms and ammunition into Ireland in view of the heavy searching for arms and ammunition in every case, box and package coming into Ireland". "Now" he said, "if I told you you might chance it when you would get out, if ever you do". "Did you come back to Dublin two or three times". "Yes" I said, "to see how the business was going on". "Had you any luggage coming back on the two or three occasions and what were they" he asked. "Clothes, boots," "and revolvers" he butted in. "No" I said, "no revolvers. If so, why did the Customs people allow me to pass?" "Where did you stay while in London?" he asked. "In my mother-in-law's in Shepherd's Bush". "It must have cost you a lot of money to keep your mother-in-law, your wife and three children while you were there?" "Yes it did" I said. "Who provided you with the money while there? Was it the I.R.A.?" "No" I said. "You're a damn liar" he said. "There were two cards got in your pocket wallet that were taken from you at the Royal Barracks when you were arrested". "Well, where are they?" I asked. "I had no cards or anything political on me when I was arrested". "They will be all produced at your trial" said he. "Then why is all this questioning going on if there is going to be a trial. Why not try me and have done with it one way or the other. This is a sort of Yankee stuff third degree" I said. "You are here as I said before to answer questions, not to ask them" he was flaring up. "It's our business whether you have a trial or not". "Then" I said "you are going to be very busy". He banged his fist on the table and roared at me. The guards outside rushed in revolvers in hand, thought there was something wrong. "It's all right" the officer said, "shut the door". "Now, Reynolds, why did you give a wrong name and address when you were

arrested?" I said, "I gave my right name". "Now, look here" he said, producing an exact copy of a letter I wrote from London to Benny Matthews who was running my shop. "Why did you write that letter telling your man to send all his letters to 22 Uxbridge Road, Shepherd's Bush, London, and your name was supposed to be Kerrigan. What work were you doing in London in the name of Kerrigan for the I.R.A. Do you know anything of the arms hold up in Oxford St. London"? "That's a lot of questions at the one time" I said. "And another one" he shouted, "when you wrote those letters you never signed them nor you never put any address on them. He knew where to send the letters and he knew who he was writing to. Did you ever work in London"? he asked. "No" I replied. "Do you know any big manufacturing firms in England?" he said. "Yes" I said, "There is Dunlop's, the B.S.A. Coy., Brown Bros., Coventry Eagle, Runwell Cycle Co. and hundreds more". "What did you buy in the Birmingham Small Arms Co.?". "Cycles and parts" I said; "surely you don't think I bought arms. I'll let you in on a secret about the B.S.A. Coy. I had a motor cycle and I tried a lot of places for a certain part for that motor cycle and the only place I could get it was the B.S.A. Coy.". "If I hear any more of those sarcastic remarks I'll pack the lot up Do you realise I am only helping you". "Thank you" I said, but in all seriousness, you don't think a subordinate like me would be sent by such a large organisation as the I.R.A. to buy arms by myself and that in the heart of the enemy country, and again, the Birmingham Small Arms Co. are more patriotic than that to sell a few small firearms to a squib like me?". "How do you know, Mr. Squib, that they make firearms?" "Well, their trade mark is three cross guns and the world knows they make firearms". "Did you ever send a cheque there?" he asked. "Yes, I did". "How much?" he asked me again. "£2" I said. "Did you ever send a much larger cheque signed in Irish?".

"I always sign my cheques, small or large, in Irish. The biggest I sent them was £5 or £50". He said "Well, if it was £50". I said "That would not buy much firearms; you could carry that much in an attache case". "Exactly" he said, "you could". "Now I was told you sent them £50". "It's a lie" I said. "You write or phone the B.S.A.Coy. and that will clear the air. Ask them what I sent the £5 for , and if I sent £50, and what did they sell". "Right, we'll get the wires working and we will soon see what brought you back and forward 3 or 4 times. I'll prove yet you are a dangerous member of the I.R.A. Do you see that door you came in on?". "Yes" I said, "Well, over 500 men came in here from time to time and they all say they know nothing of the I.R.A. and none of them was ever a member of it". "Well, I said "they got away with it and it's only gulls like me that is held back for information. Married men with families that the authorities think would be very glad to give information to get home to their wives and kiddies. You are a soldier and hold a commission in the British Army; if you were taken prisoner by the Germans and they asked you for information about your soldiers and staff, would you give it. No, you would not, and you would be unfit to wear the uniform if you did. We wear no uniforms. But all you could ever do if there were 100 more interrogations for information , the same reply would be there. I don't know. It's not fair and it's not war. The I.R.A., as I stated to the other gentleman who was here before is a very complete organisation. I do not fear what trial I undergo with your people or the sentence, but it's the I.R.A. I and every other member fears. They give you a square deal, but the Lord help the squealer. That is why 500 men came through that door silent and that is why 5,000 more will do the same, not through fear, but for the love of Ireland. Soldiers, all of them, and good soldiers at that". "Well, well, what a wonderful speech, and you still sit there and tell me you are not a member of the I.R.A.". "I never said I was not a member

of the I.R.A. Besides, they don't broadcast the fact that they are soldiers. They don't recognise your court and they defy your law; no ordinary citizen would do that. I'm one of them that sits here and answers your questions as far as I can without giving you or anyone else the slightest bit of information." "No, you're not, Reynolds, everyone of them that I brought in here told me all I want to know. If they did not they would find this revolver stuck into their ribs until we got all the information we require. No, we are not so soft as all that. It would not be healthy for any of them to refuse to answer questions". "I don't believe any of them told you anything" I said. "Do you not know who was your Captain in this so-called Irish Army?". "There's still the same answer, No". "And you living in a hotbed of rebels in North King St.?" "Were you in command yourself?" he asked. "Don't make me laugh" I replied. "Don't sneer at me" he shouted. He produced the revolver again. "Do you know that Kevin Barry was arrested almost outside your door?" "No" I said, "he was caught in Church St. I live in King St." "It's all the same, just around the corner. I know it well. How is is that you see and hear so much, yet you know nothing when I ask you? Wasn't your brother with you when you took that armoured car on Saturday?". "I explained all that to you before and it was definitely proved my brother was on the Irish sea when that happened". "But you did not tell me your brother worked in a munition works". "I was not asked where he worked". "What was he doing there?" he asked. "You have him in custody; why not ask him; he might tell you, and, if you don't mind, I'd like to see your fingers off the trigger of that revolver; it's either you or the revolver is trembling and anything might happen and might bore a hole in me". "Yes, it might, and bore 5 more in you if I fail to get the information. I'm sent here to get as to who stole the armoured car and shot two soldiers". "Well, turn it the other way" I asked. "Not until I'm fully satisfied I'm getting the

truth. What did you want with a new £75 lathe in a small cycle shop like yours?" he asked. "I bought it from Drummond Bros. of Birmingham for my motor cycle work". "Did your brother ever show you how shells and hand grenades were turned out on some of those lathes?" "All I know is I bought it for my work, not for shells or bombs". "Come now" he said "did you ever make any small bombs on it?". "No, I never got the chance as I only had it two weeks when I was arrested, and the Black and Tans smashed £75 worth of machinery up in 75 seconds." "You had a republican stamp or transfer on all your new cycles" he said. "Yes, I had" I replied. "Now, I'll let you go in a minute". "Oh, I'm in no hurry; it's more comfortable here on a soft chair than in a prison cell" I told him. "Now, when you were staying in London did you ever stay out all night?" "No" I said, I don't do those things". "Sure" said he. "Yes, positive" I said. "You'll be asked to swear that later on and of course you'll be swearing false ; that is nothing new to Sinn Feiners or I.R.A. men. Now let me tell you you were out all night on 3 different occasions, that I know for sure". "All right" I said, "have it your own way". "Aren't you belonging to the flying column of motor cycles in the I.R.A.?" "There never was such a thing" I replied. "All sorts of people go into your shop and one time we sent a fellow with an old broken revolver and you repaired it for him and did not charge him for it. No, because you thought he was one of your I.R.A. fellows". "I must be a very busy man. The I.R.A. authorities would not rely on my mechanical knowledge to repair revolvers for them. They have an armoury of their own". "Where" he jumped, "where, you know they have one; now, tell where it is". I don't know" I answered cooly. "They must have some men employed repairing all the old revolvers they pick up in the raid and robbery on ex-officers and soldiers' houses. You don't

where and your house was raided". "Yes" I said, "eight times" "Did they get anything?" "They did" I said. "I got a list here" he said, "and I want to see if you are telling the truth". I asked for a sheet of paper (I was well fed up with all this by this time) and pencil and I would write out a list of what they got. I just put down "they got a lot of love letters". "Are you pulling my leg or having a joke at me?" he roared, and I got a bit nervous when he got up revolver in hand. "That's the truth" I said. "Did they do any damage or shoot anyone?". "No, they only smashed in the front shop door and the hall door, slashed two bed mattresses and a couch and three leather covered chairs, not much" I said. "When you were in London you were on the run" he said. "I thought we went through all that 2 hours ago" I said. All this nonsense went on from 9.30 a.m. to 12.15 p.m. The reader will understand I was practically on trial for my life. If I really did what I was getting tried for I would feel very proud and answer no questions. Besides, we were living in a very rough time and if questions were not answered you were in for a very rough time. I answered all questions tactfully; gave no information. I was in a sense working my way out. Some people who have no experience of these interrogation officers would say "I would answer no questions". It was a question of wits with the officer and whoever would be his victim. Besides, I did not want the papers or anyone to know I got executed or was sent to long terms of imprisonment for another brave man's act. Before I left his office he said I would have to sign a statement. I said I would sign no statement unless I read it first and it suited me. He said it was only with reference to our interview and would be read at my courtmartial. "I'll read out some of it for you" he said. "I can read myself" I said. "That's done it" he said, and he banged the big book he had and closed it. "You can go now and I'll see you later".

As I write this I think of the terrible beatings some of our boys got. I went back to the cell after being under a sort of third degree for just three hours. They also called my brother into their office. The next day we got a few minutes together. They told my brother in the room that I had told them all and I was anxious to get home to my wife and four children. They told him I said we were members of the I.R.A. My brother said he told them I could speak for myself, but he was not a member of the I.R.A. nor never was;he went through part of what I went through and cut them short by saying it was proved beyond doubt that he was on the ship bound for Liverpool when the armoured car was taken. He made no shells at the North Wall Munition factory. They asked him to tell them where I was in 1916 week. "He's in the cell, why not ask him, I don't know his business". They kept my brother there from 2.30 to 4 p.m. asking questions the same as they asked me. They put him back into his cell, No. 61. I was then removed from cell 62 to 23. I will try and explain to the reader why all this hidden interrogation.

There was an armoured car held up at the junction of Aughrim St. and the North Circular Road. Two soldiers were shot dead and the armoured car was taken and used to attempt to release Mr. Sean McKeon. The car was abandoned and left a few miles outside Dublin. The British authorities went wild over this affair and ordered a general round up and searching of people and houses. No one was injured in the melee, only the two soldiers killed. Special attention was given to I.R.A. men and suspects who drove motor cars. That is why they gave me so much attention knowing by then that I took an active part in the 1916 Rising they landed on me. For why, I do not know. Truthfully I had nothing to do with the taking of the armoured car. But I was in the vicinity and very near when it happened.

To continue. When I got into my new cell No. 23, I got a new pal – one of the fellows that proved to be a very dangerous man later on. He was arrested twice before and no charge against him. Such was the position in Dublin on the 8th June 1921. You went out to work, never knowing if you were to come back alive. I knew one man personally who was walking along the northern quays and he was arrested and identified by a soldier as the man who had fired at him the day before. I never knew that man to have enything to do with politics or guns. He could also prove where he was the day before; still, the soldier kept to his identification and the poor fellow got 10 years. Another man I knew was arrested for shooting an officer six months before. Although he had a good counsel pleading for him, yet, because he could not remember the incident, he got 15 years. There were several of such incidents and it was cases like those that helped to make Irish soldiers.

There was a family of seven brothers who lived in Summerhill, Dublin. None of them ever took part in politics or soldiering. One of them was arrested for something another fellow did and in a hurried trial was convicted and sentenced to 10 years. Their brothers swore vengeance and joined the I.R.A. and they all served with distinction.

In all this I was sure I would get from 10 to 20 years. But on the 11th June 1921, I was, to my surprise, called out again by the same cripple officer I was with before. He said he would not keep me long. I said "I'm not in a hurry. I'm going nowhere". "All the time I was interviewing you you never told me you were out in 1916". "O Lord" I said "are we going to go through that again. You said you knew all about me and if you are going to try me why not do so at once and be damned to it, make one job of it". Will you, or will you not answer my questions?" he said. "It's the first I did not

answer" I said. "It will be your last if you don't cool down and reply to my question. Now, where were you in 1916" he said in a slow voice. "Out fighting your forces" I replied. "Now, that's better" he said, "we are getting somewhere. What commission did you hold or what were you"? "I was motor cycle dispatch rider to General Headquarters" I said, "and I thought you knew all that" I said. "Calm down" he said, "I might lose my temper". "I don't care a damn about you or your temper. I'll refuse to answer any more of your childish questions. Why don't you give up sneaking around the bush for information in the hope that me or some other poor devil will crack up and tell all they know. If you think so, you have a job on your hands, for I'll answer no more; put me on trial or courtmartial and see how I'll get on, for I wont stand any more of these closed door meetings. They are not good for you or me".

"Would you recognise the court if I brought you to trial?" "Not if you were there" I answered. (I was hungry and did not care what happened). "Guard" he shouted, "put this fellow back in his cell, he's getting obstinate". I was put back into my cell and I felt relieved. I heard there was great talk about peace, although there were ambushes, fires and shooting going on all around Dublin; in fact, it was safer to be in prison only we missed the fun, and a fellow is no use to any one while he's in jail. Then on the 17th June there was a re-shuffle of prisoners. They were sent away to all parts - Ballykinlar, Belfast, Collinstown, 8 miles from Dublin, and many sent to English prisons. We were all told to pack up. I did too, thinking I was going. I looked through the peephole and I saw my brother's cell door open. I tried my door and a miracle happened; it was open; it was opened by the soldiers but in the excitement I did not hear them. I ran across the hall to my brother's cell and a sergeant came along. "How many fellows are in here?" he said. My brother answered quickly "Two". There was always an armed guard outside my

door until this day. Well, I was disappointed. I did not go that day. Two days after there was another re-shuffle of prisoners and, as I often said, wonders will never cease. My brother and I were put into the one cell, No. 42, Well, we talked about everything all at once and we finally settled down to a long term of imprisonment. The sergeant told us we were getting shifted next day. We were all very anxious to know if it was to any part of Ireland or England. We asked a soldier; he did not know. Well, we were sent off next day to Arbour Hill Detention Prison. We were in separate cells..

I'M not much of a poet, but in the solitude of a prison cell you can think out a lot of queer things you would never dream of in the outside world. So I composed the following song to the air of Father O'Flynn. If you follow the lines you will find every word just as it happened. So here's the song. I sang it on several occasions in London, Liverpool, Manchester and Wales.

Arbour Hill

1st Verse.

Now listen a moment I wont keep you long,
For I'm just going to sing you a very nice song,
Between shifting and moving, I've just got a chill,
But I'm all right again now in Dear Arbour Hill.

2nd Verse.

We arrived here all right, it is sad to relate,
There were soldiers and police to meet us at the gate.
There was one fellow there who had a face like a grill,
Saying welcome my boys now to Dear Arbour Hill.

3rd Verse

We were all then marched out in a solemn array
And they asked us politely what we'd have for tea,
We said O don't mind; they said it's all right,
For we must make our guests happy in this house tonight.

4th Verse.

We were all then lined up at a big iron gate
And told supper was ready or else you'll be late.
We sat down at a table at one look you would fill
And we all settled down then in Dear Arbour Hill.

5th Verse.

We got up from the table we felt very pleased,
We were hungry no longer, we were well appeased.
We asked them politely would they get us some beer,
And they said they were sorry, we wont get it here.

6th Verse.

I woke up next morning as fresh as a bee,
And started my duties as they had told me,
When all of a sudden a voice shouted out
Here, Sergeant, look lively, I want Reynolds out.

7th Verse.

What's the meaning of all this I then did inquire,
Did you take me for a guest or a man just on hire;
And the answer he made was two men I did kill,
And you'll never see the outside of Dear Arbour Hill.

Another end to that song.

Air: Wearing of the Green.

For I met with Patrick Pearse one day
And he took me by the hand,
He asked me how the Four Courts was
And how did it stand.

They're putting up a great fight there, says he
As every one can see.
Please God we'll live to see the day
We'll set old Ireland free.

During all those weary hours spent in a prison cell I often wonder why those convicts don't make first class poets.

There were no clocks or any way of knowing the time and you would not know if it was day or night. Anyway, this night happened to be midnight when our names were called out and we were all lined up and handcuffed. We could not hear ourselves speaking with the roar of the engines of lorries and armoured cars outside. We were all put into the lorries dispatched to Collinstown, a large field where the R.A.F. had a few planes We were very glad we were sent to a place so near. On our way down an incident worth mentioning happened. As stated, we were all handcuffed. The handcuffs that were put on me were a bit big. Besides I have small hands. We were handcuffed with our hands behind our backs. During the journey to Collinstown in the lorry I was fiddling with the handcuffs

and I took out one hand and then the other. But escape was out of the question as there were four armed soldiers in each lorry. I was in the third lorry. The driver, an officer and a sergeant sat together in front. I slowly moved my hands and taking the handcuffs in one hand I handed them to a soldier sitting beside me, saying, those are no use to me. He shouted: "Sir." The lorry stopped and all lorries stopped. ("I've done it now", I said to myself). All guns ready, the officer came up. "What's wrong?" he asked the soldier. "This prisoner gave me these" he said. "Who opened them?" he asked. "They are not open" I said;"they are too big" . "Put them on again" he said, as if he disbelieved me. I did so without any trouble. He laughed very much over it and said: "Take them off and keep them off, but keep your hands shown in front". I did so, and the order was given to the lorries to move off. When we were about five miles from Dublin, a little more than half way, another incident happened. The roads at that time were very bad owing to all the military traffic that was after going that way during the war. The lorries bumped on the road with all the potholes that were there. Our lorry went bang into a hole that you could put rooms to let in. One of the soldiers - a nervous fellow - had his hand on the trigger of his rifle when the lorry bumped into this hole and he pulled the trigger accidentally and the rifle went off and the bullet entered the driver's cabin right between the driver and the officer. The lorries pulled up at once. With all guns pointed towards our lorry, the officer jumped up, revolver in hand, and shouted "Who fired that shot?" The smoke was still coming from the soldier's gun. Looking at him, the officer said: "What did you do that for, you silly fool. You nearly killed the driver or me. Sergeant, take that rifle from that man and place him under arrest". My handcuffs were taken and put on the poor Tommy and, after a hurried meeting with the officers, we were on

our way again. When we arrived at Collinstown our names were again called out and we were sent to different huts.

The routine here was different from that in other prisons. A section of us was called up every morning at 8 o'clock to go down to the cookhouse for breakfast for the men - a distance of 500 yards. We had to give tea to all the other prisoners in buckets and give bread to about 198 or 200 men. There were men in huts and 16 tents. The huts held about 30 men. Our hut was divided into 2 sections; ours was the smaller, so we christened it Annabella, my wife's name, and she is small also. Amongst our lot was a T.D. (member of the Irish Parliament). Then began the weaning out process. There were 6 or 7 fellows picked out to be brought back to Arbour Hill for trial. They got from 5 to 15 years.

Our next move was to elect a leader.for all our camps and huts. We succeeded in electing a Mr. J. O'Keeffe. He was a Town Councillor for Kingstown. He at once suggested that we pool our food and the other huts and camps to do the same as some prisoners had no relations or friends and got no parcels. Another lot had plenty of friends and relations bringing them food. Therefore, if the food was pooled every man would get equal share, as well as the food from the military, which was not bad. We got supper at 9 p.m. as all had to be indoors at 10.15 p.m. Our leader started a class for the teaching of Irish language. We were all in an internment camp now and we could walk about and do as we pleased as long as we kept to the military rules. We each took turns in doing orderly work, and we ran small concerts and dance classes. There were some very good singers in our lot, some wireless operators, telephone engineers, motor drivers, bakers, etc. Everything went grand until one day a crisis arose. We used to go to the baths every morning and on our return would bring up the breakfast. There was one British sergeant there who did not like us and we did not like him. On this morning, the 6th July 1921, we were

having a bath when he shouted for us to hurry up. We could not go any quicker, and some of us went out half-dressed. One fellow had not left the baths; he was having an extra wash, but came after us. We marched over to the cookhouse where the military got our tea ready in cans. We got the British guards' breakfast all right and when we asked for ours he said: "You are late for yours". "That man kept you late" he said, pointing to our last man in. "Well" I said, "if we are late for breakfast, so are the guards. If we get none, they get none". "Take that can up" he said to me, pointing to the tea cans that held about 3 gallons of tea. "No" I said, "nor no other man will either. Not until we get our breakfast". "I'll call the guards" he said. "I don't care a damn if you call in the whole British army". "All right" he said, "come on". Well, we all went and there was no breakfast for anyone. There was very nearly being a riot, several of the prisoners started throwing stones over to the aerodrome and broke a few panes of glass. Things were looking very serious when the Adjutant and an armed guard came in and asked for our leader. Our leader came over to them and they demanded to know the names of the men that broke about 12 panes of glass. Our leader said he could not give the names of the men that broke the glass as there were so many men and they were nearly getting out of control on account of the way they have been treated. "Then we will arrest you and hold you responsible for the damage". As they laid hands on him all the men gathered around and would not let him be taken. The men threatened all sorts of things. I thought there was going to be fireworks. Our leader wanted peace and he consented to punish the men and make good the damage on one condition only. "What do you want?" the adjutant asked. "I want the sergeant that caused all this trouble and left the men without their breakfast punished and removed from here". "How do you punish your men when they misconduct themselves?" the adjutant asked. "I have a very severe way of

punishing them" our leader said. The adjutant seemed doubtful and declared he would arrest our leader and leave us without any dinner. "It makes no difference to me or the men, but I will hold you fully responsible for anything that happens, and as I am under double arrest, I cannot be held responsible". After a parley for about 15 minutes he was not arrested. The adjutant agreed to the terms and we got dinner that day and so peace was once more with us. Our leader kept his word with the adjutant and made the men pay for the damage, in this way. He called a meeting of all the men. There were always soldiers at our meetings, uninvited of course. He told us he had given his word to the adjutant that he was going to punish the men that broke the glass,"and now I am going to do so". "There are about 200 of you men here. Now, you all elected me to look after you and I want truth and co-operation, otherwise you can elect another man". Shouts of "No". "Now, how many of you took part in this glass breaking business, as many of you did step out one side and own up to the truth." About 36 men came out, including myself, and held up their hands. He asked was there a glazier amongst the men. Two men stepped out and said they were glaziers. Well, we all pooled in and paid for the glass, which was 1/3d a pane. The money was handed to our leader who, in turn, gave it to the officer to pay for the glass. Our men said they would put in the glass. The British officer kindly refused to take the money, saying he would pay for it himself. Our leader would not have that. While thanking the officer very much, he insisted that the money be taken, which he did, and we all became friends again.

The next day our leader, who was a very cool and conscientious man, called us together again and, after making a very nice speech on discipline, said he did not want any mob law or any blackguardism or any act that would cause any trouble in the camp. He was not going to mention any names

and he also knew that the men acted in a moment of hot temper. He wanted to put that sort of thing down. If anything went wrong any time he was to be consulted as to what they were to do, and not to act on their own again. "As you know, I am responsible for all the men here, and if you think I am not fit for the job, I would gladly step down and you can elect another leader". Cries of "No. You are all right. We don't want any other leader". "All right, now" he said, "quiet down now; keep calm; you all know an army could not go into battle without a leader, and that leader must be obeyed. Now, in conclusion, if there are any more complaints consult me, and if I am taken away or shifted anywhere, elect another leader at once and so on, but don't be without someone to lead and direct you".

SAD NEWS.

Everything was going on well until I received a telegram from home stating that my mother was dying. There was also a note sent to me from Father Martin stating that he attended Mrs. Mary Reynolds and found her in a very serious condition. In his opinion, she would not live overnight. I applied for parole for myself and my brother on 10th July 1921. Word was sent to Dublin Castle. I did not go to bed that night, thinking they would reply from Dublin Castle with the news so serious, I would get parole at once. But no. While all the men in our camp were praying for her for a speedy recovery or a happy death, the door was opened at 11.30 p.m. and I was handed a note from the adjutant which read - Application has been put forward to Dublin Castle for parole and refused.

TO: Peter, Patrick } Reynolds.

Even still I did not give up hope. I was expecting parole, but none came. Then at 1 o'clock the next day my wife came out to us in a motor car and shouted to us across the fields We heard her and she said poor granny (as she called her) was

dead. Before my mother died she asked to see her two sons, Peter and Patrick - "my only two boys taken from their homes at the point of the revolver". When she called my two sisters to her bedside she quietly passed away to heaven on the 11th July 1921 at 11 a.m. My wife waited from 1 o'clock p.m. to 5 p.m. to see if I would get parole. During this time two dispatch riders were sent to Dublin Castle about our parole papers. They were sent and we were brought into the commandant's office. We were handed another paper to read and it stated -

11th July 1921
Collinstown Detention Camp.

Parole is granted to Peter and Patrick Reynolds on the following conditions:-

1. That I am not a member of the I.R.A.
2. That I will not become a member of the I.R.A.
3. That I will not take up arms or attend any hostile organisation.

Signed: Captain Webber.

My brother looked at me and at his paper. I took the pen to sign it and, dipping the handle of the pen into the ink, I drew 4 large lines across the paper as above. I stood up from the chair and addressing the commandant I said: "You would not allow me out while my mother lived her last few moments and now that she is dead you want to impose conditions of parole which I refuse to sign, not even if I was to rot here". Another officer came in and read the conditions and said those were the only parole papers he got and we have to sign or stay. Captain Webber, who was a London man, and lived next door to my wife's mother in Shepherd's Bush, London, said to us: "I know you'll come back if you give your word". Meanwhile, a truce had been called outside and everyone was happy. We thought we would all get out.

A General Order was given from Headquarters of the I.R.A. that there was to be no more raids, ambushes or shootings. The same order was issued by the British authorities and

and both armies kept their word. Negotiations were going on between the representatives of Ireland and England which lasted quite a long time.

Continuing my parole story - a record officer came into the commandant's office and said there was peace outside. Captain Webber came over to me and said "Look here, Reynolds, if I take the risk and let you out to see your mother without signing papers, will you give me your word of honour you will return on Friday night". I said: "Sir, if you accept the word of a soldier, I promise to return on Friday night, 15th July". "All right" he said, "you can go now and good luck to you". My brother and I ran out to the waiting motor car. All our clothes were in the fumigator and I had only rags, no socks. I borrowed a shirt, but I was in splendid condition. When I went home I met my sister from Liverpool whom I had not seen for a few years; it was a sad meeting after so many years. However, it was peace day and everyone was happy except us, of course. After my mother was buried I had a good look around the city and also my cycle shop. I found things very bad there. The next day I had a few newspaper reporters in with me to know how about the prisoners and their conditions; was there any trouble in the camp? I gave them the following interview which can be seen at the National Library, Kildare St. Dublin, in the Freeman's Journal of 15th July 1921.

> "In the course of an interview with Mr. Peter Reynolds of North King St. Dublin, an internee in Collinstown Camp, Co. Dublin, he stated "The prisoners here have little to complain of in the matter of treatment".
>
> Mr. Reynolds and his brother, Patrick, were released on parole on Monday to attend their mother's funeral and are due back at 11 p.m. on Friday night.
>
> No Charge.

They have been imprisoned for some time past and no

charge has yet been preferred against Patrick. There is a serious charge against Mr. Peter Reynolds of double shooting and the stealing of an armoured car at the North Circular Road - (cut out by Censor, F.J.) Mr. Reynolds, who was in good health and spirits told our reporter that there were about 195 or 200 prisoners in the camp including two men from London. All the men were fairly pleased with the conditions said Mr. Reynolds and the food is good. We are distributed to huts and camps and receive our parcels regularly. We had a march past on July 4th, American Independence Day".

I was getting ready to go back Friday night when a fellow rushed into the house. "Reynolds" said he " I am free, released. I was sent home today with 5 other men". I was glad to hear it. I thought we would all be released on account of the truce. Several people wanted us not to go back as they would never come for us now. But no, I gave my word to a British officer as a soldier of Ireland and I would not disgrace the uniform by the word 'deserter'. Instead of being released I was kept in for another 6 months until the General Amnesty of December 21st, 1921.

It was strange to pick out 6 men and release them at such a time, but not new to the British administration in Ireland in those days. In order to keep my word with Captain Webber, we bid our friends goodbye. My wife and sister came to Collinstown in a taxi with us. When we got to Drumcondra Bridge about a mile from the city and six from Collinstown it started to rain very heavily. It rained and thunder and lightning all the way out. The taxi needed no lights with the flashes of lightning; it was the worst night seen for years in Ireland. The short walk from the taxi to the guard-room we were drenched to the skin. Between answering sentries

and dodging barbed wire in the dark we were none too happy. We arrived one hour too soon and we were like two men after being rescued from drowning. We went to the officer to report our presence and he shook hands with us. "My God" said he "What a night to come out, you could have easily waited until morning". The soldiers were searching our luggage according to rules, and the officer said "That's all right, stop searching". They did so. "You fellows are very wet. You could have slept at home tonight and come in in the morning. After all a few hours would make no difference". "Thank you, Sir" I said, "but we gave our word of honour that we would be here by 11 o'clock; it's now 10.45 and we have kept our word." He told us to go to bed and not be too particular as to when to get up. "I'll see you are not disturbed and get you some dry clothes. If all the I.R.A., or whatever you call yourselves, are like you two, well, I'll only hope I'll never have to fight you. Go to bed now, boys, and goodnight". The next morning we had all the boys around us asking how things were outside, what the city looked like and how the people were taking the truce, and any sign of us getting out on parole or released. I told them there were bonfires all over Dublin. The people were delighted and all were hoping for an honourable and everlasting pease. Flags were flying everywhere. They asked us how the people treated us. We said we got nearly everything we wanted for nothing. The people were all over us. We got plenty of presents and food coming back. I told them I told the Freeman's Journal representative that the British had a charge over me for stealing an armoured car and shooting two soldiers. I told them that part of my interview was cut out and not published. Every night an orderly officer would come around and inspect the huts and camps. You could hear the sentry shout: "Halt, who goes there". "Friend" the answer would be and so on until one night the officer came around. The usual challenge

was shouted: "Halt, who goes there". The officer replied "Friend". One of the peisoners in a soldierly voice shouted "Advance friend and be pulverised". That tent was shifted to the further end of the field.

There was no room for football, handball or any outdoor game. The names on our huts and camps were as follow: Turtle Dove. Never Inn. Dogs' Home. The Open Door. Tigers' Alley. Dirty Dick. Rats - Dangerous, and, my word, they were a dangerous pack in that hut. There was Arabella - our hut. Daisy. May West. Ben Turpin, and many more. Then came another shuffle and we all guessed there was something real on now. We peeped out and saw an officer and guard. We thought they were looking for a prisoner, or seeing if we were making any attempt at an escape. But no, it was the usual midnight shift. During these times any moving about was generally done at night time. There were too many of us in that camp and some were taken away. One very hot day in August 1921 there was a severe shortage of water. Many of the prisoners got weak. We got no water to wash ourselves as it was a very dry summer; all the nearby wells were dried up. We got a cup of water between three of us. People would hardly credit such a story and happening in modern times. Many of the men kicked up a row for their release or a proper supply of water, so a much better supply of water very soon came along.

AN ATTEMPTED ESCAPE.

A wild prisoner pal of mine, Christy Keeley, and another (mentioned earlier), John Ansley, Christy Doyle and myself were arranging plans for an early escape. After a few days we decided to do it in two days' time as our plans were complete. Our leader called all our men together in the evening and made a nice speech and telling us once again that men were not to do things on their own. We had a

suspicion that he guessed that there were plans moving for an escape. He said we were to do nothing to break the truce (but we could have broken his neck). So that put the tin hat on our would be escape. The military got suspicious seeing we were all so uneasy. Then a big change came on August 15th; while we were getting down to sleep at 10.30 p.m. we heard a lot of tramping of feet. We peeped out again and we saw another officer and two guards searching all the camps. They paid particular attention to Tigers' Alley Camp - a pretty tough lot was enclosed in that camp. The officer and guard went away after half an hour's search. Then at 4 a.m. we were all wakened up by noise outside. We again thought there was trouble as we were always on the alert. Just as we were peeping out, soldiers rushed in and we ran like lightning under the bedclothes. The officer in charge shouted "All up" and he smiled when he saw how quick we answered, with the exception of 2 or 3 extra lazy ones. We were all supposed to be fast asleep when he came in, and he called out some names and they were taken away to God knows where. They had to pack up in semi darkness and any of us who were not going helped them to pack up and to give them a good send off. They were gone by 4.30 a.m. Then we settled down to finish our sleep. We were just comfortable when there was another rush on. This time this grinning officer did not get his own way. We all declined to answer our names and he rushed out in a terrible rage. Our leader demanded to see the adjutant and he was brought along. Our leader said to the adjutant: "In view of the truce the men should get more time to pack up, otherwise they will have trouble as they will not answer their names. A proper hour and time must be given". The adjutant at once agreed and said they would get proper and plenty of time to pack up as we don't want any trouble here. So all was O.K. once again. The next night we had a concert which would have been much better

only a lot of the men were gone away. The soldiers joined in in the concert and we had an enjoyable night under the circumstances.

Then on the 21st August we were all asleep and we were awakened with the noise of engines of motor lorries and shifting of feet. We thought by so many lorries going that we were all getting shifted. This was at 3.30 a.m. We all sat up and waited. Then the officer came in a said all the men whose names ranged from A. to L. were to pack up and as mine was R. I was not going. The drivers or soldiers did not know where they were going. Those of us that were not going got up and got tea ready for them and helped them to pack. As usual, all this was done in semi-darkness which caused another spot of bother and no more names would be answered and so work was at a standstill. Then the following night the same officer came in to tell us we were all going early next day, so we sat up nearly all night singing and cheering. None of us knew where we were going; some said to Mountjoy, others said Wormwood Scrubbs, London, and various guesses as to where we would be sent. Anyway, I don't think any of us cared where we were going. Then at 4.30 a.m. we were told to get ready by 6.30 a.m. and any man not ready would stay behind. Our leader just said to us "Don't hurry or worry. Let them wait until we are all ready". We did, and it was about 8.15 before the first batch of men was ready. We were all brought out behind the lorries and lined up; our names were taken and 10 of us were put into a lorry with 5 armed soldiers. Just as the lorries made a move to start a small nonentity of an officer with an eyeglass and leggings came along and ordered all men to be handcuffed. This our leader strongly objected to saying there were 80 men gone out who were not handcuffed. "I'm in charge here" this officer said "and I'm here to deal with those men and they are going to be handcuffed." "Well" said our leader "you'd better try it. It will be dead men

you will be handcuffing, and don't forget there's a truce on". "Truce bedamned" he said, "I'm sent here to carry out orders". "Yes, so am I" our leader said, snd walking away from this officer, he said to us "let no man allow himself to be handcuffed, and we will hold this man responsible for any outbreak" "What am I to do?" he said to our leader. "You're in charge, you don't want me to tell you what to do" our leader told him. He continued: "I'll make a suggestion if you care to act on it" "What the devil is it?" the officer asked. "Well, if I and my men pledge their word that they will make no attempt to escape will you accept my word?". No reply. "Well", our leader said, "if it does not suit you, you carry on and give your orders and I will give mine." You could see all the men looking at the guards with their rifles ready waiting for the word. I said to myself "I've been in some tight corners and got out of them, but this is one I don't think I'll get out of". There was a sort of parley going on but we could not hear a word with the noise of the engines. There were ten lorries, two private cars and an armoured car. The little officer had a long conference with two other officers and were evidently waiting for a dispatch or telephone message. Anyway, word came out that we were to move off as we were. What a relief and victory - at 10.15 a.m. instead of 6.30 a.m.

While they were arguing I wrote out a note as I had relations living in Drumcondra at the bridge. I knew we would be passing that way and I thought if I dropped it out of the lorry there would be a million to one chance of it being picked up. I put the note into a handkerchief and a small stone inside and as we were passing Drumcondra Bridge towards the city I let the handkerchief fall on the note was to bring this note to 10 St. Patrick's Road, Drumcondra. I just wrote saying that we were all gone from Collinstown and to tell my wife and a few others in case they went out and found we were

all gone. I said we might be going to Kilmainham Prison which was only a guess. The note got there and by 2 p.m. we had many inquiries and we got parcels of food sent in by everyone.

On our way to Kilmainham Prison we passed very close to where I lived. I could not resist saying hello to a few people I knew on my way. I saw one gentleman I knew in a motor car. I told him where I thought we were going - Kilmainham, and to tell my wife, which he did, and drove her up in about an hour's time with parcels of food. The soldiers were not so hard on us then as the truce was still on and no one wanted any trouble. When we arrived at Kilmainham we were cheered as they were when we entered the Main Hall. They were some of the men that were with us in Collinstown. They were all in separate cells looking through the peephole. We, as newcomers, were very anxious to hear the conditions there and, after getting a rough idea, we settled down in our new home. Our luggage was searched and we had to be in our cells at 9 p.m. and up at 7 a.m. The prison was a very large stone building. We were all put into the centre hall about 200 yards long and about 15 yards wide. There were six sections as follows:- E. F. G. H. I. J. The top section could be reached by an iron staircase. G.H. section and I.J. section was square at one end and half round at the other end; corridors and iron railings all around each section. Each section had sixteen cells. From No. 1 to 16 I. From 17 to 33 J. From 34 to 50 G. and so on, up to 100. Facing southwards we had a very nice view of the Dublin Mountains. On a fine day here the scenery from our window was splendid. The military here had charge of the cooking and a few days after we being here there was trouble about the way the food was cooked. A deputation was sent to the military adjutant to allow us to cook our own food as we had some very good cooks amongst us.

This was granted and there was great satisfaction. A Mr. Larry Carroll acted as superintendent and kept everything clean and tidy.

Now we decided to elect a leader as we had not one since we left Collinstown. This was done and we elected a Mr. Christie Byrne and we gave him the title of Commandant as he held a commission in the I.R.A. He carried out his duties to us with the utmost satisfaction. He certainly worked hard for the interest of every man. He succeeded in getting our exercise in the yard increased from six hours to twelve hours per day, Summer Time. He also got the prison turned from a convict prison to an internment camp. I was surprised to see some of my mates from Arbour Hill there too. We all rigged up an altar for the priest to say Mass, which looked very nice. In the next wing of the prison we had a section and in that we had men we called The Fire Brigade, as every one of them was arrested for the burning of the Custom House, one of the finest buildings in Ireland. They were separated from us. In our section we started a band - 1 biscuit tin for a drum; two tin whistles and a flaggelette which I tried to play; two violins and a melodeon and a mouthorgan. It was very difficult to get them together in Kilmainham and when we would, the music - well, I'd better not explain.

Each section had to appoint a section leader. The section leader then appointed two orderlies. Those two orderlies brought up the food and washed up the plates, cups and saucers and so on. There were two different orderlies every day. Breakfast at 8 a.m., then clean out cells, wash and go out to yard for exercise or do what you like inside prison walls until bedtime. The sports committee organised a handball tournament, the prison walls being so high that it was nearly impossible to lose a ball, only the walls were not too even or made for handball.

The Gaelic Athletic Association announced that they would give two gold medals to the winners and two silver medals to the runners up. After we read that in the papers there was great activity in the prison yard. All names were put into a hat and drawn in pairs. I was drawn with a man named John Jones. No matter how good or bad your partner was you had to remain with him until you were knocked out of the tournament. We got into the second round - how I don't know - because I could not hit a ball if I had a pan on my hand. In the next round we were drawn against my brother, Patrick, and a young man named Patrick Kenny. The latter was a splendid player; we were defeated. The honour of having medals with the inscription Kilmainham Prison Handball Tournament on them seemed weird but honorable to the men who would win them. It was won by a Mr. Lawler and Mr. Murphy. Mr. Lawlor, a Corkman, Mr. Murphy from Ballaghaderreen, two first class players. The two runners-up were Mr. Kenny from Mullingar and my brother from Dublin. It was a great final; Mr. Kenny almost played the two men himself as my brother was not much better than I was. The late Tom Keogh and Mr. Frank Bolster of Fire Brigade fame also took a great part in organising and taking part in the great Handball Tournament which was held in the same yard as the 1916 leaders were shot in.

While I was there I had a visit from my mother-in-law and sister-in-law; both came from London. They had made a personal application to Downing St. London, before coming over here. She had two sons serving in the R.A.F. and she had some trouble in getting a permit there to see me, but she got it and was only allowed 20 minutes with me. During the time we were speaking there was a soldier on guard outside the cell which was open, and right next to it was the cell were Joseph Plunkett was married an hour before he was executed, he being one of the signatories to the Proclamation of the Irish

Republic in Easter Week 1916. Our interview was short. They were both delighted to see me. The officer allowed my wife in for a few minutes without a permit.

This part of the story was written on the steps of the old execution chamber where they hanged convicts long ago. The last man hanged was a James Heffernan for murdering a girl in Mullingar in the year 1908. Directly opposite where I write this is where the Irish Republican Leaders of 1916 were executed. They were buried in Arbour Hill Prison. This prison, Kilmainham they say is about 170 years old. It was condemned 20 years ago and was not used again until 1916 under the control of the military, whereas it was always a civilian prison. There were workshops and padded cells in some of the cells beside the cookhouse. It was very dark, hardly any light coming in at all. There were punishment cells. They did put some prisoners there in the Fenian times about 1867. I was shown the cell in which Charles Stewart Parnell was put, also James Stephens and many other brave men for the love of their country.

Negotiations were still going on at this date, Tuesday, 27th September 1921. Everything seemed to be going on well. When we first arrived here we were not allowed to talk to those gentlemen in the Fire Brigade section. There was only one door dividing us. One day a carpenter was sent to put up a new door. After it being put up complete - the next day we were all allowed to mix with each other so the door was not needed. They went to considerable expense to fit up a new lavatory in Collinstown and two days after we were all ordered out. In every cell in Kilmainham a new set of locks was fitted to keep us in our own cells. Some of them were easily broken by the prisoners. An order was issued for a new set of locks much stronger than the first lot and, as usual, after all this expense, we were allowed to sleep in our cells with the doors unlocked. After that no door was locked and such was the

economy used by Britain in those days.

Then on 11th October eighty men were called out to be sent to the Curragh. They were told to get ready and be packed by Wednesday, 14th October, at 6 a.m. A far different proceeding than that of Collinstown just related, with only half hour or an hour to get ready. Now we had two days' notice. We got up as usual and gave them a cheer and a good send-off. Next day there were 60 names called out and my brother and I were amongst the next lot. We were told we were going to the Curragh at 6 o'clock Friday evening. We got all our luggage packed and then came a sensation. It was caused by the appearance of the adjutant. He was all smiles and said "Boys, would you all like to go to the Curragh?". Most of them said they did not care where they went. He then asked our leader and he replied "wherever you send us". The adjutant said if we gave our word that we would not attempt to escape he would not let us be handcuffed. Some gave their word. Others said if they got a chance of escape they would take it. The adjutant said he must have all their words or none at all. "Besides, boys, I trust your word and it is only for your own good you will probably be handcuffed for 3 hours and that will be pretty uncomfortable and you will also have a guard of about 30 soldiers. So your chance of escape is very small. I'll give you 10 minutes to think the matter over." The men gave their word, saying "we kept our word from Collinstown and we might as well from here". Well, instead of the ten minutes given to us by the adjutant, it was very nearly an hour when he came in again. We were all ready to go. In he came and said "Well, boys, the trip is off, and I think that's a good sign for you fellows" and he said "I'm very glad". Well, so were we. We were not allowed any candles in our cells but there was a glimmer of gas. A soldier there told us that the bill for gas for two months was £90. The gas was then cut off and we were allowed candles, but we had to put

them out at 10.30 p.m.

I got a letter from my wife stating there was a lot of correspondence to attend to at home. Firms with whom I did business and owed money to were pressing for payment. As I sent no money to anyone since I was arrested, and they were getting anxious as they were getting no replies to any of their letters. No one at home could attend to them except myself, as my wife did not know much of the business. I had several motor cycles and two motor cars in March before I was arrested. I got two days to dispose of them by a British military order. I sold some of them at a loss of £55. I had three men and one apprentice working for me. I had the two shops, 64 and 64A, and doing a very good business when the trouble began. Now, at the time of writing - October 21, 1921 - one of my shops is closed and I have only a boy of 14 working for me. I am now sending out instructions to close the other shop unless I get parole for a few days to attend to my business. I fully explained all in my application for parole. I also stated that I got parole before on the death of my mother and was back well before my time. Well, after waiting 4 weeks for a reply, this was the reply they sent:-

Dublin Castle,
Political Prisoners.

Dear Sir,

In reply to your application for parole to attend to your business, we have made a searching inquiry into your case and we find it would not be to the interest of our authorities to allow you out on parole.

I am,
Yours

(Sd.) Captain Paton.

I did not know what to do when I got the above reply. The same day we had a visit from the Liaison Officer named Michael Staines (whom I mentioned earlier in the story) over some little disturbance in the prison. At the same time I did not care if there was a revolution. I approached Mr. Staines and told him I wrote for parole and showed him the

above reply. He said I should have got parole if only for a few days. However, carry on; it wont be long until you are all out. Two days after we had another visit from our Liaison Officer and a Divisional Inspector named Cruise. Mr. Staines was a T.D. (Member of Parliament) for our division. They took a lot of names down for release - boys under 18 and men over 45.

When I sit in this lonely prison cell and think of the conditions here in the cold with a butt of a candle for light and heat and think of the times the Liaison Officer and myself had motoring about; tea and dinner in swell hotels. Now he is an honoured officer, highly respected everywhere he goes, but he deserves it. He fought well in 1916 and up to the truce in 1921. And now as I think of my wife struggling along on her own with the children. But I took it on and I am not complaining. I am writing this in slips here and there, in the hope that some day it will appear in print and the public see the conditions I and many a poor volunteer went through for the love of his country. My wife and children were well looked after by the Irish Prisoners' Dependants' Fund. My wife got a good weekly allowance and I was grateful to the Committee for same. I do not regret what I went through. If I were free I would gladly do the same.

My older brother was in the Connaught Rangers. My wife's brother was in the R.A.F. and a lot of my relations were mixed up in the British Army.

My father was an old Fenian and I must have inherited the love of Ireland from him.

On October 24th we had a medical examination. I had a very had cold in my head. I went to the doctor and he sounded me and asked me was I all right. I said I was except for the cold in my head. He nearly finished me when he told me I was a case for the hospital. I asked him what had he to drink

last. He got very vexed and ordered me out and said he would send for me. The rest of the men refused to be examined, not because of my case, but the same doctor would not go to any of the prisoners that would be sick in their cells. Our Commandant called all the men together and advised all the men to go and be medically examined if only for their own sakes, and he would see that the doctor would visit the next sick prisoner.

On the next Sunday, October 30th, I was playing ball in the yard when I was called in. I was told the medical officer wanted to see me. I went to him and he asked me how I was. I replied I was grand. He then examined me and asked me what had my skin so white. I said it was always like that. He then said, to my amazement, that I was to go to King George's Hospital tomorrow at 11 p.m. I said I would not go. If there was anything wrong with me I would go to a private hospital or a city hospital, but not to a military hospital. He said "you can argue that out with the head of affairs. Will you go?". "All right, I'll go and see what's wrong, but I wont stop". He said "I'll send for an ambulance for you and three other men". (Note: here he said an ambulance). The next day at 10 a.m. the four of us were called. One fellow who had got a bullet through the arm, about an hour before the truce last July. Another chap had a bullet or part of one in his thigh. The other fellow had a very bad ear. We thought we were going to have a nice ride in an ambulance. When we were leaving the prison we got the usual warning that if any of us attempted to escape we would be shot, truce or no truce. We went out to the ambulance (as we thought) which was an old lorry used during the war for carrying troops from place to place. During the war in Ireland it was used with big steel sides with just enough room to look out caged in wire netting on top. The four of us had to stand in the lorry during the whole journey which, lucky for me, was not very far away.

They sent nine armed soldiers to guard four sick men on that short journey. We arrived safely at the hospital and waited our turn for over two hours, but we did not mind it as it was a sort of holiday to be outside prison walls if only for a few hours. I was called in first. The doctor there asked me what was wrong with me. I said that's what I came here to know. He asked me did I come here for a rest. I did not know whether he was joking or not. "Well" I said, "if I wanted a rest I would not come here for it, as it might be too long a rest+". He then asked me was I working my ticket, I said "No, I came here under protest on the order of the Prison Medical Officer and I did not come here to be insulted" I took up my hat and coat and without saying another word walked out. When the other three men were attended to we left for the lorry to our hotel (Kilmainham Prison). The doctor saw us off at the door and, addressing me, he said: "I thought you were going to make a speech, young man, and I did not like to interrupt you. But if you don't feel well at any time let the prison doctor know and he will report to me". Off the lorry went and, as usual, anywhere we were recognised we got small parcels or sweets, cigarettes and other things. We nearly had a collision at Parkgate St. The engine stopped. A soldier got down to re-start it and a small crowd gathered around with more parcels. The engine re-started and we were brought back to our den of gloom to await further events.

On the 28th November an officer that we never saw before came in from the Curragh Camp, where more prisoners were. He was after visiting all the prisons. Since his arrival there was a considerable amount of shifting and moving. We were all wondering what was wrong. Eventually we found out that some of the prisoners in Kilkenny Jail and the Curragh Camp had some quarrel with some British officers there and were not satisfied with the food. They also did not like the

place and a crowd of them left both places without saying they were going or where they were going to or if they'd be back. So that's what brought this officer to inspect every hole and corner of the prison to see if we were leaving without saying goodbye.

A tunnel was bored in one or two of the open tents in the Curragh Camp and bored out under three layers of barbed wire and an armed guard. The wire was divided by three feet from each other. The tunnel was about 36 feet long and just big enough to let one man out at a time. About 30 men escaped this way and were never caught, although when the tunnel was discovered all soldiers were called out and an all round search was made. It was that that rushed the officer to visit us. He had caught the tunnellitis disease. He searched every cell and paid particular attention to the cookhouse. How he could think we could escape is beyond comprehension considering it is one of the most strongly fortified prisons in Europe.

The cookhouse staff started to organise a concert. Prices of admission were as follow:- any sort of old boxes would admit you to the balcony; 1 shovel to the stalls; any old pickaxe would admit you to the circle, a bucket, and you would be let on to the stage. Further prices ranged according to what you could do. The officer gave orders that all men were to be let out of the cookhouse at 9 p.m. instead of 11 p.m. as it formerly was. The staff refused that order and there were orders for us for a general strike which, happily, only lasted one day. Both of us had to give way, so it was arranged to leave the cookhouse at 10 p.m.

There was an order sent in to the prison that all men would get parole to attend to business, family troubles or deaths. I then applied for a parole to go to the Motor and Cycle Show held at Olympia, London, every year, and also to attend to my business at home. This time again I was refused,

in spite of the order just issued. I then sent out a letter to my wife to close the shop. The next day we heard we were getting released and there was some cheering. An hour afterwards we were all sad men and disappointed, as negotiations had broken down in Downing St. London, between the representatives of the Irish Government and Lloyd George. So we all settled down to a few more years in prison. A few days afterwards negotiations were again re-opened, the cause of the breakdown being, the Irish representatives declined Mr. Lloyd George's terms. This time Lloyd George gave more terms and concessions and at the time of writing - 4.15 p.m. 3rd December 1921 - all is going well. Next day, another report came in that we were going home on the next day, 5th December, when all the gates would be thrown open. Now we are getting used to those rumours about getting out and going home so we don't take any more heed of that news. We think it's a ruse by the military to keep us quiet in case all fails and there is a general break out. We are on the ups and downs waiting to be free or convicts for life. I have just written out a song while waiting to be free or here for ever. It is called Kilmainham Hotel and all the words are just as things happened. Here it is:-

<u>Kilmainham Hotel</u>.

Rebels from each county and town
just landed in here from the camp, Collinstown.
As the weather was bad, and we were not too well,
So we all changed our digs to Kilmainham Hotel.

2.

On the wing in the west, there are 100 more,
And what they are here for you've all heard before.
But in case you have not, I might as well tell
They're the Fire Brigade doing duty at Kilmainham Hotel.

3.

The sergeant comes round and shouts "out of bed"
We don't get up at all, but we lie on instead.
When he comes round again, what he says we wont tell,
But it's understood well, at Kilmainham Hotel.

4.

We get out of bed at seven and get breakfast at eight,
You miss a great feast if you chance to be late.

If the food could only speak, what a tale it could tell,
Of the pleasures and dangers of Kilmainham Hotel.

5.

At twelve we come in and the dinner is served;
We get some nice horse that for months lay preserved.
For dessert we have starch to make us look well,
But you must keep the rules of Kilmainham Hotel.

6.

The sergeant comes round, he shouts and he cries
"Out to the yard now for your exercise"
But they don't let you out till you clean up your cell,
And you must keep yourself clean at Kilmainham Hotel.

7.

As we don't get any beer, we make ourselves tea,
And just how we make it you'll very soon see.
To show us a light there's a jet in our cell,
And that's how we make tea in Kilmainham Hotel.

8.

Then comes tea at four, some bread and margarine,
The look of it alone would just turn you green.
If you want any more, you just press a bell,
And you get all you want in Kilmainham Hotel.

9.

At nine we go in, we're locked up for the night,
The sergeant comes round shouting "Put out that light".
How we bid him goodnight, there's no need to tell,
It's a grand institution, this Kilmainham Hotel.

As I finish my day here in this miserable cell I hear very loud cheering outside. I ran to the window and saw crowds waving and cheering. They were shouting something I could not hear as my cell was on the very top of the prison, next door to the hang house. Whatever they were saying seemed to be good. Then I heard a great commotion going on in the prison below. Looking over the balcony I heard that wonderful word of words - PEACE. We are all being set free. The gates are thrown open and to that word that everyone loves - FREEDOM.

There were great crowds waiting outside the prison to see their brothers, fathers or husbands. As soon as we got out there were motor cars everywhere willing to take us home, no matter how far we lived; or we could travel by tram

or bus free; it was a great day - 21st December 1921.

As I arrived home in a stranger's motor car, a good few of the neighbours gathered around. But I left them all in the street to go upstairs to my wife and children. They were all sitting around the fire when I rushed in. They did not know anything about my release. My wife nearly fainted with fright. I was almost in rags. I told her to sit down as I had to go out to the headquarters of the Irish Republican Prisoners' Dependants' Fund in Mary St. where we got suits, shoes and money, according to rank. Some men got £2, £5, £10 and £20. I got £10. There was a great lot of money distributed during these days.

And so ends my part, which was very small, towards the freedom of the country I love and will always love.

In re-writing this story for the military history of Ireland, I may mention I received a pension from the Irish Government for life, also three medals - one 1916, one for 1921, one for Emergency in 1946.

Re-written in August and September 1949.

Signed: Peter J Reynolds

Date: 1 February 1950

Witness: R. J. Feely Comdt.

NAMES MENTIONED.

1.	Peter J. Reynolds	27 Brian Ave., Marino.
2.	Patrick Reynolds	64 North King St. Dublin.
3.	Mr. Darrell Figgis	Dead.
4.	Sir Edward Carson	Dead.
5.	Mr. Robert Monteith	Banna Strand, Kilbarrack, Sutton
6.	Mr. John Shaw	Mary's Lane, Dublin.
7.	Mr. Thomas Finnegan	67 Annamoe Drive, Cabra.
8.	Mr. Ml. Staines	Castle Avenue, Clontarf.
9.	Mr. Sean Heuston	Executed.
10.	Sir R. Casement	Executed.
11.	Mr. Eamon Ceannt	Executed.
12.	Mr. Edward Daly	Executed.
13.	Mr. Patrick Pearse	Executed.
14.	Mr. Jas. Connolly	Executed.
15.	Mr. E. MacNeill	Dead.
16.	Mr. McKeever	Dead.
17.	Mr. Thomas Ashe	Dead - Hunger strike.
18.	Mr. Bernard Matthews	Dead.
19.	Mr. John Jones.	Dead.
20.	Mr. Jos. Plunkett	Executed.
21.	Mr. Arthur Griffith	Dead.
22.	Mr. Pink	4 Hanworth Road, London
23.	Mr. John Ansley	67 Merchant's Rd. Dublin.
24.	Mr. Michael Collins	Killed in action.
25.	Mr. John Costello	Killed in action.
26.	Mr. O'Rahilly	Killed in action.
27.	Mr. Peter Macken	Killed in action.
28.	Mr. McCormack	Dead.
29.	Mr. Frank Fahy	Speaker in Dail, Leinster House.
30.	Mr. John Dunne	27 Brian Ave., Marino.
31.	Mr. Christie Byrne	Housing Dept. Lord Edward St.
32.	Mr. John O'Keeffe	Dunlaoghaire.
33.	Mr. Larry Carroll	America
34.	Mr. Jos. McGuinness	Dead.
35.	Mr. John Redmond	Dead.
36.	Mrs. John Dunne	27 Brian Ave. Marino.
37.	Mr. Ml. Reynolds	Grosvenor Gardens, London
38.	Mr. Christie Keeley	North Strand, Dublin.
39.	Mr. Wm. Cosgrave	Beechpark, Templeogue.
40.	Mr. Eamon Morkan	Strathmore, 13 Wellbrook Road, Rathfarnham.
41.	Mr. John Coburn	Drumcondra Road, Dublin.