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STATEMENT BY WITNESS

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Witness

Frank Hynes,
Cross Street, Athenry,
Co. Galway.

Identity

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Captain No. 1 Cork Brigade, 1918 - Truce.

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ORIGINAL

STATEMENT BY FRANK HYNES,

Cross Street, Athenry, Co. Galway.

I have been asked to write an account of my personal experience in the Volunteers or I.R.A. during the time I was with them. I understand that the purpose is to supply data for future historians. If I pick out items and give them individually I'm sure I will mess it up, so I will tell the story in my own way. I will remember the items of interest better that way. I think it was very early in 1914 that we started the Volunteers in Athenry. A meeting of the people of the town was called, and from that meeting a committee was elected. The following are the names of the Committee members - John Broderick (Seán Broderick, afterwards T.D.), Pat Hynes, Tom Clery, Dick Murphy, Jim Barrett, Stephen Jordan, Larry Lardner, F. Hynes.

Dick Murphy had a hall and at the back there was a splendid yard, like a barrack square, for drilling. The men on the reserve in the British Army were not yet called up and they gladly took on the job of drilling us; some of them lined up with us, and one particular man took charge. His name was Johnny Nauction, but as a drill sergeant he was useless; it took him about three weeks to teach us how to stand to attention. He had a big store of the drill sergeant's jargon - "remember that you're not tied to your mother's apron strings, etc., etc.". One night he was drilling us, and he went over to an ex-army man who was in the ranks and said to him, "I'm surprised at a good-looking fellow like you to be

looking down, there are no sixpenny bits on the ground". The man couldn't stand it any longer; he said, "if you don't shut up I'll give you a puck in the mouth".

There was another man named Martin Holland or Hollian who came down to look on. He was a reserve man too. One night he was listening to Johnny's jibing comments and he said to him, "Ah! drill them Johnny or leave them alone!" Next night we appointed Martin drill master, and before a week he had taught us all the foot drill and had us out doing field work. After about three months the reserves were called up and our drill master had to go. The only one we had to fall back on was an ex peeler who was on the army reserve but was rejected for active service on account of bad health. He, too, was useless; we could hardly understand his words of command. When he wanted to halt us (for instance) the sound he emitted was something like this "heeould". We soon dispensed with his services. We next got an old ex army man who was too old for active service. He was an Englishman. As soon as he started drilling us he also started recruiting for the English Army, so he went west.

We had been organising companies in the meantime in the outlying villages. In fact we were the organising centre for most of the county. We had an election of officers and Larry Lardner was elected Battalion Commandant. I was elected Company Captain. I don't think that there was such a thing as a brigade in County Galway up to 1916. There was what they called a county board, and although I was a company officer I was never called to any of their meetings.

When John Redmond got control of the Volunteers we had a great influx of recruits, but we didn't trust them - we knew they were not genuine. We collected about £100 for arms and some of the members of the council were negotiating with D. J. Nugent for some of Redmond's guns. In the meantime I happened to meet a man from Dublin. I think his name was Kennedy. He seemed to be well in with the right crowd in Dublin. I spoke to him about our company and told him that we intended purchasing some rifles. He said that The O'Rahilly would be the best man to get in touch with. He promised to make enquiries for me. Some time after he wrote to me and told me that some rifles had just been landed - they were single shot Martini Enfield - but for God sake, he said, "don't have anything to do with Redmond's rifles, they are mere toys, and there is no ammunition for them, they are a complete fraud.

There was a meeting a few nights after, and the secretary read a letter from Nugent stating the price etc. of Redmond's rifles. I waited until the letter was read. I knew that no one in the place knew anything about the dud rifles and they would decide immediately on sending on the money for them. I produced my friend's letter and said, "before you decide on anything, read that". The letter was read, and it was decided to get in touch with The O'Rahilly. We got twenty-six rifles.

The police, instead of preventing us from carrying rifles, used to stand at the barrack door as we marched past, and even shouted words of encouragement to us. We knew what the idea was - the English Government thought that we would be available when

they wanted us.

I forgot to mention that when the split came we didn't even discuss it at our meeting. Two old members of the council resigned; they were old Parnellites, and had great faith in Redmond. Of course, most of the milk and water Volunteers who joined when Redmond took over, left us too.

The next item of interest was the celebration of the Manchester Martyrs' anniversary. We called a meeting of the company officers to discuss the matter. The day happened to fall on Sunday and there was a question of discharging firearms in the public streets on the Sabbath. We decided on firing the three volleys and make preparations for the peelers if they tried to stop us. We had the company on parade in the drill yard on that Sunday night. It was pitch dark and we had no lights in the yard. One of the officers went round amongst the rifle men and handed each one three rounds of ammunition. They didn't have an idea as to what we were going to do; the whole thing was enshrouded in mystery, hence the darkness.

Before we started on our funeral march round the town, I addressed the men and thanked them for the respect they had shown me as their captain, also their strict obedience to my commands. "To-night", I said, "your courage and discipline may be put to the test, so I want you, no matter what happens, not to do anything until you get orders from me". This made them sit up (as it were). I gave the orders "reverse arms, slow

march", and we marched round the town past the barrack to the place appointed. We fired our three volleys and needless to say it was like a terrific explosion in the silent streets. We waited some time to see if the peelers would come but there was no sign of them. Then we went round the town again at quick march and everyone felt very satisfied.

I think it was in January, 1915, we got word from Dublin that an officer was being sent down to organise and train the Volunteers in County Galway. He was to be with us for one week only. We all were very excited over the matter. When the night arrived, Larry told me to call the company on parade while he went to the train to meet the officer. When he arrived I was introduced to a little fellow with glasses. My impression of him was that he may be a clever lad - he was about 22 years - but couldn't be much good at fighting. His name by the way was Liam Mellows. He came in when the men were lined up, six footers most of them. Liam addressed them "Now men I was sent down to get you to do a bit of hard work, so I want you to be prepared for a week of very hard work". I could see the faintest trace of a supercilious smile on some of the men. When he was finished talking Larry and himself went off to arrange about digs. Then the smiles broke out to laughing. "Who is the ladeen", asked one fellow, "who talks to us about hard work". They all enjoyed the joke, but before the first night under his command was over they laughed no more, they loved and respected him after that.

The fdlowing night Liam brought us out for a route

march. When we were about a mile out the road and some of them were thinking it was time to turn back, Liam put us on the double. Liam and Larry and I were in front. Larry was rather stout and soft. We weren't long at the double when he started to blow. I was a little better, but Liam was stepping along as cool as a cucumber. We trotted along for about three-quarters of a mile when Liam told Larry who was next to him to give the order for quick march. Larry couldn't give the order if it were to save Ireland; all he could do was give me a push in the ribs. I managed to blurt out the order, and when we looked back we had about half our company missing. They were lying along the route. By the time the week was up we had a fair good idea of what hard work meant. When his week was up he wrote to headquarters for another week's stay with us, but instead of staying only a week he remained until he was deported.

He stayed in Seán Broderick's house, but when he started organising throughout the county he was usually late coming home. In fact, any time from 12 at night until 8 a.m. The result was that he spent most of his nights in my house - we had a spare room, and we called it Liam's room.

One day he marched us to a village called Clarenbridge about six miles from Athenry. We met a few more local companies there and had some field manoeuvres. In the evening when we thought it was time to go home, Liam brought us together. "Now", he said, "I want to divide the party in two, one half will defend the village and the other will attack".

Larry and Liam were defending. I was in charge of the attacking party. Liam collected half barrels, shop shutters, horse and donkey carts, anything he could lay hands on, and didn't ask leave of anybody. He made barricades across the streets. After about an hour's sham fighting, we had a stand up fight in the centre of the village . Then we set out for home, dead beat, and six weary miles in front of us. The men were so tired after the day that it was almost impossible to make them keep step. When we were out a couple of miles on the road we heard from the rear some marching song. Up to this every man had his head down and dragging his legs. As soon as they heard Liam's voice all heads went up and every man picked up the step and forgot he was weary before. We had many such field days after. Liam had a man named Pádraic Fahy from Gort with him very often in his rounds of organising. Pádraic was teaching Irish classes under the Gaelic League, and very often I accompanied them.

There is one incident worth mentioning. Liam asked me one Saturday if I could go to Derrybrianto organise a company of Volunteers. Derrybrian is a village about six miles across the hills from Gort. I was to cycle to Pádraic's place about three miles outside Gort - Ballycahillan. I was to take the local company across the hills on Sunday after Mass. Ballycahillan is about 18 miles from Athenry. I started out on Saturday evening and on Sunday I got the company together and started to march across the hills. Some of those hills were so steep that we had almost to creep on our hands and knees; keeping in any sort of formation was impossible, it was every man for himself. The day was very warm;

one old man who always insisted on being with the company - was lagging behind. We waited for him. He struggled up the hill with his frieze coat on his arm. One of the boys said to him, "Patsy, you're as cool as a cucumber, and we're all sweating". "á, t'anam ó'n diabhail", said Patsy, "wasn't I in a lather of sweat until I swapped shirts with Tadg Lally below on the side of the mountain". We arrived in Derrybrian dead beat, but we got the boys of the village together and explained everything to them, paraded our own company. I forgot to mention that Liam was to go to Portumna and meet me at Derrybrian. I had done all I could and we were just preparing to depart when Liam turned up with Joe Martin on a motor bike and side car. When leaving home I promised my wife that I would be home on Sunday night at any cost. When I saw it was so late leaving Derrybrian I knew that I could not possibly cycle home that night. I told Liam to tell my wife when he reached Athenry. We scrambled back to Ballycahalan but I was easy in my mind thinking that my wife would not be uneasy about me, that Liam would explain matters. I stayed with Pádraic that night.

On Monday Pádraic told me that he would be closing an Irish class in Killeeneen that night and that if I waited he would come home with me. I went to the class that night and Pádraic wouldn't be satisfied until I made a speech. Then we were just preparing the room for a bit of a dance when we heard a car outside. The next thing we saw was the door being thrown open and Larry standing there all excitement. "Is Frank Hynes here?", he said. When he saw me he ran over to me as if I were a long-lost brother. "Thank God, you're safe", he said. I said,

"What's the matter?". "Your wife", he said, "is in a state of collapse from anxiety. We have every available car in town out looking for you". I said, "how can that be. Didn't Liam bring her my message?". "Liam didn't turn up either", he said. When I arrived home they were having a mock wake; the house was full of sympathisers and my wife threw her arms round me and cried like a child. Liam met with an accident going back to Portumna, as a result he was in bed for three days and, therefore, could not deliver my message.

Liam played many tricks on the peelers. One man was told off to station himself outside Broderick's house, and another outside mine at each end of the town.

One night Liam came down to my house with his bike. This was reported to the Barrack and two peelers were told off to watch him and follow him wherever he went. They took up posts outside my house and waited. Liam brought in his bike. I brought him out through the garden, across the fields and on to the road to Killeeneen where he intended going; the poor peelers kept watch outside my door until 2 a.m. but lost their quarry.

I think it was in March or early in April that Liam was arrested and forcibly deported to England. I wont go into the details of his rescue, sufficient to say he was back in time for the rising.

Eamon Corbett brought back word from Dublin during Holy Week that the rising was to take place at 7 p.m. on Easter Sunday. It was known only to a few of us and we made our arrangements in secret. We were to produce a play on Easter Sunday night and went so far as to get out the posters, knowing full well that it would never be produced. We had all arrangements made as to how we

would proceed. We had the plan of the Barrack, and it would be just child's play to march up and hold up the peelers as they never prevented us from marching with our rifles.

I think it was on Wednesday, Larry, our Commandant, got word that if the peelers attempted to collect our rifles we were to defend them. Then we got conflicting rumours that the rising was off and so forth. Larry went up to Dublin to find out for himself. He met Bulmer Hobson and Eoin McNeill who told him that the only orders he was to recognise were the orders he got about defending the rifles, but when he came back he was told that the rising was definitely on for Sunday evening. The head officers asked me on Easter Saturday would I take charge. I had been ignored up to this as regards meetings of the council. I said, "why do you come to me at the eleventh hour. What about Larry?". They said that Larry was funking it. I said, "come up with me and we will soon find out". When we saw Larry he was in a bad way. He said, "I'm nearly out of my mind between all the rumours I was told in Dublin - one story and then another". I listened to him for a while and then I said, "answer one question - are you going to come out, or are you not?". "Oh!", he said, "I'll go out alright". I said, "that's all I want to know".

Our parish priest, Canon Canton, was a very pious man, who didn't want any display or excitement. I wanted to get all the men in my company to be at Holy Communion on Easter Sunday morning, and without giving them any information about the rising, I told them that

we were to have a church parade with full kit and that every man was expected to be at Holy Communion. Full kit meant bandolier and haversack. Larry was the only one who had a uniform. Then the job was to get the Canon to agree to let them into the church in full kit. I told him that I used this in order to entice the men to go to their Easter duties. He agreed.

On Easter Sunday morning at 7.45 I had the company on parade, just starting to march to the church, when McNeill's despatch arrived - "No action to be taken today. Volunteers completely deceived".

We called a meeting during the day and got out despatches to be sent to all the companies that we had notified about the rising, informing them that the rising was off. I went to work next day, thinking that everything was over, at least for some time.

On Monday when I came to my dinner I got a message to call down to the hall. When I went down Larry was there and his face was a placard in which trouble could be read easily. He handed me a despatch from Pearse - "Going out today at noon; issue your orders". There was a kettle of fish! What were we going to do? We notified all the companies we could get in touch with. We were told that Liam was back and was in Killeeneen. We got in touch with him and asked him what we would do. He told us to wait for him, not to take any action until he came. Before evening everyone knew of the rising in Dublin, and the peelers started making preparations. They called in all the

peelers from the outlying stations and occupied all the houses in the vicinity of the barrack and made an attack on the barrack impossible. The only thing we could do was prepare to defend ourselves in case of an attack. About one dozen armed men remained in my house during Monday night. On Tuesday we were making all the preparations we could for any emergency; some of the local companies came in to join us.

On Tuesday night we decided to retreat towards Cranmore and meet Mellows and his contingent and leave it to him to decide what was best to do. We met him about a mile outside the town. He had about 300 men and we had about the same. They had a whole string of carts which they had captured and four peelers. One was wounded. They attacked the R.I.C. Barracks in the village of Clarenbridge and Cranmore without success.

At the point where we met there is an agricultural station. Liam decided to take possession of that for the time being. For some time before that there was agrarian trouble over this station. They had about 600 acres of the best land in the county and the people wanted some of it divided so that it became necessary to build huts for the peelers on the land. One of these huts was within about 50 yards of the station and next morning our outposts were surprised to see seven peelers armed with rifles coming up the road. I was sent out with six men to meet them. We opened fire on them; they didn't run away; they fought a retreating fight, returning our fire until they got to the town.

Anyone reading this account would be inclined to

think that we were acting in a rather cowardly manner - why did we not attack the barrack in Athenry? Why did we keep retreating, etc., etc. The Volunteers who were out in Galway numbered between five and six hundred; we had about fifty full service rifles and about thirty rounds for each rifle. The rest were old shot guns, .22 rifles, about one dozen pikes and a good many were not armed at all, so that if we wanted our ammunition on attacking the barrack we had nothing to fight with after that; and as for bombs, we made some hopeless attempts at making bombs. If one of them exploded in a man's hand it would not injure him. After the scrap with the peelers we called a meeting and decided to retreat to a place called Moyode. This was a castle which was owned by one of the big landlords called Perse. It was about five miles from us. The argument in favour of Moyode was that we could defend it at least until our ammunition would be spent. The castle was in charge of a caretaker so there was no trouble in capturing it.

Several rumours reached us of soldiers marhcing on us. We will give the bearers of those false rumours the charity of our silence, but one in particular who was responsible for most of them was a very prominent republican and a member of the I.R.B. up to Easter Week. This man did his best to get us to give up and go home and have sense. He brought one particular rumour that five or six hundred soldiers were marching on us from Ballinasloe. We called a meeting and I'm afraid that one or two of our officers were anxious to take him seriously and take his advice to go home. Liam got disgusted and said he would not disband the men. He handed over command to Larry. b u t

Larry would not disband them. Liam after about an hour took over again and called for volunteers to go out the roads to see if there were any soldiers. There was no shortage of volunteers and every motor we had was sent out. We remained on the alert until morning and the scouts came back with nothing to report.

Another report came of the same nature. At our meeting this time I proposed that the officers all stick together whatever comes, but I thought it only fair that the men would be informed of the situation and given the option of going or staying. This was agreed to and the men were informed. About 200 of them decided to g o, so we took what arms they had and anything else that might be of use to us, such as overcoats, and let them go.

On Friday evening we got word from one of our scouts who were watching the railway, that 900 soldiers were in Attymon and were marching on Moyode. There was no question of trying to defend the castle under the circumstances, so the question was, would we disband or retreat in order; so we decided on the latter. I would mention here that our chaplain was Father Feeney of Killeeneen.

Liam got the companies into marching order. He kept my company for rearguard action as it was the best equipped. Liam and Eddie Corbett, our Battalion Adjutant, and I were in charge of the rearguard. We intended trying to get down through Clare county and if we got enough help to fight our way to Limerick. We bye-passed the village of Craughwell. Not far from the village we met two priests who told us we were marching to certain death. They had definite

information that Dublin had given in and that the soldiers in Galway were aware of our movements and were marching to meet us. We came to an old house in a place called Limepark, about half way between Ardrahan and Gort, and decided to hold council there. Father Fahy and Father O'Farrell were the priests' names. Fr. Fahy told us he had come from Dublin. He pointed out the hopelessness of the situation to us. As soon as Liam got inside he sat on the floor with his back against the wall and fell asleep. Alf Monaghan who was organiser under Liam, was the only one who said that we should keep on the fight, so when I saw how things were, I said we must know what our Commandant (Liam) has to say. We woke him up and told him how things were.

When Liam understood the situation he apologised for having slept and now he said, "I brought out the men to fight, not to run away. If they disband now, what will happen. They will be shot down like rabbits without a chance of defending themselves. I refuse to disband them. I hand over command to anyone who wants it. I have not slept for three nights. I'm going to sleep here until the soldiers come and will fight while I am able and then they can do what they like to me". I knew that he meant every word of this, and I learned later that he was determined to give his life in the fight. Alf Monaghan said he would stay with him. The predicament I was in was that if I announced that I would stay and the men of my company knew it, every man of them would insist on staying with me; so Fr. Fahy said he would tell the men how the position was, and when he announced that all the officers except two had agreed to disband, one of my men asked who are they, and

when he was told he gave a disgusted grunt.

I wouldn't like to witness again the scene that was created by the disbandment. I saw big six-footers weeping. There was terrible confusion but in the midst of it all the rifles were thrown here and there on the ground. I went round and made my men take them up and bring them with them. They brought them and hid them on the way home.

Liam went round amongst the men consoling, encouraging and bidding goodbye. Everyone was asking every other one"where are you going to go, what are you going to do". A brother of mine came up and asked me what I was going to do and when I told him I was going to stay with Liam, the poor fellow broke down - it was a sad sight. When Liam had bidden goodbye to all of them, he came up to me. "Goodbye, Frank", he said. My only fear was that he would object to my staying with him. I said, "I'm staying with you". The poor man took my hand in both his and said, "God bless you". I knew he appreciated it very much because I think I was the only one who bothered about his fate. They were nearly all gone when Liam and Alf and I were standing together ready to go back to the house, when Liam said, "do you know what I was thinking? lads. It would be better to make a running fight of it than stay in that house. We could give a better account of ourselves". Alf and I agreed. So we got into a motor which the driver had been fixing for the road, and there was a long avenue into this house. On the way out one of the officers who saw me in the car, jumped on the running board and asked me where I was going. I said, "I'm staying with

Liam and Alf", and Liam said, "Ah!, come on along with us", but before he had finished saying this the officer had disappeared. Liam told me after that it was consideration for my wife and children that made him decide not to stay in the house.

We went into a house that was quite close to Lime Park. It belonged to Pete Howley, one of the men who was out with us. We had a feed there and then took the road, or rather the fields. It was about 4 o'clock when we arrived on the road within about 100 yards of the Peterswell police barracks not far from Ballycahalan. Talking of Ballycahalan reminds me that I forgot to mention about Pádraic Fahy's part in the rising. When Liam was in Killeeneen he sent Pádraic with a despatch to Father Meehan in Kinvara (this was immediately before they started out). When the car arrived at Fr. Meehan's there were two peelers who covered Pádraic and the driver. Pádraic put up a fight but was eventually overpowered. The driver escaped with the car and brought back word of Pádraic's arrest. Liam started out with his men thinking that Pádraic would be brought to Galway Jail. He tried to intercept them but he was brought to Limerick instead. That was the start of the rising in Galway.

When we got out on the road we made for Patsy Corliss's house, an old man who was a member of the Ballycahalan company. He had a great welcome for us. There was no one in the house but himself and his brother and they had only one bed. They got out of the bed and we went into it. We slept the round of the clock. On Sunday night we went across to another old volunteer and remained there until Monday night. We could see the

village of Ballycahalan about three-quarters of a mile across from us.

On Monday morning the peelers ventured out and they advised any of the lads who had guns to give them up. They were very nice until they found out that all the fighting was over, and then they came tearing down the village like roaring lions, went into houses, tore down ceilings, broke open boxes and showed the cowardly bully in every way. There was some heavy rain a few days previous and the road to where we were was flooded, and the peelers didn't care for wet feet. We were inside in a small room when some lady visitor happened to come into the house. She was full of news about the rising. "I hear", she said, "that Liam Mellows escaped, dressed up as a woman". The woman of the house pretended to be surprised. "Oh, yes", she said, "you know he's a very good-looking fellow". A few of the neighbours came and stood in front of the house looking down at the peelers in the valley. One fellow said, "isn't this terrible work. Where's Mellows now? That's the way, there isn't a tinker that comes along here but they make a little God of him. I always told them he was no good". Liam told me afterwards that that fellow was the first to welcome him to the village every time he came. The name of the man in whose house we were was William Blanch.

That night we moved up about two miles to the top of a mountain where there was a cattle shed. It was roofed with scraws or sods. It was divided in two. It was owned by a farmer named Hood. There were a couple of bullocks in one part and some dry, or I should say,

damp straw in the other. We stayed there until the following Friday. Poor old Blanch was hiding in the furze during the day and then when it got dark he trudged up the mountain with some grub for us. Sometimes he would bring us a bit of boiled cabbage stuffed into a jam jar; sometimes nothing but potatoes, but so long as it was grub we were glad to get it as we had only one feed in the twenty-four hours. Hood got a bad fright when he first discovered us. He was afraid we would be caught in his shed and he would get into trouble for sheltering us. Every evening he would come with a true tale that the peelers were coming up the mountain in the morning and wouldn't be at all pleased. When he came back next day and found us still there, a few suggestions he made to us gave us to understand that if he could get us out of his shed he didn't care what happened to us and he had not the courage to inform on us.

On Thursday night we decided to move in the morning. We made our way down to Blanch's. We didn't know how to approach the house lest they would have visitors. There was a sheep dog at the corner of the house and Liam did his best to make him bark, but instead of barking when Liam threw a stone at him, he slunk away. We said some prayers for that dog. Liam then crept to the corner of the house and hopped a stone in front of the door. We retired and waited. Soon Mrs. Blanch came out and brought us in. She gave us a good feed and filled a haversack for us for the road.

We started out next morning about three o'clock, moving south towards Clare. Liam told us that he had an uncle in Scariff, and just in order to have a particular

point in view, we said we would make our way to that place. We kept walking until about six o'clock. We came to a big river and we were lucky enough to hit on the only bridge for miles. We crossed the river and got into a big wood where we spent our day. We had breakfast about 6.30. We found a little stream running through the wood and had a wash - the first for a fortnight. Our haversack was empty when breakfast was finished except about 4 ounces of bread. Liam had a map and an electric torch and we spent the day studying the map for the road to Scariff. At 5 o'clock we ate the ration of bread; about 5 o'clock we said our Rosary in Irish, and started out across a very rough mountain. Our torch got broken and the night was very dark. We were tripping over roots and falling into holes in the dark. After about an hour we happened on a road but we couldn't ascertain if it were one of the roads marked on the map. There were some houses on the side of this road and Alf said he would go and inquire for the right road. When he knocked at the door a big man about 6 foot 4" opened it. Alf asked him for the road to Flagmount. "Yerra, man", he said, "you'll never venture on the road a night like this. Come in and I'll put you up for the night even though I have a house full of children (this in a very pronounced Clare accent)". Alf told him he had two pals outside, so he came out and told us he would walk a bit of the way with us. Liam said that would be too much trouble. "Oh, not at all", he said, "I'd like to help anyone on the road. Ye might be some of them Sinn Féiners for all I know". "That's just what we are", Liam told him. "Oh, holy smoke", he said, "sure your lives aren't worth a thraneen, the soldiers are searching the country everywhere, and if they come across you they'll

shoot you". He walked along with us for about a mile and gave us all sorts of advice. He told us we should separate and get work from farmers.

He intentionally directed us on the wrong road (which we found out after). He was afraid that if we kept to the public road we would be captured or shot. He directed us on a road that was leading right up into the heart of the mountains. After he had left us we came to a cross roads, and we saw a black object on the other side. "That's a peeler", said Liam, "taking out his automatic. He went in a crouch across the road but soon came back disgusted. "Damàt", he said, "it is only an old ass". "Well", said Alf, "he can be thankful for once in his life for being an ass instead of a peeler".

We had an uphill trudge once we left the cross roads. We had nothing to eat since we shared our four ounces of bread at 5 o'clock. It must be about 12 o'clock when we felt so done up that we could go no further. Although it was making a sort of drizzling rain we would have to lie down somewhere. The hills were rising on each side of the road. We climbed one of them on our hands and knees - the only place we could get to lie was between two big square rocks. I'm sure they were about ten feet every way. We lay down and our only covering was an old frieze coat belonging to me. Our bed was anything but comfortable. However, we were so exhausted that we fell asleep. We slept for about two hours and when we woke we were sore all over from the stones on which we were lying. Liam was always more interested in our comfort than in his own. "How do you feel?", he said to me. "Rotten", I said.

"I am shivering with cold". Liam began to laugh. "Remember", he said, "many are cold but few are frozen", but where I told him to go wasn't cold.

We passed the time as best we could until daylight. The rain cleared off as the sun was rising and we sat down and studied the map. We then found that the road we were on was leading us away from Scariff and that the road we wanted was running parallel to ours about three miles away. We were ravenously hungry. I searched the haversack for a few crumbs. The only thing I got was a boiled potato and when I went to divide it I found it was bad in the centre. I stood up and called on my pals. "Come on, lads, I'm going to get breakfast if I were to shoot my way to it". We walked along the road and before long we saw the thin blue smoke curling up in a perpendicular column from the chimney of a farm house. I said, "there's our breakfast. Wait here and I'll see about it". I walked to the house; the door was open and a young woman was standing at the fire. The table was laid for breakfast and I feasted my eyes on a most beautiful home-made cake about 15" in diameter and 12" high. I had to exercise all my will power to restrain the savage desire to go and grab that cake and hop it. Instead I asked the woman if she would make a cup of tea for three of us who had lost our way and were walking all night. Naturally she had no welcome for me at that hour of the morning, but she said, "I will make a cup of tea for you anyhow". "Of course", I said, " we will pay you for your trouble". She ignored this. I marched down to the lads with my head in the air and I announced that breakfast was ready. That cake that I mentioned was a feed for six men, but

by the time that we had devoured two blue duck eggs each and our share of the cake I doubt if there was enough left to give the man of the house his breakfast, who by the way, came in as we were eating, and the only thing that troubled him was that we would kill ourselves eating. When we were finished we wanted her to take some money but she got very indignant. "What do ye think we are at all to charge ye for a cup of tae?".

We started on the road again. This was about 6.45 a.m. and the people were beginning to be about. After a short walk we came to a gap in the hills and took the fields. We got into a kind of plateau surrounded by very high hills. We came across a nice patch of heather, soft as a carpet. We lay down like the babes in the wood and let the cares of the world look after themselves - we slept to our hearts' content.

I don't know how long we slept but I was the first to waken. I was on my knees saying a few prayers when I saw a tiny object moving on top of one of the mountains and it was moving in our direction. After some time I discovered that it was a man. I noticed that he had his hand in his coat pocket. I finished my prayers, sat on the ground and put my hand in my pocket and kept my eye on him. The lads were still asleep. When he came within about ten yards of me he sat on a rock. "You are strangers round here", he said. I told him a fishy yarn about cattle jobbers going to the fair of Limerick, knowing well he wouldn't believe me. He told me so in so many words. "I think you are Sinn Féiners". He had two dogs and one of them licked Liam's face and awoke him. He just heard the stranger say "Sinn Féiners".

He sat bolt upright and stared at him. "We are Sinn Féiners", he said. The stranger smiled and said, "youve just come to the right place. I knew the boys were disbanded in Galway and I thought that some of them might take to the hills". Away at the foot of one of the hills were three young colts and when the stranger saw them he gave an exclamation of surprise. "Well", he said, "that's a curious coincidence. You see them three horses - I spent three days looking for them. I searched through a great area and this is the last place I would expect to find them. It was mere curiosity that made me climb the hill". Liam and he got into conversation and he happened to be acquainted with a lot of Liam's friends in Dublin as he spent a number of years there as a shop assistant. He then asked us what we intended doing and Liam told him about his uncle in Scariff; if we can get in touch with him, he may be able to help us.

"You have no use trying to get through the country at present if you value your lives; the soldiers are searching everywhere. I happen to be captain of the local company. We didn't get a chance of doing anything and now that you have done your bit, the least we might do is look after you. I will ask you to wait here for a bit and I'll be back as soon as I can". He then left us. We waited for about 2½ hours and I was beginning to get impatient. I said, "that fellow won't come atal". It would be about 4 p.m. by this time. Soon we saw him coming and he had a big basket on his arm.

He laid down the basket, took out a tablecloth, three big plates of boiled bacon, a large home-made cake,

and all the necessities for a good feed, not forgetting a teapot of tea. While this good fairy was preparing this magic feast he was explaining the cause of the delay. "When I went in", he said, "my sister was just going into town (Tulla was about three miles from where he lived) and I told her my story". "Oh", she said, "I haven't a bit of bread in the house", "so she had to turn to and bake a cake, that was what delayed me".

Picture us who had nothing since 6.30 a.m. starting in at that feed. The trouble was, we didn't know when to stop. When we were finished we lay back - there was nothing necessary to complete our happiness but a good smoke. It was at least three days since Liam or I had a smoke. Alf didn't smoke, but our friend left nothing undone. He pulled out a big plug of tobacco. "Anyone smoking?". Liam and I jumped up. Did we enjoy that smoke! lying on the flat of our backs. "Let the whole British Army come now, but we must have our smoke". Our good friend's name was Michael Maloney from a village called Balluactra about three miles on the Galway side of the little town of Tulla.

Our friend took us to a place where the furze grew to a height of eight feet. "You will be safe there until it gets dark", he said. He left us a lot of papers with the news of all the executions. Liam was very much affected as he was intimate with all those who were executed, and this was the first news we had since we came out.

When it got dark our friend Michael came back and told us of an old stable that was built partly under a hill.

"You will be fairly safe there for a week anyhow". He had another young man with him named Tom Hogan. This young man had very little to say but as we found out after, was very reliable. We went into the stable in which there happened to be a fireplace. They gathered some thick bits of furze and made a fire. We chatted there for hours but in the meantime John, a brother of Michael's, brought some bedclothes. There was about 2' 6" of dried manure on the floor of the stable. The bedclothes were laid on top of this but there was no 'Odearest' - nothing we ever enjoyed as that first night between the sheets.

We told Michael about the house where we got our breakfast. Tom Hogan was listening in silence. We were told afterwards that he went hot foot next morning to find out if this man was able to keep his secret or was he inclined to blab. "I hear", he said, "that three Sinn Féiners passed this way this morning and that they called here for their breakfast". The man looked at him with well assumed surprise. "Who told you that yarn?", he said. "Oh! I found it out". Tom said, "you found out a dam lie - no Sinn Féiners called here. If they did, we didn't see them". He did his best to get him to admit pretending all the time that he only heard the news, and when he found that the man was solid and not inclined to blab, he got up and as he walked out, he said, "well, aren't people the devils for telling lies". He came away satisfied that the secret was safe. He never mentioned this to us - Michael heard about it and told us.

There were 900 soldiers in the town of Tulla searching everywhere for rebels. For the first couple of

weeks we used gather up our bedding and go out under the furze during the day and one kept watch while the others slept. We did this in turn; Michael, being company captain, was wondering why they were not coming for him; he gave us his rifle and revolver.

It looked as if God had a special hand in guiding us into the only district where there were no arrests made. The reason is that the peelers refused to give them the necessary information. When the soldiers came to Tulla, the local head constable was acting D.I. and he went to meet them. He grovelled so much and was so slavish in his manner telling them that he and his men would take them round, that they were disgusted with him and used very insulting language to him and when he saw their attitude towards him he refused to give them any help; hence our safety.

After a fortnight the soldiers departed and we felt fairly secure. We enjoyed the fire every night until morning and slept during the day as we couldn't light a fire in the daytime. We had many adventures during our six months stay in that stable. I will just mention one or two as I fear my story will be too long before it is finished.

Liam was always more anxious about his pals than about himself. He knew that my wife would be in a bad way, not knowing what my fate was, so he contrived a means of sending a message. He told Michael and Michael said that there would be a fair in Athenry in a few days and he could travel as a cattle jobber. The soldiers were everywhere by this time and it was hard to travel round.

We sent whatever money we had and Liam wrote a little note to a lady friend of his. He twisted the note and put it into his pipe and put some tobacco over it. Michael set out and when he reached the station in Gort there were a lot of soldiers there. When the train came in they got on board and started to search everyone. They eventually came to Michael and after asking his name and a few other questions they ordered him to take off his boots. "Look here, mate", he said to the officer, "I take off them boots every night and put them on every day and that's quite enough for me. If you want to pinch them you will have to take them off yourself". While they were taking off the boots Michael was getting nervous about the note. "I might as well have a smoke while you're at that job", he said. He took out Liam's pipe and lit it and when they went to search his pockets they found his own pipe and turned out the heel of tobacco to search the pipe. If they found thatnote, they would be down on top of us before anyone could warn us.

I think it was about the end of September that word came from Fr. Meehan who was making arrangements to get the boys who were "on the run" out of the country. They discovered where we were and sent word to Liam that two fellows Eddie Corbett and Pat Callanan had seamen's passes and any of them was willing to let Liam go in his place. Liam spurned the idea of leaving the country for his own safety. He wanted to make me go and I refused. He sent back word that he wouldn't go. After about a fortnight he got a definite order from Volunteer Headquarters to prepare to go to America, that there was important work for him to do. He had to obey this and made the necessary preparations. Liam's hair was

very light in colour so that it had to be dyed. We dyed his hair and moustache which he wore while "on the run". He got a new brown suit, brown shoes and all. We were very lonely when he left us.

Alf and I spent another month together when another fellow was brought away. I was taken away to a place called Bawn about four miles outside Nenagh in Tipperary. Father Kennedy who was teaching in some college in Ennis, heard about us and decided to send me down to his mother's place. She had two sons and a daughter at home and they did everything they could to make me comfortable.

I was there about a week when one day a motor came into the yard and a priest, the boys' uncle, and another brother and two girls, cousins, came in. We were not prepared for them, so I blurted out the first story I thought of; Murphy from Waterford. The priest was very inquisitive and when I got him alone I told him the truth. I said I would be there for a few days only. The man who came with him happened to be County Surveyor in Galway. Whether the priest told him or whether he had seen me before I don't know, but about a week after, another priest came along and told me that he just had got word from this County Surveyor that the police in Athenry knew where I was and that the house would be raided that night. The priest told me he did not believe the story himself. "I think", he said, "they have the wind up". This priest's name was Fr. Culligan, a rebel at heart. "I will have to take you over to my own place", he said. He lived in the Silvermines. I protested against this and said I wouldn't like to bring any trouble on him, but he

resisted and so I went with him. His house was very small but he and his housekeeper looked after me well.

The only exercise I could take was a walk in the garden at night with Fr. Culligan and wearing one of his coats. There was a high wall round this garden but there was a gap near the house between it and the next house. One night we were walking up and down the garden and as we came opposite the gap we heard a sound as if someone had kicked a tin. Fr. Culligan stopped and listened, then he beckoned to me to go into the house. I went in and had almost forgotten the incident but after a quarter of an hour he came in in a terrible rage. "'Tis an awful thing", he said, " that a man can't live in his own country without being spied on". I asked him what happened. "I found a spy", he said, "lying under a bush. I asked him what he was doing there and he said he was only waiting until we passed to get out by the yard gate". He pulled him out from under the bush and put him on his knees. "You've being spying", he said. "Now I want you to swear that you won't tell anyone what you saw or heard tonight", and when he had sworn Fr. Culligan said, "Now you have sworn and now as a priest, I swear on my solemn oath if anything happens to that chap, I'll shoot you, and don't let me see you outside your own house tonight".

Father Culligan had a pony and trap. "Go down and tackle the pony", he said. "I'll have to take you away from here tonight. I don't trust that fellow". He went out the village and I went down and tackled the pony. When Fr. Culligan came back he told me we wouldn't require

the pony. "I wired the doctor for a sick call. He's to call at the parish priest's house, and what do you think, he said - I found that spy outside on the path and I caught him by the scruff of the neck and slung him in about the house. I got two fellows to cut the wires and they will bring you out through the garden across the village to the priest's house. Put on a collar and coat belonging to me". I was led across the village to the priest's house and when the doctor arrived, he told him about me and said he wanted to bring me to Borrisokane. He explained to me that there was a priest, Fr. O'Halloran, who was in charge of a volunteer company, and I think he will be able to get you put up safely.

We started out on our journey and eventually arrived in Borrisokane. Fr. Culligan went in and explained to Fr. O'Halloran about me; then he came out to help the doctor put up the car. "You can go in now", he said to me. I went up and the priest was standing at the door. I shook hands with him. "Goodnight, Father", I said. He kept looking at me for a while and then he said, "Is it true what Fr. Culligan told me about you?". I said, "I don't know what he told you". "He said you were a fellow on the run". I said, "that is true enough". He just smiled. "You're not going to catch me with that trick", he said. I said, "I don't see any trick". Then he laughed outright. "What's the joke, Father?", I asked. He looked at me again. "Do you mean to tell me that you're not a priest?", he asked. I laughed then and told him I wasn't lucky enough". "Well", he said, "you could pass the best detective in Dublin and he would salute you and would never suspect you"

Father Culligan wanted our host to get some of the Volunteers to put me up. Fr. O'Halloran said "why can't he stop here?". "He wouldn't be safe". However, after some argument it was decided that I stay in the priest's house. They had a few drinks and were talking for about an hour when Fr. Culligan got up suddenly and said, "I'm not going to leave that man here; if anything happened to him, now that I have taken him on hands I would shoot myself". There was some further argument and then the doctor said, "I'll drive him to Belfast if I get a tin of petrol". Fr. O'Halloran had a tin to spare and we decided to take the road again.

Father Culligan told me had two brothers living in a big mansion in a place called Shinrone about four miles from Birr. "I'm going to bring you there". We arrived there about 12.30 The people of the house were in bed but we roused them up. They already had a conscript from England but there was plenty of room for me.

I wasn't long there when Alf was brought along. We spent about three months there. Mr. Culligan bought some carpenter's tools for me, cut down several trees and got them sawn into boards and scantlings, and I was quite happy making field gates, barrows, etc., etc.

One night one of the brothers came and told us that he was afraid we would have to leave, at least for a while. It seems that some fellows were playing cards in ahouse in the village and one of them blurted out that there were three Sinn Féiners staying at Culligans. There was a sergeant in the village who was very nosey. He came therd a few times while we were there but never saw us. Now that the news was out it would not be long until the

sergeant got it. So we started out once more for Borrisokane to Fr. O'Halloran but he wouldn't venture to put us up as he said his place was being raided nearly every night, but he got us put up in a farm house. Next morning my two pals, Alf and ? (I can't think of the conscript's name) started out for Dublin. John Culligan told me to remain on, that he would bring me back again when things settled down.

I put in a terrible three weeks. I was worse off than a prisoner in jail. My room was about 5'x6' and I couldn't leave it day or night, they were so careful lest anyone would know I was there. At night the kitchen was full of visitors. One night John Culligan came for me. He had to come in through the room window and brought me out that way and home to his own place again.

Let me explain in passing that I got a message home about every couple of months, sometimes three. While I was in Culligans I got a letter (we had our own system of communication apart from the regular which I couldn't trust) (a cattle dealer, a railway guard, a priest, or anyone in sympathy with us were enlisted in our service) from home in answer to one I sent a couple of months before, and my wife told me that the house was raided every morning at 4 o'clock. One of the children was on the point of death, but they didn't mind. They wouldn't even wait for her to open the door; they burst it in every morning for six weeks, and the reason was, they recognised me as the one who led the attack on the seven peelers at the Agricultural Station in Athenry. They described to her several times the different kinds

of death they were to deal out to that - - of a husband of hers.

I was only a few weeks back at Culligans when one day I was told a priest wanted to see me. It was Fr. Tom Fahy, the man who disbanded the men at Limepark. "I have a job for you in Maynooth", he said. "I am perfectly happy here", I said, "and I can be of some little use to Mr. Culligan working at my trade. Mr. Culligan told me not to mind that part of it, but, of course, I would like to have your company". "Now", said Fr. Fahy, "are you going to disappoint me after I cycling 45 miles from Maynooth. Alf is up there and he asked me to bring you along." I thought it would be ungrateful to refuse after that.

Mr. Culligan got out the pony and trap. Fr. Fahy gave me his bike and went in the trap. I had a bundle of clothes as I had no case for them. We were early for the train. We put up the bundle and bike at the station and went to the hotel for a drink. After some time we strolled leisurely into the station. We were getting our tickets when the station master asked Fr. Fahy if he was going on the train. "I am", said he. "You want to hurry", he said, "the train is on the move". Fr. Fahy rushed out. I was in a quandary as to what to do - I had no ticket and the bike and bundle had to be got out. I left all and rushed out but a porter stopped me and so I was left on the platform. The porter explained that there was an inspector on the train but for that they would wait. It was my first time for six months to appear in public and I thought that everyone who met me would know that I was a wanted man, Yes! while we were in the stable we saw a few copies

of the "Hue and Cry" and my name and description were on it. I rambled out the country road until next train time in about four hours.

I got into Kingsbridge about 12.30, tried to get lodging and had to put up in the Four Courts Hotel. I had to sign the register. I signed Pat Sweeney, Limerick. The hall porter was looking at me. "Limerick!", he said, "why, there's a wedding party here from Limerick (we heard them talking and laughing) you might know them". "I don't want to meet anyone", I said, "I'm dead beat".

After breakfast I started out, took a tram to Lucan and had to walk from there. I couldn't bring Fr. Fahy's bike lest it would be recognised by the gate man.

I won't go into details of the three months I spent in Maynooth, suffice it to say that I was foundered from running from 6.30 a.m. till 9.30 p.m. for 6½d. per day.

There was a priest there from Cork, Father Duggan. He had something to do with getting me the job. He met me one day and asked me if I would like to get a job at my trade (carpenter). I said I would. "Would you like to work in Cork City?". I said, "Yes". "Very good", he said, "I'll manage it for you in about a week". He told me to give notice and get ready. We went up to Dublin and he brought me to Volunteer Headquarters. I met Michael Collins who gave me a letter of introduction to the boys in Cork. Fr. Duggan put me on the train to Cork. The first man I met was a medical student named Tim Donovan. He showed me round and what was more important he showed me all the detectives, and

anytime we would pass one out he would say to me "so near and yet so far". The people of Cork are very wary of a stranger. I found it hard to get into a volunteer company at first. I was lodging in a place that I din't like. Fr. Duggan warned me not to go near Miss O'Brien's, the West Cork Bar. He said it would be too dangerous. I happened to go into a house and the lady of the house was a relation of Miss O'Brien's. I asked her could she keep me. I explained to her that I was a carpenter working in the city. She said, "you will have to be out early". I said, "8 o'clock". "Oh", she said, "that would be too early for me". Another young lady happened to be standing by and she said, "did you try Miss O'Brien?". I said I was warned not to go there. She looked at me in surprise and asked, why! I said, "it is too dangerous". "Oh, don't be silly", she said. "Come with me and I'll fix you up. I'm the owner of that dangerous camp". She happened to be head of Cumann na mBan and the first job I got was drilling them. I even had to bring them out for route marches. I got in with a few of the boys in O'Brien's and we set to work getting the few scattered lads who were not in jail, out into the hills, drilling and organising. We kept pegging at it until the general amnesty same time in June 1917. All the boys were let out of jail and Dev and a big crowd of the released prisoners were to come to Cork on Saturday night.

I wanted to go home after doing 14 months "on the run", but Miss O'Brien told me I must wait and welcome Dev and the rest. I said, "there will be a welcome for myself when I go home". We argued for two days. On Saturday evening I was getting ready . Someone came in and she introduced me and explained all about me, and

"here he is now", she said, "running away and all the boys coming here tonight". "Of course", she said, "I know you are anxious to get home, and your people are anxious to meet you, but you must remember that a lot of the boys passed by their own homes in order to take part in the demonstration tonight". The result of the argument was that I decided to stay. I got ready to go down to meet the boys and as I was going out the door she put a loaded revolver into my hand. "Take this", she said, "you might want it". I took it and put it in my pocket.

There was a great crowd waiting for the train, lolling about here and there, and as soon as the train came in the procession formed up automatically. There was great excitement for some time before the procession started. I don't know how it happened, but when I had time to think of myself I found myself not far from the head of the procession with a big republican flag in my hand. We reached the Grand Parade where a platform was erected. Dev and some of the boys spoke, and the meeting broke up quietly.

On Sunday evening Tim Donovan and I had just come in from a walk in the country and we saw a lot of people walking aimlessly up and down the street. Tim said to me, "wouldn't you almost feel the tension - it is like the calm before the storm". When we reached the end of Patrick Street a few soldiers' wives were coming up the Grand Parade singing three cheers for the red, white and blue, and waving ribbons. The crowd rushed at them and scattered them; then from the Coal Quay came a shower of stones. There was murder in a few minutes.

Immediately after about 50 of these women, half-drunk, marched down Patrick Street and got into the fight. When they were vanquished the whole crowd, about 1,000, without any orders, marched up the street to the recruiting office at Patrick Street Bridge. There was a large picture of Lord Kitchener on the window. The window was broken and Lord Kitchener taken out and thrown in the river. All the allied flags were flying over the front of the roof. All those were torn down. A Union Jack that flew over the tram pole was taken down and a tricolour put up in its stead.

The next thing we saw was about two dozen peelers with their helmets and rifles, marching up the street. Some of the crowd rushed for the lanes. The peelers lined up in front of the recruiting office and were pelted with stones from the lanes; then there was a bayonet charge down the street. My chum and I remained on the footpath and as the last of the peelers was passing, a fellow ran out of a lane with a big ash plant. He got behind the last peeler and let him have it; one inch lower, and the peeler's troubles were over for a time, but the lower rim of the helmet saved him. He staggered across the street but kept going and didn't even look back.

When they got about half way down the street they turned back taking footpath and all. I was carried off my feet and I next found myself jammed in a laneway. After a lot of pushing and jostling I got clear of the mob and made my way to the digs. Miss O'Brien was very excited; she wanted to be in the thick of it. There was a lot of street fighting, pelting the peelers with stones or anything the boys could get to throw at them.

About 11 p.m. Miss O'Brien couldn't stand it any longer, and she came to me and said, "I want to post a letter. Will you come as far as the Post Office with me?". Well!, I never was what you call heroic - I never cared to be where there was fighting unless I had to, but I wasn't going to let this brave girl see that I was afraid. Now, the Post Office was in the midst of the fighting area. There is a street running straight from the Post Office on to Patrick Street. A crowd of the boys stood at the Post Office end and a crowd of soldiers' wives were at the other end, and a peeler with a bayonet was running from one end of the street to the other, roaring like mad, to keep the two crowds separated. Just then a company of soldiers took up position at the Patrick Street end - trench helmets, rifles and bayonets. This gave the women great courage and they shouted to the boys, "come on now, ye slackers". The street was empty except the peeler who was doing his stuff with the bayonet. When Miss O'Brien posted her letter she said, "come on up this way", indicating the street occupied by the mad peeler. "Are you mad?", I said, "to try to pass that fellow". She just looked at me and smiled. "Are you afraid?". Of course, I was afraid, but I didn't tell her. "Come on", I said. We passed along the street and the peeler passed on down like a steam engine roaring. She was very much amused but faith I wasn't. That was alright until we came to where the soldiers were. Then she shouted, "What brave Englishemen ready to shoot down unarmed men and women, and our Irishmen fighting for the Empire out in France". I think I was more afraid of the women than I was of the soldiers, but before we came home we visited every part of the city. That girl didn't know what fear was.

I came home to Athenry next day and before I left my boss told me that if I were in any kind of trouble or that I couldn't stay at home to come back to him. There was a great welcome for me when I arrived. My father, R.I.P., didn't know where I had been during my 14 months' absence. I wrote to him before I came home and he was so glad to know that I was safe that he told everyone - the result was that the peelers got to know.

The boys told me I had no use staying at home although my father, who was a building contractor, needed my assistance badly. I was told that the peelers had sworn to get me at any cost. After a few days I went back to Cork. The name of my employer in Cork was Hegarty. There were two brothers - one lived in Sunday's Well, and the other lived in Ballintemple, Blackrock. I was known on the job as Jack Sweeney. I immediately engaged some rooms and sent for my wife and children. When I got word that they were coming, I went down to the train to meet them. There was a detective named Mailiff. He must have got word that my family had left for Cork. I wasn't long in the station when he came in. He looked round the station as if looking for some one and when he saw me, I knew it was for me he was looking by the way he stared me. I just smiled and walked away.

About a week after my wife had come, the boss came to me and said, "I'm afraid you're not out of trouble yet". I asked him why. "Just as I came to the office this morning", he said, "there were two detectives at the door, Mailiff and Ryan. Mailiff and I went to school together", he said. He asked me if I had anyone working for me named Hynes from Galway. I said, no". "Are you sure?", he said. "Of course, I'm sure". "When did you take on

the last man?". "About a month ago a man named Sweeney came looking for a job as a carpenter. He is from Tipperary". "Oh, that's him", said the detective. "His name is Hynes from Athenry. His wife and children arrived last week". "I don't know what you're talking about. I gave the man a job and I find him suitable. His name is Sweeney from Nenagh", I told him. "Would you find out for me?", he said. "I don't speak to my men", I said. "Couldn't you get the foreman to find out?". "I don't speak to my foreman except on business, and if you think I'm going to do your spying for you, you are mistaken. That's what you're paid for. What have you against him anyhow?". "Oh, nothing", he said, "just we'd like to know could you not sack him and get him out of the city?". "Now", my boss said, "when I want your advice as to what I am to do with my men I'll ask you. This man suits me and I'll keep him as long as it suits me to do so". I thanked my boss for his kindness and said I hoped he wouldn't get into any trouble on my account.

It seems that the authorities wanted to know how it was that I could be moving about under his nose, and he having my description in his pocket.

I was about a month settled down with the family when who should come along but Alf. That was the third time we parted and came together again. Up to this time I made several attempts to join some of the companies but they didn't seem to trust me. When Alf came along he got in touch with one of the Captains who was a farmer and lived in the village of Ballinhasick. Joss Richardson was his name. He had charge of an area just outside the

city, called Pouladuff. He was attached to No.2 Battalion, City Brigade. The Battalion Commandant was Seán Scally. Alf got a job from Joss Richardson and he told him all about me. So Joss made it his business to call on me. We had a house in Brandon Road this time. He asked me to join his company, so I agreed. "Now," he said, "when they find out who you are they will all be looking for you; don't go to any of them". His words proved true. At a Battalion meeting shortly after there was a great discussion. One Captain wanted to make out that I was in his area and another that I was in his company area. "Whatever area he is in he is in my company and he stays there", Joss told them, "and besides he tried to join some of your companies and you wouldn't have him, and now ye all want him".

When I joined the company I found that the officers were very backward, even the Captain knew very little. I wasn't long in the company when I was made 1st Lieutenant. I paid every attention to my half company and soon had them in ship shape. I was then appointed Lieutenant of Engineering. I didn't know much about this but I knew as much as the rest. The threat of conscription was in the air and we devoted our attention to making bombs.

About this time our Captain of Engineering for the Battalion was arrested. His name was McNeilus. He was a quiet going man but he was convinced that we were always at war with England and that he was justified in shooting the enemy whenever opportunity offered. He was in lodgings. I can only think of the landlord's nickname - it was "Could Cabbage". One evening McNeilus was in his bedroom dressing himself to go out when (I think) four peelers came in to search the room.

He told them to search away. While they were searching he suddenly opened fire on them with his automatic. He wounded one or two and then the gun jammed on him. They tackled him and tried to overpower him. The landlord and his two daughters came up when they heard the row. The peelers asked him to go for reinforcement. He told them to go to hell, if they weren't able to arrest him. The two daughters did their best to keep McNeilus up and down the stairs. They fought for an hour. They finally arrested him. While he was waiting for trial we felt nervous for his chances. "They will surely hang him for shooting the peelers".

At that time, 1918, there was no limit to visitors going to see a prisoner. Inside the big wooden gate was a waiting room. Between the wooden gate and a big iron gate was a sort of a hall wide enough for alorry to pass through both gates; outside the iron gate a path led up a hill to the cells.

Two fellows called to see McNeilus and in about ten minutes time two more called. They were in the waiting room with a warder who had the keys of both gates. Now the plan was that when the two visitors who were with the prisoner, when their visit was coming to an end, they were to knock out the warder with a life preserver; the two in the waiting room were to calculate the end of the visit as the time to knock out their man and open the gates.

A man was placed outside the wooden gate to direct McNeilus round by the jail wall and on to a cross road where a motor car waited. There is a road leading straight from the jail gate on to the main road.

A bridge spans a stream that runs about 30 yards from the jail gate. On this bridge was another man and his duty was to hold up any soldiers who might come to go into the jail. As luck would have it, two soldiers came along in a horse and tumbling cart. He held them up, got them down from the cart and made them stand on the bridge. He was troubled then lest any more would come and he took the other man away from the gate to look after the soldiers, so that he would be free to watch the road. The result was that McNeilus had no one to guide him when he came out.

Inside in the waiting room the warder spotted something suspicious about his two visitors and he went to the 'phone to report, but one of them broke his jaw with a sandbag and the other knocked him out with his life preserver. In the meantime the visitors with the prisoner knocked out their own men, but coming down they found a soldier with a rifle marching up and down by the iron gate. They watched until he had turned back on his beat from them, then they went to the gate which the lads had opened. McNeilus rushed out the other gate and straight up the road towards the main road. A youngster was practising on a bike up and down the road. McNeilus caught him by the neck and slung him off, got on the bike and went off like mad. I never heard of him after but he wasn't captured.

We were trying hard to improve our bombs. Our first attempt was to fill cocoa tins with concrete and shrapnel, leaving a hole in the centre for gellignite, with a smaller hole in the side. The idea was, a glass bulb was filled with sulphuric acid that was put into a hole left in the concrete. Under the cap a powder called

potasium was put;under the bulb a short fuse from the detonator passed on to the bulb. To explode the bomb, you had a long nail; by pushing the nail hard through the hole left for it, you broke the bulb; when the acid and the potasium met they ignited the fuse, caught fire and carried it into the detonator.

We improved further on those by making wooden cases. This turned out an octagonal bomb 6" x 3" without any covering. The iron cap was held in place by two small bolts buried head down in the concrete.

One night I attended a meeting of the Battalion officers. After about an hour taking reports, etc., the Commandant asked me to leave the room but to await outside. I was puzzled but didn't question the order. I waited about 15 minutes and the next thing I knew all the officers came over shaking hands with me. I was then informed that I was elected Battalion Vice Commandant.

At the first opportunity Seán Scally (Commandant) and myself went into the affairs of the Battalion. I found that up to this there was only an engineering department in the Battalion. We then decided to start a signalling, scouting and first-aid classes, and get them into working order. I forgot to mention the most important one - the Intelligence Department.

Then the conscription threat was about to be out, so we laid our plans to meet it. We warned the different companies not to leave anything to chance, so every man had his bandages, iodine, oatmeal bread, which would keep for weeks, even the needle and thread -

they had them all ready.

The plan we had was that the Commandant was to take half the Battalion and help to prevent the soldiers from entering the city, make a barricade at Patrick Street Bridge by upturning the trams across it, to be reinforced later with sandbags. I was to capture the local police barracks and then proceed with the rest of the Battalion to Ballincollig, a big military station, surprise the sentries and capture the place. When that was done I was to send all the men and arms I could spare into the city. I think more people were disappointed than the number that were glad when peace was signed and put off conscription.

Thomas MacCurtain, R.I.P., was our Brigade Commandant. One day he met me and said, "I think that Battalion is too big for Scally and yourself". We had ten companies and mostof them were four or five miles from the city. "I'm thinking", he said, "of splitting it up". I thought that what he intended doing was to take a few of the companies and form another one and leave us as we were, but instead he dissolved the whole Battalion and held an election for two Battalion staffs. The Commandant and I resigned and didn't go forward for election.

There was one particular company whose officers were not acting according to principle. Under the pretext of raiding for arms they were using the Volunteers for the purpose of looting. When the election came on and all this crowd got on the Battalion staff, then the work started in earnest. Volunteers were called out to guard cross roads and different points, thinking that it

was a raid for arms, but it was either a distillery or a poultry yard that was raided; they even held up people on the road and robbed them.

I went back to my Company as 1st Lieutenant. The Gaelic League Ard Fheis was held in Cork that year, 1918, and Dick Mulcahy was one of the judges, so we decided to lay the case before him. Of course, we couldn't tell him that the Battalion staff werelooting all round them. We would have been ashamed to confess it. We brought them up on the plea of incompetence in which we were right. None of them was fit for the post he held. So Dick instituted an enquiry, and when he had examined each of them he was disgusted. The Lieutenant of Engineering was brought up. He was asked, "What position do you hold?". "Lieutenant of Engineering, Sir", "And what are your duties?". "To instruct the engineers in each company", "And on what do you instruct them?". "On blowing up bridges and demolishing railways". Well! silence! "Does engineering consist only of those things you mention?". Silence ! "Do you mean to tell me that that is all you know about engineering?". Dumb! Dick reduced each of them in the ranks.

I was asked to take charge of the Battalion but wasn't in a position to do so. The result was that the companies were divided up with the other Battalions.

As 1st Lieutenant I found that the attendance was very bad. We could never get any more than a dozen men with the officers. The chief reason was, the area of our Company was outside the city and most of the members

worked for dairy farmers, milking cows, and bringing the milk to the dairies. Our Captain, Joss Richardson, was one of them and as such he was unpopular with the men.

The Captain saw that as such he was a failure and couldn't get the men to attend, so he resigned. A meeting was called to elect a new Captain. Proposals were asked for and one man stood up and asked, "What is the idea of proposing anyone or having an election. I know that there's not a man here who will soldier under any man but Frank Hynes. We'll have him for Captain or no one". This was endorsed by all present. There was a marked improvement in the attendance from that on.

There was a municipal election in Cork, and any of our fellows who were not working were down at the booths keeping order. They were not very numerous, but a corwd of ex-soldiers came down with revolvers and cleared them out. That night when I cam to my tea word came from the Commandant, Seán Sullivan, to mobilise all available men with side arms and report at Sinn Féin Hall, Grand Parade. It was the man who brought the message who explained to me what happened. I notified all the boys I could contact, and when I reported I was ordered to proceed to one of the booths. We felt certain that there was going to be trouble. There were some Volunteers there before us and one of the ex-soldiers was looking for trouble. He got it too. One of the Company Captains hit him on the chin and he went down. We thought this would be the signal for a row but there wasn't a word. When the booth was closed we marched to the City Hall with the men who carried the ballot

boxes. We had to pass through a few dark streets and we expected an attack at any moment, but none came.

The raids were just starting at this time and a lot of arrests were being made. Whenever the boys would get word of a raid I was notified and many a morning I had to get up at 3 or 4 o'clock and get out the country. Things were getting so dangerous that all officers were ordered not to sleep at home. I told them I couldn't sleep away from home, whatever about my duty keeping me out at night. I couldn't go away every night and leave my wife at home as she was expecting a baby and was in very delicate health; so I stayed at home, with the result that there was a knock at the door one morning at 3 o'clock; when I went down to open it I saw a peeler in the skyline. "Are you Mr. Hynes?". I said, "Yes". "You're wanted", he said. Himself and an Army Sergeant came in and needless to say I felt nervous because I thought they would search the house as I had a revolver and some copies of "An tÓglach", and it meant six months for each copy. However, they came up the stairs very quietly and stood outside in the passage while I dressed. My wife started complaining to them for taking her husband away and she in a delicate state of health. The peeler was in sympathy, but I said, "what do you want complaining to these men, they are only doing their duty for small nationalities". I thought that the authorities' opinion of me was very small when they only sent a peeler and a soldier to arrest me. The peeler was so discreet that he didn't like to handcuff me in the presence of my wife. As I was going down the stairs I thought of my tobacco. I dived into the front room for it. The peeler came in after me and he said, "I must

put on these on you." "What's the idea?", I said, "'tis not a criminal you have". "Well, you know", he said, "we have to do it". I said, "is it not bad enough hauling a man out of bed at this hour of the morning without humiliating him in this way?", "Well, now", he said, "they wont be a bit of hindrance to you. There's a swivel on them; they are military handcuffs". My wife heard the argument, and thinking they were going to shoot me, she came to the head of the stairs and as we were going out the door she fainted and in falling hit her forehead against the wall. I, of course, didn't know this until I came back in four months' time. Indeed I believe that if the peeler knew it he would allow me to go back to do what I could. The door of our house opened on the gable where there was a lane, and at the head of the lane there were about two dozen soldiers, and I felt so proud I shouted, "Oh, bedad, ye sent a decent escort after all".

The peeler expressed his sympathy while we were walking down to the lorry. "That's a bad case of yours", he said, "your missus being so delicate. I'll tell you what you ought to do. When you get to the jail ask for the officer in charge and state your case to him and I'll corroborate your statement". "Listen", I said, "the only charge ye have against me is that I'm an Irishman who tried to do what I can for my country. The fact that my wife is sick doesn't make me any less an Irishman than if she were not sick, and besides, I'm not going to crawl to any Englishman". He shut up like a clam, but I believe his sympathy was genuine.

They left me in a covered lorry and went off for more victims. There were a few soldiers standing round

the lorry, and after a while one of them said, "perhaps that chap would like a smoke. Help him to get his cigarettes or pipe". I told him it was alright, I could manage. I had to stand up as there was no seat. I wasn't very long there when another prisoner was brought. He went into the far end of the lorry and I could just see his shape. His head was down on his chest until I spoke. "Hallo, mate", I said. He immediately jumped to attention. "Oh, hullo", he said, "I thought I was alone". His name was Seán Murphy. After about half an hour another man joined in - Christie O'Gorman.

We were brought to the Detention Barracks and a peeler came in to search us. "Have you any revolvers on you?". "If he had a revolver on him", said Christie, "you'd keep far away from him". We were eventually brought to Cork Jail . I couldn't realise that I was in jail; it wasn't anything like what I had pictured it. I heard fellows talking and singing around me. Someone shouted through the window directly over mine. "Hey, down there, have you any tobacco?". "Yes", I said. He let down a twine with a loop in it. "Put a bit in that", he said. After a bit I heard again. "Hey, have you eer an ould song?". "Sure". "Out with it". For breakfast I got some porridge in a deep tin and a pint of milk, and boy I did enjoy it. I was feeling kind of glad I was in jail. Our own fellows dished out the grub and it was brought to you in bed in the morning. We were only two days in jail when we heard that Lord Mayor MacCurtain was murdered. We could see the funeral through the top windows.

We were in Cork Jail about two weeks when one night about 12.30 we were roused and told that we were wanted by the military. We were put in lorries and brought to Cove. There we were put on board some sort of a war ship. We certainly were not treated very well on board; they fed us like dogs or pigs. A bucket of tea was left on the floor and some dog biscuits and tins of bully beef. We had to empty the tins in order to get something to drink the tea out of. They brought us all the way by water from Cove to Belfast. There were a couple of peelers on board and we were in Cove with them. There was a soldier guarding a certain part of the ship and he got one of the peelers to relieve him, but they had to withdraw him. We groaned and booed and shouted "put out the murderer". One of the soldiers told us in secret that we were going to Belfast and when we found it out each man scribbled a note home. We gave our letters to one of the soldiers. One poor fool handed his to a peeler and we gathered round him and made him get it off him. We found out later that all the letters were posted.

We were prepared for the worst in Belfast Jail; we expected that all the warders were Orangemen.
Seán Murphy and I were next to each other on the ground floor. A man was appointed in charge of each landing, and a Commandant was elected. Our first Commandant was Seán Hayes. I think he was from some part of County Cork. We found the warders very friendly. There was one old warder whose daughter was a member of Cumann na mBan. For the first week the only way we had for saying our Rosary was, each man shouted through the spy hole in the cell door as the glass was broken in all of them.

When going out to exercise each Captain lined up his

men and marched them out in military formation. We smuggled in a handball and started to play at the gable end of a building. There was a window in this gable and we expected that we would be prevented from playing, but instead, when we came out next day a wire netting was neatly fastened over the window. We next got in a football and had some very rough football matches. Then we got a set of boxing gloves, but none of those things were objected to.

Then we started Irish classes and signalling classes. In comparison to Cork we found the grub rather scarce. We were not getting anything from outside, so we put in a demand for more and better grub, and to our surprise we got it immediately. We were told that the Governor would do his best for us to avoid any trouble.

New batches were being brought in every other day. One day a very tall and very straight good-looking fellow came amongst us and for the first couple of days he found himself very much alone. The word was sent round among the lads, "look out for 'your man', he's not to be trusted". Then some fellow was told off to take him round the ring and sound him. When he came back he reported favourably but still we didn't take him to our bosom, but some one from Belfast whom some of the lads knew came along and we asked him about this fellow. We were told that his name was Seán O'Neill, the most prominent Sinn Féiner in Belfast. Martin Corry (who is now a T.D.) came along and the first thing Martin wanted was a hunger strike. "Ye're only a lot of sheep", Martin would say. There was a wing of the Jail that was broken up by Austin Stack and his men

some time previous. The slates were gone off half the roof and all the balconies and partitions were broken down. Martin would look at the wing and say there was a man! he didn't lie down under it like this crowd. Some of the lads were inclined to agree with Martin that something should be done until one day one of the boys got hold of the story that Martin was preparing to get married when he was arrested, and after that when he would mention the hunger strike the answer he would get was, "oh yes, Martin, we'll go on hunger strike in order that you will get out to get married and to hell with us after".

There was another fellow whose name I forget, who was getting older and more wrinkled every day from worry. He was the only man who would listen to Martin. His idea was that all we had to do was declare a hunger strike and we would all be let out. He came to me one day and began, "isn't mine a pitiable case? I had a nice little shop and now 'tis closed. I had no one to look after it". "Go away", I said, "you ould woman complaining to me that left a wife almost dying and three helpless children on the charity of the public, and I'm not worrying. Why don't you take it like a man?". Eventually when we did go on strike the doctor said that if he were kept any longer he would kill himself worrying - he wouldn't even come back to tell us.

One day we were marching out and it seems that the Captain of our landing didn't know much about drilling. He marched us out and was giving all sorts of jumbled up orders. The fellows in front were making a joke of it but he took no notice. The Tommies were looking on. I stood up and faced the Captain. "Look here", I said,

"if you were used to playing at soldiers, I'm not. I was properly trained and I took my training seriously". "What can I do?", he said, "when they wont go right". "If you can't control them", I said, "hand them over to someone who can".

Shortly after he was shifted with a batch to England. I was appointed landing Captain. The first thing I did was to teach the words of command in Irish to the men. Then there was an order from the Commandant that each landing Captain give the words of command in Irish. We were still trying to say our Rosary through the spyholes. One evening I took a chance. When we came into the corridor I addressed the men and said we would say our Rosary before we went to cells. I thought the warders would object. Instead they retired to the end of the corridor until we were finished. I was called the chaplain after that.

The hunger strike started in Mountjoy and Martin was roused once more. "Ah! we're great soldiers, fighting for our country. Our comrades dying above in Dublin and we here living in the lap of luxury". However, he prevailed this time. All the Captains agreed to the hunger strike and we went to the Commandant and explained matters to him. He addressed us in the exercise ground and said, "The Captains of each of the landings have agreed to go on hunger strike. Now, do you know what the men in Mountjoy are demanding; they want a trial or release. If we go on strike for these things we will be acting inconsistently. You all know that every Volunteer is bound to refuse to recognise an English court. If we go on strike for a trial and then refuse to

recognise the court, where will the matter end?. We will be a laughing stock; go back and ask your men to vote on a strike for unconditional release!' I might mention here that our Commandant was rather easy going and didn't want trouble. When we put it before the men they said that a strike for release would look like as if we wanted to go home to our mothers.

Shortly after that another batch was shifted and our Commandant with them. We elected a Kerryman. I think his name was Quinn. We were getting disturbing news every day about the strike in Mountjoy. One day I went up to our new Commandant and said, "'Tis terrible to think that our comrades are dying and we here seem so indifferent". "Well", he said, "what can we do? We wanted to strike in sympathy and wouldn't be let". "Well", I said, "we can pray for them, and that's the least we might do". "You're the chaplain", he said, "and the men are there". I think there were about sixty of us at this time. I called the men together and told them that I wanted a Rosary said for the release of the men in Mountjoy. Now, the Mater Hospital is just outside the Jail wall. It was in that end the men knelt down in two ranks. I stood in front of them. They were facing the hospital. Every man had his Rosary beads, and not one man lifted his head during that Rosary. When it was finished I turned round and looked towards the hospital. There was a nurse or two leaning out of every window and I don't doubt that they were joining in the prayers. Soon we were called into cells. We were only five minutes in cells when one of the nurses flashed a morse message, that the boys in Mountjoy were just after being

released. The news flew from cell to cell and did we celebrate! We kicked pots and everything in our cells that would make noise, including the cell doors. Pandemonium reigned for over an hour. We finished up with singing the Soldier's Song. During that time not a warder came near the place.

A man named O'Connor came to me one day and suggested that we get up a concert for the following Sunday. I agreed and we went round and canvassed the boys - anyone who could sing promised to do so. I commandeered a small wagon that was used for shifting refuse. It was about four feet high; by letting down one of the sides it made an ideal stage. We had some fine singers and some of the most seditious recitations you could hear. It was a great success but when all was over I was told that none of those who sang were half as good as Connor - no one had asked him to sing.

We got word of a hunger strike in Wormwood Scrubbs. Martin Corry took the field once more. Our new Commandant was made of sterner stuff than the last one. We called a meeting and decided almost unanimously to strike in sympathy. We were formed up in a square. We exempted a few who were in hospital and two old men who were over sixty. One was Jim Leddy of Limerick. He was a Cumann na nGaedh T.D. afterwards. Jim stepped into the square and appealed to us in a most pathetic manner. "This might be my last blow for Ireland and I ask ye for God's sake to let me take part in it". We cheered him to the skies and then the other man Jim Sullivan who was exempt, stepped in and in a most belicose manner said, "who said I couldn't go on hunger strike? Well, I'm

going anyhow". Jim got another cheer. Just then a young man, a solicitor, strong and healthy stepped into the square and said, "I object to go on hunger strike on conscientious grounds". He got no cheer. Then the Commandant, in the name of God, declared the hunger strike on and prayed for its success. All razors, penknives, etc. were taken from the prisoners and at least all those of my landing were put into my cell.

We had finished our second day when we were shipped across to Wormwood Scrubbs. About 6 p.m. we were brought down to the dock. There were over a thousand Orangemen, women and children, and but for the soldiers they would have made short work of us. They started throwing stones at us but luckily for us one stone hit the officer in charge and he turned back and threatened to turn the soldiers on them if they didn't stop, but they hissed and booed and threw every insulting remark they could think at us.

We were handcuffed in pairs, and according to law the handcuffs should have been taken off on board ship, but our gentle gallant officer was above the law, he wanted to leave us handcuffed all the time. We had to climb down the narrow hatchway in pairs, one fellow lying on the deck while the other one got down and then scramble down after him as best he could. One pair objected that they couldn't do it. "Get down or I'll throw you down", this lovely officer said.

When we were all down below a peeler came down and was called up again. "What are you doing?", the officer asked him. "Taking the handcuffs off the prisoners". "When I want the handcuffs off I'll come to you for the key".

The peeler reminded him that it was illegal to handcuff prisoners on board ship. They argued for a time and then the peeler told him he would take no orders from him. The Commandant and I were handcuffed together, and when the peeler came to open our handcuffs, we asked him what the officer was shouting about. "Ah, that fellow 's mad", the peeler said. "He wanted to have ye handcuffed all the time". I will never forget that journey.

After some time the sailors threw some blankets down to us, and this officer did his best to stop him. The sailor told him he had his orders. Most of the lads lay huddled on the floor. I sat on a form and watched those poor fellows huddled together on the floor. Most of them got seasick, and it was pitiable to see them trying to vomit. We arrived in England at 8 a.m. next day. We were then huddled into a train, two prisoners in each compartment, and three soldiers and one peeler with each pair of prisoners. We travelled on that train without a stop until 6 o'clock that evening when we arrived in Paddington Station. We were then put into lorries. There were seats in them and good enough of the peelers who were with us, they let us sit down, and our gentle officer came to one of the lorries, addressed the peelers "You fellows sit down and let those swine stand up".

We arrived at Wormwood Scrubbs Prison. We now had our third day's hunger strike completed. It is bad enough to be on hunger strike in your cell but to be hauled about like so many cattle and treated worse is another matter. To our great surprise when we got inside

in the prison, we found the corridor lined with soldiers with fixed bayonets and trench helmets, and everyone scowled at us. We were left standing in the corridor. Each man was brought into a room and all his belongings searched and his person examined for ~~moulds~~ MOLES and birthmarks (we didn't have to undress) but I suppose it took ten minutes to examine each man. The result was that it was 10 o'clock when we got the very uncivil but welcome order "get to your cells".

Next day we were let out on exercise, and the yard where we were was surrounded by barbed wire entanglements. We didn't worry trying to get through. That night before we went to cells I took another chance, not knowing what the result would be. I went round to collect the men for prayers. One of the warders saw me and came up to me and said, "are you collecting the b oys for prayers?". I said, "yes". He said, "I have a little bell here, and anytime you want them I'll ring it for you". I thanked him and told him that the boys needed only a nod from me.

I forgot to mention an item in the first night's proceedings. When we all were searched the Governor got up on the stairs and said, "Now, you fellows, I want to give you to understand that we will take no monkey tricks from anyone, and if you start them we know how to deal with you". We were completely puzzled; here, we were in the heart of England, three days without food and surrounded by armed soldiers, and yet this fool is afraid of us. What do es it mean? We found out afterwards that the batch who were on hunger strike before us had pulled down all their cell doors and were now in underground cells.

At the first opportunity I wrote to my wife as I knew she would be anxious about me. I will now tell her part of the story. She was within a week of her confinement when a telegram came from a Belfast hospital to one of the neighbours, from her nephew - "released yesterday, now in hospital"". She came with all haste to tell the good news to my wife, but my wife was not satisfied. She said, "if Frank were released he would wire me". So to please her they went back and got a reply - "Frank left here three days ago, don't know where he is gone to". This nearly drove her mad, and to make it worse the child was born before she got any word about me. A friend wired several jails in England - "Where is Frank Hynes?. Wife in critical condition".

One day as I was lying in bed, a warder came in with the wire and read it to me. He had some papers in his hand. When he read the wire he said, "you better sign this paper asking for parole and get home to see your wife before she dies". I said, "I must see my Commandant first, but I will sign the petition conditionally". I got up and went out to state my case to the Commandant. He told me that I would have to be at least a week taking food before I would be allowed out, and by that time your wife will be either dead and buried or better. I went back to bed and when the warder came I told him to cancel my petition for parole. In about three hours after another telegram was thrown on my bed - "baby girl, both well". I went through hell from the time I got the first telegram and I will leave the reader to imagine the joy I experienced when I got the good news.

When we came to Wormwood Scrubbs we had the usual prison bed to sleep on. Shortly after we came there, the Commandant ordered us to stay in bed as much as we could as he said we would give it to be understood that we we were too weak to get up and be released all the sooner. I think I was about the only one who carried out the order as I did a lot of reading. One day I was lying in bed when two warders came in with a new spring bed. They got me into this and I found it very comfortable and they brought a lovely white enamelled wash basin and stand, a big water jug; a plate glass mirror about 24" x 18" hung on the wall; then a larger mat for the floor. When they were leaving after putting down the mat one of the warders said "we weel 'ave the 'armonion in a meeneet". I said, "you better get some one to play it".

Our chaplain was a real angel of mercy. He was in complete sympathy with us. When he would come in he would sit by the bed and put his arms round me and tell me about the other prisoners, and with words of encouragement try to make me feel happy. I found him so nice I asked him one day was he Irish. "No", he said, in a thorough saxon tone. "The only connection I have with Ireland is that it was on St. Patrick's Day I was converted to the Faith, I had a lot to do with the Irish in Liverpool".

We were about ten days on strike, when one day I heard the boys walking up and down the corridor. I said I would scrabble out to them as I hadn't seen them for a quite a while. I got up and when the boys saw me they had great welcome. We said our Rosary, and I was sitting on a chair. One of the boys was standing at a desk,

I think he was writing, but suddenly he fell back on the floor in a dead faint. It caused great excitement. He was brought in to his cell and the doctor was brought. The excitement was too much for me and I felt myself getting rather weak. One of the boys saw me and asked me was I alright. I said I felt a bit weak. They all gathered round me and made a great fuss. They put me into bed and brought the doctor. He ordered the cell door to be left open all night.

We were released at about 2 o'clock on Friday. I had completed 11 days; we were taken to a hospital in Highgate, St. Mary's, Dalington. We were not treated as invalids. Our first feed was a very bad quality of bread, margarine and bovril. There were many interesting incidents which happened during our three weeks in hospital, but my time for writing is drawing to a close and I must finish my story in the time left to me or it will never be finished.

There was a huge crowd at Euston Station when we were leaving. There were several Irish priests. When we arrived in Dublin the boys were making a show, getting photographed, interviewing reporters, etc., but a few of us who didn't want that kind of thing, got a jarvey to drive us to the station.

I was very weak for some time after I came home. After about a week I went back to work, but when I arrived at the workshop the foreman asked me where I was going. I said, "I am coming to work". He said, "You are not going to do any such thing, you're going on a holiday".

I want to state here that in addition to whatever help my wife got from the Prisoners' Dependents' Fund, the men I worked with made a contribution each week that brought her money up to my usual week's wages. Knowing this, I asked the foreman how I could expect to go on a holiday. He said, "there is plenty of money". They commandeered a house for me in Crosshaven and gave me a month's holiday.

My Lieutenants, Danny Murphy and Tom Leahy, worked hard with the Company while I was away. When I came back I took over and organised until I had the membership well over the hundred.

Our Company area was on the outskirts of the city and the members were mostly agricultural labourers. About fifty of them were engaged in driving milk vans to the dairies in the city. They went on strike for higher wages. The farmers themselves then brought the milk to the city. This didn't suit the strikers, so they tried to prevent them by intimidation.

One Saturday evening I was lying on the bed after finishing work, when one of my men came up to the bed to me. He had a belt on with a holster and revolver hitched on. This was in the height of the Tan trouble. I asked him what the idea was. He said, "I am guarding the farmers". "Who orderedd you?", I asked. "The 1st Lieutenant". I told him to tell the Lieutenant that I wanted to see him. The Lieutenant was very zealous Volunteer and had great respect and admiration for his Captain. I asked him what he meant by issuing those orders. He was very apologetic but said that just before curfew he got an S.O.S. from the farmers who

wanted protection, and I didn't have time to contact you. I sent word to some of the lads who were outside the curfew area to be at the different cross roads this morning and it was a good job. They had a mob on each end of the roads, armed with sticks, and swore that they would stop the farmers at any cost - our lads had to draw their revolvers". I said, "do you realise the responsibility you have taken on yourself?". Half our Company members were in that strike. "Do you think they are going to take our interference lying down? You had no right to issue any orders without consulting me". "Well", he said, "I did what I thought was best under the circumstances and I'm prepared to stand courtmartial and take the consequences".

I went into the city to see the Brigade Commandant, Seán Hegarty. I stated the case to him and told him that it was like strike breaking, "but you are responsible for the peace of your area. Keep on as you are, and I will see the heads of the Labour Union". That night I got word that the strikers were going to hold a big meeting at Pouladuff (this was the road that most of the milk vans travelled) and that they were determined to stop the milk cars going to the city. I issued an order to all my men who were not in the strike to be on parade at 2 p.m. on Sunday with side arms. The 1st Lieutenant lived not far from where the meeting was to be held. The 2nd Lieutenant and I were going out when we met the 1st Lieutenant. He asked me if I could get on without him. "My mother is in a state of collapse on account of this and if I go out she might die". "Now", I said, "you didn't think of this when you brought this on us, and besides if we were going out to fight for the country, and your mother got into a state

of collapse, would you be justified in staying at home? Get ready and come with us".

When we arrived at the place there was a mob of about sixty men. I lined up my men and although the mob had the road blocked I marched the men right up to them;. they stood in a threatening attitude with their sticks. I kept one stone in my pocket and kept walking right up to them. They eventually withdrew to one side and let us pass. I marched the men about 100 yards above them and waited for the vans. When we had about nine of them I put a line of men each side of them and we marched towards the crowd again. A scout came up and told me they had formed a solid block on the road and were determined not to let us pass. I kept marching on right up to the crowd with my hand in my pocket. They stood there until we came right up to them. I took no notice of them but kept walking. They gave way once more. When we had the vans brought safely through the crowd I put two men on each van and let them off. I kept the men together and the crowd was shouting and calling us strike breakers . We marched on towards the city. We were about two miles out. We marched to the outskirts of the city. Some of the cars were there delivering the milk. I knew that the men would be glad to get to their dinners so I dismissed them. Just then a scout came up and said that the strikers were marching in. I held all the men who were not gone. I stood by the first car myself and the first crowd passed on. The second crowd stopped opposite to me and I noticed that their leader was not one of the strikers, and was a member of the Company. He addressed the men and said, "Now, lads, there will be no intimidation or rowdyism". I walked over to them and said I was very

sorry for this state of affairs. Two men stepped out of the ranks and saluted and said, "we're sorry, Sir, too, but we're fighting for our rights". I said, "as far as that is concerned, I, as a Trade Unionist, am in sympathy with you, but I am responsible for the peace of the district, and besides I have more experience of strikes than any of you, and I never knew of a strike that was settled by intimidation. If you carry out your strike in the proper manner, you can depend on all the help we can give you, and now if you promise that you won't interfere with the delivery of the milk, I will withdraw my men". They assured me that they would not interfere, so I withdrew my men.

I was worrying about the Company, I was afraid that those on strike would forsake us and leave our numbers very much reduced.

After a few days the strike was settled. We had a little hall for drilling outside the city, and one night I was in the field adjacent to the hall, drilling a very much depleted Company, when we heard the measured tread coming down the road. Our strikers were coming towards us. They marched into the field. I had my men in two ranks, and not knowing what was going to happen, westood to attention. The strikers marched behind the Company, fell into line; their leader walked up, saluted and retired into the ranks. I felt very proud of them.

About two months after I had come home a lot of Volunteers were arrested and kept in Cork Jail. Amongst them was one of my Company. His name was Joe Murphy. The charge they had against him was most ridiculous. We had a dud bomb with which we were practising bomb

throwing. They found this in Joe's house. They went on hunger strike. It was the most remarkable hunger strike in history. Some of the men did 90 days without food and except poor Joe, they all survived it - Joe lasted 79 days. I was speaking to him some days before he died. His voice was gone, he could only speak in whispers, but for that he looked quite normal. "Captain", he said, "we'll win no matter how it goes. If we outlive this and they have to release us we have them beaten, and if we die we will go to Heaven because we gave our lives in a good cause". When the visit came to an end he took my hand and said, "don't fret, Captain, I'll keep the flag flying for "C" Company". He did, the poor fellow - he carried it to his grave.

When he died we set about making arrangements for the funeral. We went up to the Jail (which is about two miles from the city) with the coffin; six of us got under the empt empty coffin going in and when we got inside we had to submit to a search, while we stood with the coffin on our shoulders. We brought him to the church and arranged for Mass next morning. At this time only a limited number were allowed to walk in the funeral. Six of us stood guard over the coffin during Mass; we kept a bodyguard on until the funeral. The soldiers came to remind us of the limit. We put six palls on the hearse so as to have a guard of six men by the hearse.

There was an armoured car and some lorries with soldiers at the funeral. We had secret arrangements made for a firing party. The officer in the armoured car stood at the cemetery gate to see that no shots were fired, but give him his due, he had his cap in his hand during the burial service. We said the Rosary and other prayers,

delayed as long as we could until the armoured car was gone. Some of the huge crowd departed thinking all was over, but a great many waited to see if we would have the courage to fire the volley. The Commandant came to me and said he thought I should put it off for another time. I said, "we'll wait another bit". Then the officer got into the car and at a signal our firing party appeared from nowhere. The car had only started from the gate when the crowd were aroused by hearing the word of command "Firing Party - attention". Everybody looked up. I marched the men round the grave and fired the three volleys and everyone in that crowd clapped. I had a queer feeling listening to the people clapping in a graveyard.

After this incident every young man in the area joined our Company. When Terence McSwiney, Lord Mayor, died in Brixton, and was brought home to be buried in Cork, I had 169 men on parade at the funeral. There was no limit to the number at the funeral. They lifted the ban for that occasion. The Volunteers were used to line the route on each side of the two miles to the cemetery. My Company was the last on the route within about 500 yards of the cemetery. When the funeral was passing the Commandant came over to me and said, "If we allow the huge crowd into the cemetery there won't be standing room". "When the cars are all passed make a double cordon across the road and don't let anyone pass". Some order, but it had to be attempted, and then we didn't know when a lorry load of Tans would come. Some of the crowd were very indignant but others took it in good parts. We had our hands full for a couple of hours.

With the excitement of looking after the crowd in

the cemetery the Commandant forgot to relieve us from our duty. The result was that we waited there long after the crowd had gone home. It was dark night when I took it on myself to quit the post.

About the middle of December, 1920, we had a very important job to do. We had no proper dump for our "stuff" and we had it hidden in small lots, some of it up to three miles from the rest. So we said we would have to collect it and put it all together in one particular place. Curfew was on and the job was to avoid the Tans. When we started on the job the night came very bad and it rained all night through, with the result that when we got finished about 2.30 a.m. we were drenched into the skin. Some of the boys got into a farm house, but there were two for whom there was no room. The alternative was a hayshed. I insisted on going in the hayshed as being the oldest veteran who had most experience of that kind of life. Then each of them wanted to remain with me, but one particular pal of mine insisted that he would stay. We had to sleep in our wet clothes. At the time I was "on the run". I couldn't go near my own house on account of an incident that happened a short time before. Since the time I came home from England my health wasn't very strong, and I had a mile to walk to work every day. A girl member of Cumann na mBan brought my dinner every day except on Friday. I went home every Friday. This went on for about four months, but as luck would have it, I was told that I would have to come home to my dinner on Wednesday instead of Friday. On the following Friday just at 1.15 as I would be sitting at my dinner, three Tans came in, closed the hall door and rushed from the hall into the kitchen, covered the table

with their revolvers and were very much disappointed when I was not there. My movements had been watched and reported so accurately that the only snag in the whole arrangement was the accident that kept me away on that particular Friday.

They asked my wife where I was and she refused to tell them and they beat her and put her facing the wall while they pulled down all the pictures on the wall and kicked them round the house. They went upstairs and collected all the papers they could get and put them under the bed ~~with~~ and ~~set~~ fire to them. The only thing left untouched in the kitchen was a picture of the Sacred Heart. One of them went over to pull it down when my wife, who was facing the wall up to this, turned round and said, "don't you dare touch that, you're not worthy". The soldier turned away without a word. When they were going they told her, "we were sent up to do in your husband; we were disappointedthis time, but we'll get him and you won't see him any more". She just had time to put out the fire under the bed when she fainted after they had gone.

I couldn't go near my home after that. I found it hard to try and carry out my work and then make my way by lanes and backways to some friend's house for tea, and when it got dark steal out to somewhere in the country to a friend's house or a hayshed. I couldn't take the same route twice. I was being spied on and the boys were spying on the spiers.

The night Cork was burned I was in a house about two miles out the country and didn't know about it until next day. It was a terrible scene, more than half of the

shops on one side of Patrick Street were burned to the ground.

I had been about two months 'on the run" when the incident which I related above occurred-about sleeping in my wet clothes. A couple of nights after this I slept in a friend's house in the city. I tried to get out of bed on Sunday morning when I found I couldn't stir. I was a very sick man. Word was sent to my wife. She was afraid to come to the house in case she would lead the spies to me. She went to a priest, a great friend of ours, Fr. Duggan. He went immediately to the hospital and engaged a bed for me. I was brought to hospital. My name was supposed to be Ward. Nearly all the patients were ex soldiers so I had to be very careful. The sister in charge of the ward was indisposed (the hospital was run by the Sisters of Mercy). Another sister was acting in her stead. I'm sure it was the fervent wish of each of those soldier patients that the head sister would never be able to take charge of the ward.

She eventually came along, spoke very gruffly to a few patients who were in bed - "What's wrong with you? - bronchits?". "Yes". "Hmp", she came to me, and listening to the uncomplimentary remarks of the patients about her, I didn't feel very friendly towards her. I thought she was just a bully. "What's wrong with you?". "Bronchitis, soldier?". "Yes" (and after a pause), "Soldier of the Irish Republic". She turned with a kind of a start, and I thought she was going to order me to be put out. "Oh!", she said, "I know what happened you, out at night getting wet, sleeping in wet clothes. Isn't it diabolical", she said, "all this shooting and

killing". I said, "what can you expect from cowards?". "Cowards", she said, "you don't know as much about them as I do. They are the very scum of the earth, shooting unarmed people is all they are fit for; they ran whenever they met men who could fight. I spent ten years amongst them".

I will have to pass over a lot of interesting incidents during my stay in hospital, but it was coming near Christmas and I thought I would like to spend Christmas night at home. I asked my friend, Fr. Duggan, and he said he would ask the boys. They said it wouldn't be safe, I had so many escapes that it would be tempting Providence to risk going home. I couldn't agree, that bad and all as they were they would go raiding on Christmas night - however, I would not go against orders.

A couple of days after Christmas my wife came and told me that the soldiers came led by the detective Mailiff, and gave her a bad time, wanting to know where I was - she would not tell them of course.

This raid was brought about by a very peculiar circumstance. A friend of mine, Thomas Malone, who used visit us often had come into the city. He was captured by the Tans and I believe some ammunition was found on him. He was asked where he came from. He said he slept in the city last night. He was asked what house and mine was the only name he could think of, and thinking to kill two birds with the one stone, they brought him to my house hoping that I would be home for Christmas.

They didn't bring him up to the house but asked my wife, "did any man sleep in the house last night?". She

said, no. After some more questioning one of them said, "bring him up". Thinking it was I whom they had she was very troubled. Thomas was brought up and she was asked, "do you know this man?". She said, "yes". "What's his name?". Now Thomas sometimes used an alias and she didn't know whether to give his own name or not. Then in order to save him from getting into trouble she told them that he slept in the house, which was not true.

When the boys found out that Mailiff was in a raid on my house one Christmas night, they said, "Oh! we can't allow that kind of thing. If that fellow is on to him again we'll have to do something". About a week after there was great excitement and shooting outside the hospital. I was walking up and down the corridor when I saw a wheeled stretcher, and lying on it was my friend Mailiff. His pal, Ryan, was on another. He was brought in and propped up on a bed. I tried to keep as cool as I could. I helped to give round the tea to the patients, and had my own tea just opposite to where Mailiff was, two or three Tans came in with their rifles and I didn't know when Mailiff would point his finger at me, that would mean sudden death.

I told the sister about the detective and she put a screen round his bed, but she said it would be risky to stay in the ward. She changed me to another ward - I had to leave next day. I think the boys had other charges against the detective besides his attention to me.

Shortly after this my boss sent me to a job in Crosshaven and before I was finished there the Truce was on. I got into bad health and after coming back from

Crosshaven I had to get my knee opened a few times for blood poison. One day I had been to the hospital and was walking home when I met our Brigade doctor. He stood out from me with fright in his eyes (our Brigade doctor was Tim Donovan). "Is it you or your ghost, I see?. Why, man, you're dead but to close your eyes. I'm in charge of a ward in Shanakeela Hospital in Sunday's Well, and I want you to call up until I examine you and don't do too much walking round, you might drop dead".

I spent three months in hospital under our doctor, and when the Staters came to Cork the Republicans retired after burning the barracks, and the doctor had to go with them, with the result that I had to leave hospital to find when I went home that my wife and one of the children were just recovering from a bad fit of sickness. The doctor was attending them and wouldn't tell me. Someone advised me that I would never get back to normal health until I went home to my native air.

I decided to sell my furniture and go home. There were no trains at the time. I had to come by boat. We got on board on Thursday night and arrived in Limerick at 7 o'clock Sunday morning. First, we were held up by a fog, and next we were held up by the Staters who searched everyone on board.

A train was leaving for Galway in half an hour on Monday morning from the time I went to enquire and there was no other train for a week. I got my stuff

off the boat and by delaying the train for a few minutes managed to scramble on board. I took no part on either sides in the Civil War.

I hope that some future historian will find something in this statement that will be of assistance to him.

SIGNED Proinnsias Ó hEó...

DATE 19/10/'50
1950.

WITNESS Seán Brennan. Comdt.