

W.S. 496

Duplicate No 2

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21  
BURO STAIRÉ MILEATA 1913-21  
No. W.S. 496



BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 496

Witness  
Commandant Francis Davis,  
31 Main Street,  
Longford.

Identity  
Member of Irish Volunteers, Longford, 1914 - ;  
Member of I.R.B. Longford, 1919 - ;  
Quartermaster 1st Battalion Longford Brigade;  
" Flying Column North Longford.

- Subject
- (a) National activities, Co. Longford, 1914-1921;
  - (b) Military engagements " " " 1920-1921.
  - (c) Death of D.I. Kelleher, <sup>R.S.C.</sup> 31/10/1920;
  - (d) Death of Constable Goney, <sup>R.S.C.</sup> 1/11/1920.

Conditions, if any, stipulated by Witness

N11

File No. 3.1658

DUPLICATE

*Collected into Copy*  
*Marked Copy*  
*1-4-57*

Statement by Comdt. Francis Davis,

31, Main Street, Longford.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21  
BURO STAIRÉ MILEATA 1913-21  
NO. W.S. 496

I joined the Irish Volunteers in August 1914 at Ballinamuck, Co. Longford. This unit was about two hundred strong. It was drilled by ex-British Army men and of course two R.I.C. men were present at each parade as was usual everywhere.

After the Split in the Volunteers in 1915 nothing remained of the Volunteers and there was nothing doing again until 1917. In the summer of 1917 on the release of the prisoners from England, Collins, Frank Thornton and Austin Stack visited the area re-organising the Volunteers. A Company was started in Ballinamuck. This was between seventy and one hundred strong. John O'Neill was appointed Company Commander, John Sullivan 1st Lieutenant, Michael Hart 2nd Lieutenant, Tom Whitney Company Adjutant and Frank Davis (self) Company Quartermaster. We took no oath nor made no declaration on joining. We paid a penny per week I think subscription.

We had no arms except a '38 revolver and a few rounds. Parades were held twice per week per half-Company. These parades were held openly up to the middle of 1919. We did the usual training, route marches and field exercises, extended order drill and so forth. We did our instructions from British Army drill books. During the McGuinness election in May 1917 the Volunteers were very much engaged in protesting the polling stations and voters and getting the Sinn Féin supporters to record their votes. Things were of a routine nature until the 1918 elections when similar activities took place. The Volunteers were the back-bone of the election organisation and were heavily engaged in

protecting the Booths - getting the people to vote and maintaining order in the different areas.

We still had no arms. We used to get the loan of a Service Rifle for training purposes. This rifle was recognised as the personal property of the O/C Brigade (Thos. Reddington). At this time a Brigade was organised in the area of the county but there was still no Battalion organisation. Thos. Reddington was the Brigade O/C and Jim Flood the Brigade Adjutant; otherwise the Volunteers were still on a Company basis.

About the end of 1918 or early 1919 North Longford was organised into a Battalion area and was known as the North Longford Battalion. Seán MacEoin was appointed O/C, Seán Connolly Vice O/C, Seán Duffy Adjutant and I was Quartermaster. The Battalion area included Drumlish, Ballinamuck, Dromard, Colmille, Mullinaught, Edgeworthstown, Killoe and Ballinalee companies. There was also two outside units. These were known as "Outposts" and comprised small units not attached to other Companies. I cannot account for South Longford.

From the 1918 election period the Volunteers were doing the police work of the area. The R.I.C. were made ineffective as the Volunteers took over their work and influenced the people to go to them when they required assistance, and people with litigation, to bring their cases before the Arbitration Courts, which had now begun to function effectively.

In the Spring of 1919 the North Longford area was organised into Battalion areas; Ballinalee, Edgeworthstown, Granard, Mullinaught, Killoe, Colmille and the Finea and Street Rathowen outposts became the 1st Battalion under Seán MacEoin.

The other area, 5th Battalion, included Drumlish, Ballinamuck, Dromard and later on Moyne. J.J. Brady, of Ballinamuck, was appointed O/C, James Mulligan of Dromard Adjutant, Frank Whitney of Drumlish Quartermaster, (later when he was arrested Paddy Kiernan of the same district replaced him) and Charles Reynolds was Vice O/C. The 2nd Battalion comprised Longford town area - Olonguish along by the Shannon up to Tarmonbarry under the command of Michael M. Murphy. The 3rd Battalion under Michael Ryan (later replaced by Tom Gibbons who was later replaced by B. Carrahan) comprised the areas of Lanesboro, Ratholine, Ballymahon and Keenagh. The 4th Battalion under Leo Baxter, with Michael Ballesty - Adjutant comprised the Ardagh, Moydow and Legan areas. The Edgeworthstown Company (J. Kearney O/C) was included in 4th Battalion at this stage of re-organisation.

D  
J R A 1918.
 About the harvest time of 1918 Sinn Féin was getting stronger and increasing in strength every day. A meeting of the local Sinn Féin Club was held in Ballinamuck in the summer of 1919. This meeting was held in the local Court-house. I was not a member of Sinn Féin. This meeting was attended by the local Politicians and also by some members of the I.R.A. who were members of Sinn Féin also. (By this time the Volunteers had become the I.R.A. and had taken the Oath of Allegiance to the Irish Republic). The meeting was presided over by Mr. J.J. Brady, who was the local Company Commander. I was playing handball in the local ball alley while the meeting was going on. I noticed the local R.I.C. Sergeant and two Constables rushing towards the Court-house and I decided to follow and see what was going to happen.

I reached the Court-house immediately behind the R.I.C. They pushed the door in and I followed in their footsteps. Immediately everything became silent inside. The police

made their way in to the centre of the meeting. The Courthouse at this time was crowded. I made my way to a place which was higher, being somewhat elevated above the ordinary level of the floor. Nobody was speaking. The officials of the Club were on the Bench and the police in the body of the Court looking around them. There was complete silence for about fifteen minutes. I noticed there were weights and measures in a corner of the Court-house and making my way over to them I procured a two lb. weight unnoticed by anybody, and put it in my pocket. Coming back to the front I stood up on a form on which there were a number of people standing and I was now placed about five feet above the heads of the police. I waited until I got all the police looking in the same direction and then I singled out the Sergeant and let the weight fly at him. It hit him on the back of the head just below his cap band. He collapsed on to the floor. One of the police ran for the Sergeant's wife and family. The members of the meeting made for the door. The Sergeant, McNabola was his name, was carried unconscious to the barracks, leaving a trail of blood en route, and was invalided for about two months before resuming duty. This was the first enemy blood was far as I am aware that was spilled in the County.

Seán MacEoin was O/C 1st Battalion and Seán Connolly Vice Commandant. Later Connolly was appointed Vice O/C of the Brigade. From there he was transferred to G.H.Q. and appointed organiser in the Roscommon area. Seán MacEoin was then appointed Vice Commandant of the Brigade to replace Connolly and held the dual appointed of Vice O/C Brigade and O/C 1st Battalion. On the 1st Battalion staff Connolly was replaced by Seán Murphy of Granard. Seán Duffy was Battalion Adjutant and I was Battalion Quartermaster. The Company Commanders were; Ballinasee - Hugh Hourican, Granard - Seán Murphy (who on his transfer to Battalion staff

was replaced by Michael Mulligan), Mullinaughtor - Larry Kiernan, Killoo - M.F. Reynolds, Colmcille - Pat Finnegan, Finca section - Harkins, and Streets and Rathowen section - Jim Killene.

About April 1919 I joined the I.R.B. in MacEoin's house. I was sworn in by Martin Conlon now resident in Dublin. Seán MacEoin and Seán Connolly were present. A Centre was formed in the Ballinacree area with Seán MacEoin as Centre. About the harvest time of that year I was instructed to report to the Brigade O/C Tom Reddington. I reported to him and he administered an oath of secrecy to me not to discuss with anyone anything that took place between us at that meeting. He asked me if I were prepared to stand by my oath of the I.R.B. I said I was and that I was prepared to accept the responsibilities and risks attached. After a conversation in this strain he told me I had been selected for a dangerous job. I said I was prepared to undertake it. He then told me that G.H.Q. had decided that we would not succeed by clipping the "Branches" off the "Tree" but would have to remove the "Trunk". He then told me that Lord French was the person.

I told him I had intended taking a course in the Irish School of Motor Engineering in Dublin and that I proposed going there shortly as I had been in communication with the school. He asked me to postpone going until he would let me know that I could go. I agreed to this. Early in November he sent for me again and reminded me of our previous conversation. He told me I could now go to Dublin but when I got fixed up in "digs" I was to let him know my address, which I did. During my sojourn in Dublin I was never approached by any of our people there.

The School was visited on various occasions looking

for me, and one day when I returned to the school, Capt. Gray an ex-British Army Officer who was in charge sent for me to come to his office. He confronted me with being a Sinn Féiner. I denied that I was. He said he knew I was and that he had three C.I.D. men in looking for me. He said he told them he had no one in his school of that name and suggested that I should change my name to George Rhye, a student from Kerry who had passed out of his course. This I did and subsequently I answered to this name and the surprising thing about it was that no one seemed to notice the change. The C.I.D. visited the school on occasions and called the Roll and inspected us, but I passed muster at all times as Rhye. Johnny Keogh was an Instructor in this establishment at the time. (He was afterwards a Captain of Transport in Beggars Bush Barracks after the formation of the National Army).

At Xmas 1919 I returned home. I met Seán Connolly and found that he knew all about the visits of the Detectives to the School. He had intercepted messages from the local R.I.C. to the Detective Division in Dublin. I returned to Dublin again after Xmas but finally returned home in the third week of January 1920 and resumed my duties as Battalion Quartermaster.

On the 8th January an unsuccessful attempt was made to capture Drumlish R.I.C. Bks. This was principally a first Battalion job. Seán Connolly and Seán MacEoin were in charge. A cart-wheel box filled with gelignite was thrown through the 'Fenlight' but this failed to go off. I had no immediate part in the attack as I was in charge of a party of three on the road leading from Ballinaloe to the village. We had for armaments two revolvers and two shot guns.

Before Easter 1920 a large number of outlying R.I.C. barracks had been vacated by the R.I.C., the Garrisons being withdrawn to larger sections. On Easter Saturday night all these barracks were destroyed by fire.

From now on we were concerned with collecting arms and equipment around the area. Everywhere we knew there was arms was visited and an amount of stuff - principally shot guns and cartridges were collected. A large amount of material collected was of an obsolete type and of little value. A few useful revolvers of different types and calibre were collected. Seán Tracey, 1st Lieutenant of Ballinalee Company and I were raiding for arms in the Ballinalee district. We called on Archdeacon Johnston and told him our business. He said "certainly I have a double barrel shot gun and 18 or 19 cartridges" and went off to get them. He returned with them and said, "That is all I have and you are welcome to search the house". I thanked him and said we would not search. When we were moving away he called me back and told us that his son who was a Captain in the British Army was in the sitting-room and that he was aware that he had a revolver and ammunition in his possession. Just then the son appeared in the hall-way and approached us. He said he could not give up his gun without putting up some resistance as it would tell against him in the British Army - which he had selected as a career. I thanked him and told him he could keep it. His father and he were very thankful for this gesture on our part. This act was also approved by my superiors in the I.R.A.

In June 1920 an attempt was made to attack and capture Mostrim R.I.C. barracks. This was also a 1st Battalion job. We had approximately one hundred men mobilised for the operation. We were in assembly points around the area when a dispatch arrived informing us that the "Lancers"



stationed at Longford were advancing in force via Ardagh. When this information reached us the attack was called off and we dispersed. It was afterwards discovered that the information was not correct as the "Lancers" were only out on a night exercise and did not come near Edgeworthstown. Seán Connolly was in charge of the operations.

Early in June Connolly contacted me and told me he was going to attack Ballinamuck R.I.C. barracks. I told him that it was a regular fortress. It was a cut stone building surrounded by a high wall with round towers which were loopholed; one tower on the north-west corner and one on the south-east corner. On the west side there was a fifteen foot wall with a spiked railing on top. On the north side there was a ball-alley about twenty-five feet high. This stood back on the outside from the barrack wall which was about fifteen feet high with a passage between. On the south side the wall was about twenty feet high with approximately a four foot growth of ivy on top. Entrance to the barracks was guarded by an iron gate about twelve foot high. On the east of the yard there were outoffice buildings. The building or barracks proper was of double construction with a valley roof.

On the following two nights Connolly and I made a detailed reconnaissance of the building and I gave him all the information I had about it and the garrison. After the second visit he told me his plan of attack and that he would require a ladder that would reach to the top of the Ball Alley wall and asked if I could find a suitable ladder. I knew a house that had such a ladder and on the night of the attack I procured it. John Francis Cassidy owned the ladder. The plan was to throw home-made bombs - Cartwheel boxes filled with gelignite on to the valley of the roof, followed by bottles of petrol and more bombs to set the place ablaze.

This was an operation for the 1st Battalion assisted by the 5th Battalion. Elaborate precautions were taken to guard all roads leading to the area. We had about six service rifles for the job, the remainder were armed with shot guns and revolvers. The rifles were used to fire on the windows in opening the attack and so keep the police engaged, and this, with the noise created, would distract their attention from the operations on the roof.

When we arrived at Bandra assembly point a mile from the barrack we received information that Drumlish R.I.C. barracks - three miles distance from Ballinamuck, had been reinforced by military from Longford who were putting the place in a fortified state with sandbags and barbed wire. When Connolly got this information he detailed me to go to Drumlish and get all the information as to what was taking place there. He said he would not make a move until I returned. On reaching Drumlish I found that the information was correct and that they were putting down barbed wire all round the barracks. I also noticed four lorries on the west side of the barracks. The nights are very short at this time of the year and by the time I got back it was late so Connolly decided to attack immediately. The attack went off as planned - the bombs and petrol on the valley roof setting the place ablaze. There was very little rifle fire from either side after the opening phase. It was breaking day when the fire started. In the actual attack Connolly and MacKoin and others remained in the hall-alley to carry out the attack. Connolly ordered me to take six men to cover the Low road leading to Drumlish, to deal with any reinforcements that might come from that quarter. The police had fired Verrey lights when the attack started. There was a pre-arranged signal for withdrawal and when this was given we withdrew to a new assembly area - Lenehans of Gaigne. When the R.I.C.

found the roof on fire and in danger of falling on them they retired to one of the outoffices and remained there until we withdrew. There were no casualties on either side and no arms were captured, but we heard afterwards that some of the arms of the garrison were burned in the building. Between the local I.R.A. and the men of our Battalion I estimate that there was somewhere between eighty and one hundred men engaged on our side in this operation. The attack lasted only about 10 minutes. The R.I.C. vacated Ballinamuok next day and retired to Longford.

In August 1920 it was decided to raid Longford Military barracks Upper. This barracks was garrisoned by the "Lancers". A soldier named Jordy deserted from the "Lancers" and went to Ballinalee. He continued to remain on there and we were rather suspicious of him. He was courting a girl in Longford, whom he visited once or twice a week. He had promised on many occasions to get arms or do something for us, but never did. Finally Connolly and MacEoin challenged him and told him he would have to do something immediately. He said it would be easy to take the Guardroom in the Upper barracks and remove the arms from it. The following day he went to Longford and returned late that day and reported that he had made arrangements for the raid to take place. The plan was that he was to approach the gate and go through the rules of reporting back of absence. When he approached the gate he would have a conversation with the Sentry in order to keep the gate open. While this was going on the raiding party were to rush up and disarm the guard. All the rifles of the guard were locked on a chain in the Guard-room, the only armed man being the Sentry on duty. Soán MacEoin, Connolly, Duffy and Conway were to rush the gate.

The gate was about fifty yards from the road. A narrow road-way with high walls on either side led up to the gateway. This was a disadvantage as it meant that the attackers would be in a lane if fire was opened on them. About one hundred yards down the road Brady's car was waiting to take the rifles and stuff away. Everything went off as planned. Jordy kept the sentry engaged until the gate was rushed and then became a raider himself. The Guard put up no resistance. Eight rifles and some ammunition were secured and taken away by car. It was really a smash and grab raid. The raiding party got away safely.

Before the raid took place I was commissioned to get a motor-van belonging to Maguire of Coran for the purpose of taking away the rifles. While I was getting this van Seán MacEoin succeeded in getting Brady's car and he left word for me that I was to hold Maguire's van for the following night. The following night was the attack on Ballymahon R.I.C. Barracks.

I hid the van in a barn that evening. The following night I took the van out of its hiding place and brought it to MacEoin's forge where a few fellows were waiting with the eight rifles captured the previous night and other arms of a local nature. They loaded the arms into the van and accompanied by Seán MacEoin, Seamus Conway, Hugh Hourican, Mick Kenny and one or two others that I cannot remember now we proceeded towards Ballymahon. I was driving. We proceeded via Monto-Parroll, Carrick Boy to Barry. Connolly had gone in advance earlier in the day. About a mile and a half on the Ballymahon side of Barry we were hailed by Connolly who had a party at this point. Brady's car was there also, the driver being Paddy McKenna of Ballinacree. MacEoin paraded this latter party and between Connolly and himself, they selected men to handle the eight rifles and ammunition we had with us. MacEoin addressed this selected party telling them that the arms

he was handing over to them were in the possession of the British Army twenty four hours previously. He said he expected them to use them now in a manner befitting themselves as soldiers of Ireland.

At this time I was aware that big contingents of Volunteers were on duty all over the district, scouting and preparing trees for blocking the roads. We moved on to the attack after this in groups allotted to attack the different points. We drove without lights from this point and when nearing the town the transport was halted and it became my duty to have everything in readiness for a get away. I decided to take the two cars to the Catholic Church yard and park them there. While the attack was in progress I left McKenna in charge and went down the street towards the barracks and joined a party who were holding a position oblique to the barracks. At this time Connolly had evacuated the residents from two houses adjoining the barracks. From the second house Connolly hacked his way into the house adjoining the barracks. He had the assistance of a small party for this job. From this house he broke a hole on to the roof and from this roof he broke a hole in the barrack roof. While this was going on rifle fire was kept up on the barracks to keep the garrison distracted. A few rifle grenades were also fired. Through the hole in the barrack roof Connolly threw bombs made up in lib tins containing sulphur and gelignite, fused and detonated.

Immediately this happened the garrison shouted that they were surrendering. I dashed back for the transport. When I came down with the cars the R.I.C. were lined up against the Protestant church wall. Some were in their barefeet. I think the garrison numbered about ten men and two sergeants. We cleared the barracks of everything in the nature of arms; there were ten rifles and 5 or 6 hundred rounds of ammunition - four revolvers with 12 rounds each and an ordinary telephone,

one dozen egg bombs, a Verrey light pistol, half a dozen cartridges and a steel chest protector.

All the material was brought to Willie Reillys' of Golsha-Bunlahy and stored away there. After having some refreshments at Reillys' MacEoin, Genway and I proceeded to Father Mantfords' at Ballinalee. We left MacEoin there and Genway and I proceeded to Maguires' of Soran and returned the van. It was now about 6 a.m. in the morning. Next evening I proceeded to Reillys' and checked over our captured arms and with the assistance of Paddy Finnegan - O/C Colmille Company, I broke it up into small lots and had it placed in various safe points in the area. This gave us a supply of about twenty four rifles in the Brigade now and a fair supply of ammunition. Elaborate precautions had been taken to block all roads leading into the area to prevent reinforcements getting to the assistance of the R.I.C. We were very nearly blocked in ourselves. There were no casualties on either side. It was late the following evening before reinforcements got into the town & the blocking was so good. As all roads were blocked they could not understand how or in what direction we got away. The roads left open for our retreat were blocked after we left the area. Before leaving we trotted the R.I.C. across the Inny river to a house on the left corner of the road towards Athlone and locked them in there.

In September 1920 Arva barracks was attacked. It had been previously decided that in conjunction the Longford and South Leitrim Brigades would attack Arva, Ballinamore, Mohill and Rosky barracks on a particular night. It was decided, however, owing to intelligence brought us by Jim Ryans, Vice O/C South Leitrim Brigade, that the enemy seemed to be anticipating an attack. He stated that they were very active and were making preparations. It was therefore decided to go ahead with the attack on Arva barracks only. This was a Battalion operation

assisted by some men from the South Leitrim Brigade. Seán Connolly was in charge. The barracks was an ordinary semi-detached building and had steel shutters on the windows. This was the only fortifying that had been done to date.

In this case I was again in charge of Transport. I had commandeered a car belonging to Sydney Leudersdale, South Leitrim, and Pat McKenna was driving J.J. Brady's car which we again had pressed into use. The 1st Battalion contingent approached Arva from Ballinalee, Aughnaccliffe and the South Leitrim men approached from Carrigallen. The scheme of attack was similar to that of Ballymahon. Entrance was made to an adjoining Drapery shop owned by Elliotts, the residents being evacuated. In the meantime groups of riflemen had taken up position surrounding the barracks. Seamus Conway who had experience of throwing G.H.Q. percussion bombs and who was armed with a number of bombs took up a position at the rear of the barracks. He threw some bombs through the window but only one exploded. For about fifteen minutes there was rifle fire from within and from the attackers. While this was going on Connolly and his party had broken a hole through the wall which he thought was into the barracks, but in actual fact was into the upper portion of a high gateway or passage which went under the barracks. Connolly did not know this however. He shoved a heavy bomb of the cart box type through this and there was a terrific explosion, but only in the passage-way.

Immediately the explosion occurred the Sergeant rushed out of the barracks and across the street to another gateway shouting that he was surrendering. After this some shots were exchanged, while the Sergeant kept calling on his men to surrender, which they did. They came out with their hands up. When the police surrendered

Connolly handed them over to me as prisoners. I marched them into Elliotts' and put them in the sitting-room. There were eleven prisoners as far as I can remember but certainly not more than twelve. While the barracks was cleared of the arms and ammunition, I noticed one prisoner rolling on the floor and asking for the officer in charge and crying out that he was going to be shot. This commotion attracted my attention and I recognised him as a Constable who had been stationed in Ballinacuck and that he knew me. I called on one of our men and sent him for Connolly. Connolly came and asked me what was wrong - I reminded him that this Constable was Brennan who had been stationed in Ballinacuck. I also reminded Connolly of the occasion when this man and Constable Sheridan had arrested me and I had escaped from them.

At the time of the latter incident I was coming from a drill parade one night. I was a Lieutenant in the Ballinacuck Company at the time. I was accompanied by five or six Volunteers and we were singing that song "It's a wrong thing to fight for England" when the police jumped from a dark corner at the Post Office and grabbed me by each arm and led me in the direction of the barracks. The other Volunteers scattered and I walked quietly for about fifty yards. I stopped suddenly and placing my legs wide apart threw the two police on to the ground, jumped across them and before they succeeded in getting up I got to a laneway and escaped. Constable Brennan had boasted publicly that he would shoot me on sight when he caught up with me again. This was what was wrong with him now, he thought I was going to shoot him. Connolly pulled him off the floor and asked him what was wrong with him. He told Connolly he recognised one of us who would shoot him before they left. Connolly prepared a statement on behalf of this fellow to the effect that he would not recognise anyone he saw that night and that he would never again appear in that district or enter the County Longford.



Connolly then sent for MacFoin and procured a bible or a Prayer-book, put the policeman on his knees and swore him to the effect of the prepared statement and had him sign it. He did this in the presence of the other prisoners and assured Brennan that if he abided by his oath we would never touch him.

Connolly then replaced me by someone else to take charge of the prisoners and ordered me to look after the transport and to make ready to get away at once. Everything in the nature of arms had been removed from the barracks to the street at this time. We secured ten rifles, sixteen or seventeen hundred rounds of .303 ammunition, one Colt Automatic with three clips of seven rounds each and a box of ammunition - about fifty rounds of the same type. There were also some egg bombs. This was all the arms that I know of. There were no casualties on either side.

Again all roads leading to Arva were elaborately blocked by fallen trees and so forth. Amongst the "Swag" taken from the barracks were two very large heavy locked boxes which we thought contained bombs. The boxes were placed in my car and it took about twenty men to push the car over a hill on the way back to Ballinalee through Aghnaccliffe. The stuff was deposited in McHorney's of Gelcha. As far as I can remember that was the name of the house. The following evening I checked the stuff and found on opening the two big black boxes that they contained the weights and measures for the Cavan County Council. The joke was on us but we enjoyed it, though we were disappointed at not finding bombs. Assisted by Paddy Finnegan O/c Colmille Company and Tommy Early from Ballinalee we had the captured material broken into small lots and distributed in safe spots throughout the area. If there were any bicycles in the barracks they must have been taken by individual Volunteers. I did not handle any of them.

On the 6th October 1920 a Sinn Féin Court was held in Kilscrewley Mills. James Victory T.D. (deceased) was president of the Court. Apparently some information was received that the British forces intended raiding the Court and the Killce Company was mobilised for protection purposes. They took up positions on the main Longford, Ballinalee, Granard Road. The ex-British Army Chaplain (Father Clancy) passed through the area and apparently took stock of what was happening. He met the British Forces and had a conversation with them. They diverted from their route and proceeded by Innybegs side of the ambush area into Ballinalee. On that day I was in Ballinalee. I was chief officer of the Court. I suddenly became aware that two lorries of British military had arrived in the town. It was market-day in Ballinalee. I was carrying two bombs on me at the time. Taken by surprise I rushed upstairs to an end window in Reynold's house. On my way up the stairs I drew the pins and had a bomb in each hand. There was a small window facing south on to the Cross-roads and underneath there were shoppers and people attending the market intermixed with the British forces. I could not throw the bombs without killing and wounding civilians as well as the enemy. I waited for a considerable time but could not get a chance to throw them. I had discarded the pins when I pulled them from the bombs and even if I had them I could not return them as I had an armed bomb in each hand. I placed my hands, still holding the bombs, in my pockets and made my way down to the back yard. After some time I saw Mrs. Early and I told her to get her son - Tommy Early - to go and collect two pins for me. Tommy got some pins and we made the bombs safe. In all I was holding the bomb levers down for half an hour and the muscles of my arms and hands were nearly paralysed with fatigue and pain.

National Archives Act, 1986, Regulations, 1988

**ABSTRACTION OF PART(S) PURSUANT TO REGULATION 8**

**Form to be completed and inserted in the original record  
in place of each part abstracted**

- (i) Reference number of the separate cover under which the abstracted part has been filed: WS496/A
- (ii) How many documents have been abstracted: 1 p.
- (iii) The date of each such document: 30 March 1951
- (iv) The description of each document:  
WS496 Lord Penn's Deeds p 18.  
details of a general nature

(Where appropriate, a composite description may be entered in respect of two or more related documents).

- (v) Reason(s) why the part has been abstracted for retention:  
**(c) Would or might cause distress or danger to living persons on the ground that they contain information about individuals, or would or might be likely to lead to an action for damages for defamation.**

( These will be the reasons given on the certificate under Section 8(4).)

J. Moloney  
Name: (J. Moloney.)

Grade: Col.

Department/Office/Court:

Date: 7 March 2003.

When I had the bombs made safe I proceeded to Kilscrewley to the Court and warned James Victory that the enemy forces were in the area. As a result of my information scouts were posted all round the area of the Court. The Court proceeded and finished its work but the enemy did not interfere. There was no action that day.

The North Longford Column could be said to be officially existing as from the 1st November 1920 and to have taken to the country completely. The Column consisted of about 21 men. The majority were armed with rifles but some had only revolvers. Sean MacKeon was in charge of the column and was also O/C of the Battalion and Vice O/C of the Brigade. I was Column Quarter-master as well as Battalion Quartermaster. There was no hard and fast organisation inside the Column, organisation being made as the situation required. We lived on the country, being billeted and fed by the people. I had a certain amount of money with which I bought boots, clothes and blankets and so forth for the men.

On Hallow Eve 1920 District Inspector Kelleher was shot in Kiernan's Hotel in Granard and the following day Constable Cooney was shot at Clohbroney. Cooney was an R.I.C. man and was now a noted detective who was wont to go around dressed in womens' clothes and other forms of disguise I.R.A. hunting. He had been stationed at one time in Ballinalee. Michael Collins got to know about Cooney and ordered that he be shot. The Brigade C/C mentioned in advance to me that instructions to this effect had been sent to our Battalion. The night before he was shot several attempts had been made to locate him - but without success.

On the 1st November I was informed that Cooney had gone out the bye road to France (a townland in Longford).

He was dressed in civilian attire and riding a bicycle. He was carrying a roll of paper in a collar box at the time. I was afterwards informed

that this contained the names of a number of the important men in the movement in Longford and the surrounding counties. His notes were in code; they were sent to C.H.Q. and deciphered there.

Arising from these shootings it was feared that the enemy would take reprisals by burning Ballinalee and Granard and arrangements were made to meet such a situation. The Granard Volunteers were under Vice O/C of the Battalion - Seán Murphy and they were to protect Granard. The remainder of the Battalion, such as had sufficient arms, remained to protect Ballinalee. Arms were divided between Granard and Ballinalee. Murphy belonged to the Granard area and MacKoin was likewise a native of Ballinalee. Small detachments consisting generally of about 3 to 5 men were occupying positions on the roads leading to Ballinalee. MacKoin with four or five others took up a position in the centre of the village. On the Longford side the Killoe Company was mobilised - at Doherty's Cross-roads. This was for protective purposes to stop anything heavy coming from Longford. MacKoin's party consisted of Seamus Conway, Tommy Early, Seán Sexton and Jimmie MacKoin - Seán's brother. On the Edgeworthstown road at the Protestant school, Hugh Hourican, the local Company O/C, was in charge of a small party. Seán Duffy was in charge of another small party at the school-house on the Granard road. I was in charge of another party on the Ballinamuck side. This consisted of two others - Paddy Callaghan (deceased) and John McNally who is now a Sergeant in the Garda Síochána. We were at Early's house about 100 yards from the centre of the village or road junction.

The plan was based on the idea that the British would come in from Granard and they would be hemmed in on all sides. No matter what way they turned they would have a party of our men at their head and another at their rear. All our

information was to the effect that the British were proceeding via Edgeworthstown to Granard and this was confirmed at an early hour when they passed through there on their way to Granard. It was a very dark and wet night, there being a regular downpour of rain.

At about 1.a.m. the British drove into Ballinalee on eleven lorries. At the road junction they turned in our direction and halted to dismount in front of our position. The last lorry halted for a while at Duffy's position and then followed the others. Our instructions from the Battalion O/C was that no action was to be started until fire was opened from his position. Callaghan and McNally pulled me down from the shed and told me that the enemy were all around us. They lifted me down quietly. When the enemy dismounted in front of our position a number of them crossed a wall about three feet high into a screen of plantation where I had McNally and Callaghan posted. They (McNally and Callaghan) crept down to where I was and informed me of the position which meant we could do nothing in view of the orders issued by the Battalion O/C without muddling up the whole affair. We had to fall back to a hollow, and when we got there as there was nothing happening we decided to get around and across the river to the Ballinamuck road in order to take up a position on the other side of the river - that is the Camolin river. By the time we succeeded in getting across the river we met Jimmy MacEoin on the way to his home to inform his mother that they were alright. We could hear the firing previous to this but it lasted only a few minutes. We returned to Ballinalee. The other outposts were coming in by now. We remained in the village until daylight and were supplied with dry socks and so forth at Heraty's. We found one revolver with the butt fractured as if hit by a bullet and about a hundred rounds of .303. There was nothing else collected that I am aware of and I was Quartermaster. If anything else was found it

became private booty.

After this Ballinalise was occupied night and day for about fourteen days by about 20 to 30 Volunteers. This was augmented at night time by other Volunteers and Intelligence personnel and message carriers and such like. I had to cater for all this party. We occupied the Post Office and we had telephone communication with Doherty's Cross-roads on the Longford side. One day a party of military arrived in the village. They had come to collect Constable Cooney's belongings as far as I know. They left again without being interfered with. Contact was made I understand between MacKoin and the Officer in charge of the British forces. Mick Gormley acted as Liaison Officer between the two. The British had come in by Doherty's Cross and when leaving they left via the Edgeworthstown Road. When leaving they stood up in lorries leaving their arms on the floor of the lorry. On another occasion a party of Lancers (mounted) arrived in the village. I was at Heraty's at the time. I got across the river and contacted Sean Connolly who was in a house on the Ballinacuck side. I also contacted Sean Sexton at his home. By the time we got back to the village the Lancers had left. They apparently had sensed that they had walked into possible trouble and departed quickly. It never had been the intention to attack the military unless they attacked us or started raiding or looting.

Early in December a report was received that two lorries of enemy were travelling daily from Longford to Granard via Edgeworthstown. MacKoin took the column from Ballinalise and went into an ambush position at Ardnagullion Bog. Two mines were laid in the road. It was snowing heavily and we had to dig trenches in the bog and make shelters and cover from the weather. We remained there for three days but no patrols came that way. On the night of the third day we saw

the glow of fires in the sky in the direction of Ballinalee. Later a message arrived to say that Ballinalee was being burned. A combined force of British had come into Ballinalee and burned the place. Heraty's, Hannigan's and Macken's were burned. They had occupied Pat Farrell's and established a strong force there.

On receiving this information we dug up our mines and moved immediately at a fast pace in the direction of Ballinalee. We billeted that night in Kernan's of Drumeel and the surrounding townlands. One of the Cumann na mBan girls - Cissie Kenny, now Mrs. Eivers, went into Ballinalee and made an excellent survey of conditions there and reported back to us. The Tans, she reported were putting up barbed wire and generally reinforcing Farrell's house.

I had a large land mine at Coat Farrell and we had this conveyed to Kiernan's. We arranged to attack Farrell's the following night. The plan was to blow out the gable end of the house by exploding the mine against it. MacEoin and Duffy commanded the attack from the south or gable end. Barney Kilbride who was an Engineer was to explode the mine. I commanded the frontal attack from the east side and had twelve men under me including Peadar Conlon, The "Bun" McDowell, Fitzpatrick and Kieran from Mullinaught and Mick Kenny of Ballinalee. My party got into position first - well before the other party. We found the Tans loitering around the front of the house but as our orders were that we were not to get into action until the mine exploded we could do nothing but lie low. We were actually at the back of the wall on the opposite side of the road and the Tans were on the other side. Duffy carried the mine in his arms and placed it on the window sill in the gable end and Kilbride fired it.



The mine went up and fire was opened immediately by both sides. We had the windows well covered from our position. The mine blew a big hole in the gable end. Straw and petrol were used to set the place on fire. Again and again the place was set alight - at least five to seven times, but each time the garrison succeeded in putting out the fire. Seamus Conway was on the north side with a patrol on a sort of protective mission.

The attack was fast and furious. It commenced at 1 a.m. and continued until after seven a.m. the same morning when we withdrew. This was the first time I saw "Tracer" ammunition used by the enemy. It was something quite new to us. My party was about an hour late in withdrawing. We were depending on pre-arranged whistle blasts for signals. The enemy got wise to this and started blowing whistles and confused us. I noticed that fire from our other positions had ceased and I withdrew my party. The others had withdrawn an hour previously.

When we had withdrawn about a quarter mile we were fired on from the rear. I afterwards ascertained that this was a party of local Protestants who had turned out to help the Tans. During the attack one of the Garrison played the piano several times. This appeared to give the enemy great heart and I believe the garrison would have surrendered only for this. We had no casualties or losses. I do not know what the enemy casualties were but it was rumoured that they had thirty-seven. Michael Collins told me that was correct some time after the Truce.

After the attack the column was billeted on the general area of Currygranne, Drumeel.. We had returned to Kiernan's of Drumeel and a number of us were resting there. Someone came and reported that Connolly's house, which was about a quarter of a mile away, was being burned by the Tans. MacKoin

Hugh Hourican, Barney Kilbride, "Bun" McDowell and myself ran to Connolly's. We found the whole place on fire and completely destroyed. It was the garrison from Ballinalee who had been responsible for this burning. We immediately made in the direction of Ballinalee. It was a frosty evening but still daylight. On arrival in Ballinalee we found them on the street. We opened fire on them and a number of them fell. The remainder made indoors quickly. We had a hurried conference after which McBride, McDowell and myself went to Kilshrewley to protect MacEoin's house. MacEoin went in the direction of Sean Duffy's house.

We spent three days on this mission. On two or three occasions the enemy came out towards Kilshrewley. Each time they came we attacked them, and each time they retired. I do not know if they suffered casualties. Nothing was captured on either side. The weather had been very bad and after the three days the column broke up until after Xmas. MacEoin and part of the column went to Bunleahy. I went back to the Ballinamuck area. The enemy now occupied Fr. Muntford's house and the schools. Reynold's house in Ballinalee was also occupied and fortified. They evacuated Farrell's as it was no longer tenable. A few of the column went into the village and fired a few shots at the enemy, then withdrew. The enemy got confused and attacked one another in the different posts, keeping the firing up for some hours. This was only harassing tactics on our part. On this night I was in Granard on a similar mission.

A few days after Xmas 1920 Connolly and Bill Doherty commandeered a car belonging to Taylor's of Corboy. When they had finished with the car it devolved on me to leave the car back with its owners. I was driving and MacEoin and Jim Sheeran were passengers. We were armed. On the way to Corboy as we crossed the Ballinalee, Longford road we ran head

on into a patrol of enemy and they opened fire on us. This was a patrol from the Ballinalee Garrison. We got past them and Shocran used his rifle effectively from the back of the car. None of us were hit and I do not know if any of the enemy were. We got through alright and left the car back. The Taylors, who were Protestants, gave us a meal and entertained us handsomely.

Early in January the column re-assembled. We had several skirmishes with patrols from now on. The pressure from the enemy was very severe now in the North county area. In order to prove to the enemy that there was more than our column in the fight, and to ease the pressure and draw the enemy away from north Longford, we moved the column from Bunleahy through Carrick-Boy to Moydow. We had information that enemy lorries were in the habit of travelling from Longford to Athlone daily at this time. The first night we halted near Ardagh at Skelly's of Braine. The next evening we moved to Connolly's of Lieglassick and spent a day there. MacEoin and Barney Carraghan, who was O/C of this Battalion area, made a reconnaissance during the day. A conference was held that night at which it was decided to have an ambush at Terlicken.

At this time we had received a number of electric detonators from our G.H.Q. It was decided to place two mines in the road which had an upward incline. The mines were of the concrete type. Sean and Tom Carraghan had been attached to the engineering corps of the B.A. and it was their job to charge the mines for us. A bundle of straw was placed behind the hedge corresponding with the mines in each side. This was a guide to the person who was to explode the mines. We occupied the position during the night. MacEoin, Farrelly ("Nap") and I occupied a position in the second cottage on the left leading up the hill. It was my job to explode the mines, the leads from which came

into the house. MacEoin took position at a window at the top of the stairway which gave him observation in the direction of Longford. He was to warn me of the approach of the enemy. Farrelly who was commonly known as "Nap" was doing the cooking.

After a long period of waiting MacEoin came down and changed places with me. He manned the exploder and I took position as "Look out man". I was only a short time at my post when I observed the enemy approaching. They came in two lorry loads of a mixed force about 200 to 300 yards apart and were preceded by a motor cycle and side car at the same interval. I warned MacEoin. The mines, however, failed to explode and MacEoin called me down. I rushed down and tried to make them explode - but without result. The detonators used were "dud ones" which had been pawned off by some individual on our G.H.Q., I believe, at the instance of the British Government. The Carraghan brothers were placed under arrest by MacEoin as a result of the failure but before they were tried a despatch arrived from G.H.Q. warning us not to use the detonators as they had found out that they were "duds", and ordering us to destroy them. The Carraghans were released without any slur on their characters.

When MacEoin saw that the mines were a failure he ran out of the house and fired a few shots after the enemy. They immediately halted and got into action. Our men who were in position also came into action now. The instructions were that no action was to take place until the mines exploded and this accounts for our men not engaging the enemy earlier. Our post towards Ballymahon were resting, awaiting the detonation of the mines. As a result of the failure of the mines this position was over-run by the enemy, and our men there had to get out immediately and lost two rifles in doing so. MacEoin and Farrelly had left the cottage and I was trying to disconnect the exploder. I could not get it

disconnected as the terminals had been tightened with a pliers. The cottage was being plastered with rifle fire at this time from the hill over me. I got out and replied to the fire as best I could. After a few minutes I heard a noise behind me. It was "Nap" Farrelly bursting his way through a hedge of briars. He had discovered that I was missing and had come back to my assistance. When he got beside me he said "Come on". We dashed out on to the road and lying down we opened up on them. Their return fire fell short of us by about ten yards, spraying us with gravel from the road. We were able despite this to drive the enemy off the road. When we silenced the enemy on the road we got back to a ditch south of the cottage where there were a number of the column including MacEoin.

There was a number of cattle in the field in front of us and they kept running up and down between us and the enemy - apparently attracted by the noise of the firing. MacEoin ordered the column to withdraw and to get back to Lisglassick. The men withdrew, MacEoin remaining and Conway and I remaining with him to cover their withdrawal. I wanted to return to the cottage to get the exploder but MacEoin forbade me to do so. Then to our surprise (Conway and I) he stood up and walked across to the cottage and after a brief interval he returned carrying the exploder and trailing an amount of wire with it. He apparently just pulled it until he snapped the leads. When he joined us I again wanted to return to the cottage as I had left my coat there, in the pocket of which there was a Mills bomb. He would not let me do so. We were the last three to leave the ambush position. The other portion of the column had now joined the main body.

We had one man, Kelleher, slightly wounded. A bullet grazed his scalp. I do not know if the enemy had any casualties. The column returned to Lisglassick House where we collected some of our stuff and then proceeded by

Carrick-Edmond, Carrick-Boy, Edgeworthstown and eventually billeted north east of Clonbroney Church. We were back in North Longford again.

The ambush at Terlicken had also another object in view. It was intended at the time to get an active column going in South Longford. Certain men had been earmarked so to speak for this purpose, including the three brothers Garahans and Hussey and others. This party were present at Terlicken. They were in a position where they could view the action but were not taking part in it. In other words it was to have been a demonstration for them as to how an "ambush" should be carried out. I am afraid we made a bad impression on them.

Shortly after Xmas 1920 the Brigade O/C contacted me, and after referring to my selection for the attack on Lord French asked me if I was game for another serious job in which I would probably lose my life. He told me that a number of us had been selected to proceed to London to blow up the houses of Parliament. I said I was game to go and he told me to await further instructions. On New Year's Eve of that year MacEoin, James Killane and I were together. MacEoin mentioned the incident about going to London to me and tried to persuade me not to go on such a mission, saying that we were all wanted at home. I said I had given my word and that I would go. I heard nothing further of the subject until after the "Truce". Some time after the "Truce" had come into effect I had an interview with Cathal Brugha at his office in the Gresham Hotel. He said "You are Frank Davis, I am Cathal Brugha. Your Brigadier interviewed you about a job in London". I said yes and he then asked me if I was still good or game for this job. I said I was. He then took particulars of where he could get in contact with me. He said there was no doubt but that we would "go up" in this.

On the 5th January, 1922 I was appointed Quartermaster to the Northern Council. This was a body set up to carry on the war in the "Six Counties". Joe McKelvey was Adjutant of this Council and one day he mentioned to me about the London affair and gave me to understand he was also one of the party who had been selected. Apparently it was intended that should the "Truce" collapse the London job would be gone on with.

In January 1921 the column was ~~was~~ scattered over a wide area between Ballinalee and Granard. I was near Granard with Duffy and half of the column. We found that the 'Tans were staying indoors night and day and it was impossible to get a shot at them. I decided to come back to Ballinalee and consult MacEoin as to what we were to do. I had contacted some of the column about five or six hundred yards from where MacEoin was resting. I was discussing with them what was happening in their section when I heard shots ring out and an explosion of what was apparently a bomb or grenade. We immediately dashed towards Martin's cottage where we knew MacEoin was. We met MacEoin running from the cottage. He was shouting back at the enemy. About twelve or fifteen of us closed up to about twenty yards from the enemy. The Tans had the women - Mrs. MacEoin, her three daughters, young Peter MacEoin, a mere boy at the time, and the two Martin sisters, owners of the cottage, taken as prisoners and mixed up with them. The result was that we could not open fire lest we should injure the women and the Tans did not fire either. After a short time they marched off with the women mixed up amongst them and brought them as prisoners to Ballinalee. The MacEoin women had dashed up to Martin's when the shooting started. Sheeran and Cornley who were also in the cottage got out at the back and did not contact the column for a week afterwards.

After this incident the column got together again and carried out harassing tactics against the enemy. We did not gain anything or make any captures. I was now sent by Connolly to proceed to the south Leitrim Brigade on an observation mission. I was instructed that I was not to take part in any activities but to observe what was going on there and report back to him. He was in Roscommon at this time. The Vice Brigade O/C South Leitrim knew I was coming and he met me and afforded me every facility and help in my work.

Sometime afterwards a meeting of the Staffs of the Longford and South Leitrim Brigades, at which Connolly was present, was held at Reilly's, Drumlish. As a result of what was discussed there I was aware that the North Longford column had planned to stage an ambush on the Ballinalee-Longford road. I was not in good form at the time and I was instructed to have a rest. A few days after this meeting I heard an explosion some distance from where I was staying. This was the Glonfin ambush. I immediately made in the direction of the explosion and after travelling about six miles I met the column. They had shaken off the enemy at this time.

I now rejoined the column and we billeted that night north of Bunlahy village. Next morning we were alerted with the news that Smiths of Aughtnaclyffe had been burned down and that that part of the county was infested with enemy. They had actually surrounded us in a large circle but we did not know this. This was a day of great activity but no fighting took place. On occasions that day we had opportunities to fight but the force against us was too strong and on other occasions they were too far away from us. The enemy had a very big force of all types in this operation. We remained in that area all during that day. The enemy withdrew towards nightfall. After this North Longford area



became a hot bed of enemy activity and the pressure from them was very severe.

MacEoin now decided to go to Dublin to see Collins and I as Quartermaster holding the money gave him £5 for expenses and travelling. It was on his return from this mission that he was arrested at Mullingar. J.J. Brady was on the same train and he brought word to the column. He did not know that MacEoin was wounded. This was a bad blow for the column. After a conference it was decided that I should go to Leitrim and contact Connolly and get him back to take charge of the column. Seamus Conway decided he would go to Mullingar and see what could be done to rescue MacEoin.

I travelled to Leitrim by bicycle. I did not actually contact Connolly. I did not know where Connolly was and there was terrific enemy activity in that area as there had been an ambush at Sheemore just as I got there. I got in touch with a Miss Esther Tiernan N.T. of Drureilly, Ballinamore whom I knew. She was able to contact Connolly and give him a note from me. I then returned to Longford and joined the column again. A few days later I received a dispatch from Connolly. John Joe McGarry who was O/C 2nd Battalion Leitrim Brigade brought me this dispatch personally. It instructed me that I was to keep the column in the Columcille area until he arrived and that we were to do nothing until he did arrive. Unfortunately Connolly was killed at Selton Hill between Mohill and Ballinamore just before he was about to start to rejoin us. This was our second bad blow inside a very short period and the morale of the column had fallen and a number became disheartened but all carried on. After Connolly's death Mrs. Bernard Brady N.T. Bunlahy tried to persuade me to give her the despatch referred to but I was reluctant to part with it and as a compromise she tore it in two parts keeping the portion

bearing his signature. (She is still alive).

For some weeks we were without a leader and then Reddington, the Brigade O/C, appointed Conway as O/C of the column and M.F. Reynolds as O/C of the Battalion. Paddy Callaghan became Vice O/C, Brigade. Conway's appointment was popular but Reynolds was not received with favour. The column was now pretty short in ammunition and other supplies. It took us some weeks to get things straightened out again as there was serious unrest over Reynolds' appointment and some of the men became inactive.

When we did get going again harassing tactics were the only things we were capable of. We moved into Arva on three successive occasions, surrounded the town with the assistance of the local I.R.A. unit and fired on the Tans. I could not say what casualties we inflicted on the enemy. We had no casualties and we only succeeded in expending some further ammunition which was now in short supply and beginning to give us worry. During this period the column remained in billets around the parish of Columcille.

Some short time previous to Good Friday 1921 a small consignment of .303 ammunition was sent to us by train from G.R.Q. This was consigned to the Co-operative Stores Columcille. I knew that this was on its way and had the local Company Commander, Capt. Paddy Finnegan, also a member of the column, warned to take delivery. Finnegan was told to inform a carter by the name of Doyle to be on the look out for this and for he, Finnegan, to take delivery of it immediately it arrived. Doyle was a reliable member of the I.R.A.

The ammunition arrived in a paint container and on opening it I found that the ammunition was soiled by the remains of the wet paint. The total amount was between two and three hundred rounds. On seeing the condition

of the stuff I discussed the matter with the Column O/C Seumas Conway and we decided upon calling the column together at MacEoin's barn at "Molly". The idea was to collect a certain number of rounds from each member according to what he was carrying and issue him with a compliment to give him a fair supply. In the re-issue the soiled rounds would be given out and each man would be responsible for cleaning the amount he received.

While the collection and distribution was taking place I felt my back being touched on two or three occasions by the muzzle of a rifle and I could hear a bolt being manipulated. I was sitting on a stool with an oats riddle or sieve in front of me to hold the ammunition being handed in. I had the soiled ammunition on an old sack beside me. The noise and the touch of the rifle in the back annoyed me. I turned round on the stool and found that a man named Keenan was unloading his rifle by the bolt action with the rifle pointing at my back. I told him to remove his magazine and unload it as the other members of the column had done. He stopped using the bolt and took out his magazine, unloaded it, picked up the rifle from between his feet and pressed the trigger. A shot ran out! He had left a round in the breech and the rifle at full "cock". This round hit Mickey Gormley, who was standing over in the corner of the barn, in the knee. It blew the knee bone up through the thigh, leaving a wound you could put a large bottle into and splattering pieces of his flesh against a farm harrow in the corner.

The members of the column rushed out of the barn and took up positions to protect the place on account of the noise created by the shot. Peadar Conlon was last leaving and I called him back. We cut the leg off Gormley's

trousers. I tried to close the wound and sent Conlon to the nearby farm-house for a sheet. When he brought the sheet he tore it into strips and we proceeded to bind up the wound as best we could, each of us pulling on the bandages as we passed them hand over hand to try and stop the bleeding. All this time the blood was still gushing through. When we had the material of the sheet, in the form of bandages, exhausted the flow of blood ceased. Conlon procured a mattress in the house and collected a few members of the column. We placed Gormley on the mattress and brought him into the house and put him before the kitchen fire. In the meantime someone had gone for Dr. Keenan who lived about three miles away. I now had the ammunition which had been left on my hands secured and ready for removal. With the help of some others I had the barn cleared up as best we could to leave no trace of the accident.

When the Doctor arrived and examined Gormley he pronounced he could do nothing more for him than what had been done and so departed. We decided we would have to move Gormley out of that area and we procured a horse drawn van and conveyed him to Sheridan's of Corrinagh that morning. The Brigadier arrived the next day having got information about the accident and arranged for a nurse from Longford, I think Miss Robinson was her name, to attend to him. Afterwards he got a nurse from Dublin also. About a week afterwards I called to see how he was getting on. As I went in the door of the house I got a horrible smell of a heavy rotten nature. I knew by this that Gormley's leg had gone gangrenous. I had a few words with Gormley, who appeared to be very low. When I was leaving I called the nurse outside and asked her if there was anything wrong and referred to the bad smell. She replied that, there certainly was, and that if the boy was left there much longer he would be dead.

I got in touch with the Brigadier that evening at Charles Reynolds' place and reported to him on Gormley's condition and what the nurse had told me. He said he would have to get him to Dublin and asked me would I remain in the area until he returned. I said I would. The second day afterwards Reddington returned and told me he had made arrangements to get Gormley through to Dublin. He said it was our job to get transport to convey him to Oldcastle, Co. Meath and that Seán Boylan would meet us there and have him conveyed to Dublin.

While we were having this conversation J.J. Brady O/C of the local 5th Battalion turned up. At this time motor cars were limited to a certain mileage. We discussed how we could procure a car and struck on a plan. Brady and I would proceed to Drumlisk about four miles away to contact Batty Gray, the son of the local Doctor, and get him to proceed to McGreeney's of Longford - a hackney and engineering establishment. Gray was to have a faked message that his father wanted a car immediately on an urgent call and that he would have no driver only Stephen. Stephen was a brother of the proprietor and a trustworthy man of course. Batty had also instructions, if successful to bring the car to Reilly's of Drumlisk, not to go to his own house where Brady and I remained.

Everything worked out according to plan. The car arrived and McGreeney was game for the job. We proceeded to Sheridan's and dispatched Conlon and the nurse with Gormley. The car and Conlon returned without a hitch. Gormley got to Dublin to Miss O'Donnell's nursing home in Eccles Street where his leg had to be amputated immediately as close as possible to the hip or thigh. He recovered and is alive to-day. His case was so bad that he could never use an artificial leg and goes on crutches always.

On the 30th April 1921 the column moved into the Arva area. We had information that a patrol of about twenty Tans were in the habit of travelling the road from Arva via Fyhora to Longford. We were billeted in three houses well off the road. About 10 o'clock on the morning after our arrival in that area two Tans armed and wearing white gymnasium shoes came to the house where some of the column were billeted. Seamus MacEoin was one of the men billeted there. They shot the two Tans on the street in front of the house. That finished our hope of an ambush. Seamus MacEoin could not be blamed for this as he understood his post was being surrounded. The men in the other houses did not know what was happening. We heard the shots and I and some others ran across to the house (Reilly's) but all we found were two dead Tans. Eventually all the column assembled on Crott Hill. This was a commanding position, giving a good all round observation and could not be surprised from any direction.

We were well received by the people around this locality and they entertained us handsomely. We stayed there all that day ready to engage any enemy who would come out from Arva to look for their comrades but none came. That night we withdrew and the Tans came out after we had left and burned Reilly's house.

Conway now left us and went to South Longford. Our column remained in the North Longford area. We continued to harass the enemy by firing on them whenever the opportunity presented itself. We were really incapable of carrying out anything in the nature of a big attack. We had no explosives and only about ten rounds of .303 ammunition per rifle. The column was now in groups - each group acting on its own.

The incident at Fyhora actually took place on the morning of the 1st May 1921 (Sunday). We kept active all the time

sniping and looking out for a favourable opportunity. Arva garrison came in for particular attention. We visited the town on at least three occasions. The Tans now did not come out of their barracks between dusk and dawn or until the normal hours of the following morning. Although we fired indiscriminately on occasions at the garrison in Arva no civilian was ever wounded but some of the Tans were.

Towards the end of May three of us became seriously ill - E.F. Reynolds, James Brady and myself - and had to give up all activities. We made our way to Kiltycreevagh to a house occupied by two bachelor brothers named Smith. We were attended there by three doctors for about a fortnight. The doctors were; - Dr. Gray of Drumlish, and Doctors McCann and Robinson from Longford town. They visited us almost every day. On the evening that the cordon was drawn around the area in which we were, after dusk had fallen, with the aid of some local Volunteers, we slipped through the cordon and arrived in the townland of Bohey on the Drumlish road, north of Drumlish. To our surprise next morning we found we were just outside a second area which had been cordoned off by about 200 yards. We had actually got through a second cordon without being aware of it.

We sat on the Bohey Rocks watching all types of troops and armament including heavy guns pass by about 200 yards from us. We suspected that there was another cordon still further west towards the Shannon. We had the whole area scouted by the local Volunteers as far as the Dublin road and got reports that there was nothing in the area, so we knew we were safe as far as the Shannon. We also had the area towards Drumlish and Ballinalee scouted likewise. We found that the enemy had already combed that area and had passed on further to the north.

That evening after dusk we moved into Drumlish to O'Reilly's house and had some food there. Through this experience I found that I was fairly fit again and I decided I would go and contact the column in North Longford, leaving Brady and Reynolds behind me. I was very anxious to find out how they had fared in the big round up. I found that not one of them had been got by the enemy and that no arms or ammunition had been lost either.

We now checked up on all enemy patrols, their strength and habits etc. but found there was nothing we could take on. I now received a dispatch from Paddy Morrissey, a Dublin man, who was organising in Leitrim asking me to meet him and leaving it to me to fix the date, place and time of meeting. I fixed Gaigue Cross near Ballinamuck for a particular evening and met him there. The object of his mission was to have us consider joining the Leitrim column to our column and combining the two columns in one. I told him I was not in charge and that I would have to consult the column before any decision could be given. He asked me if he could meet our brigadier. I told him I would try and arrange this and we made arrangements how I would get word to him.

Some time afterwards I contacted the brigadier (Tom Reddington) and gave him full details of my meeting with Morrissey. Reddington said he would meet him and I made the arrangements. The meeting was to take place at Gaigue Cross, the venue of our previous meeting. Between the time of my interview with the brigadier and the time he was to meet Morrissey, a request came through from the Rosecommon brigade for an instructor on the Lewis gun to be sent to them. They had captured a Lewis gun. We selected Peadar Conlon who was an ex-British army Lewis gunner. Reddington picked up Conlon on the night of his meeting with Morrissey and brought him along with him.



I had been in the Columelle area of north Longford and I travelled to Gaigue Cross on my own. Tommy Kelleher had been in the Gaigue-Ballinamusk area for some days with the result that Reddington, Conlon, Kelleher and Chas. Reynolds, who was vice O/C of the 5th (local) Battalion, Longford Brigade, met at Gaigue Cross. Morrissey was to meet us at 11 p.m. that night but failed to turn up. We waited until 1 a.m. next morning. We were having a brigade council meeting at Rosse's of Newport, Legan, the next day (Sunday). Reddington and I had a consultation on the matter and decided on sending a dispatch to Rosse's that we would be delayed but that we would definitely turn up next day. We had decided to wait at Gaigue as long as possible hoping that Morrissey would turn up. Reddington made out the dispatch. Kelleher knew this area well and was entrusted with the delivery of the dispatch. Conlon was detailed to accompany him as we decided that the officers of the 3rd Battalion would be able to get him across the Shannon in their area into Roscommon.

About 1.30 a.m. they started off on two bicycles, both armed with revolvers and Kelleher carrying the dispatch. When they got to the town of Drumlisk, on the east end, they encountered enemy forces on foot who called on them to "halt" and some shooting took place at the same time. Kelleher was shot dead. Conlon picked him up and dragged him about fifty yards back the road and took his revolver and the dispatch from him. At this time the enemy had evidently taken cover and no shooting was taking place. Conlon saw that Kelleher was dead and he then tried to make his own escape. Fire was opened up again by the enemy and Conlon was hit on the shin bone but still kept going. This incident took place three miles from Gaigue Cross where we were still waiting for Morrissey. We could hear noises back the road like foot-steps. These noises were intermittent. We found they were coming nearer to us and we got worried that there was something wrong.

We had not heard any shooting.

Reddington and Reynolds took up position covering the crossroads and Drumlish roads. I went down the Drumlish road about thirty yards and got into a prone position at a gate pier. This gave me a position of observation and in the grey night light I saw there was only one person coming towards us. He was running, partly at times on the grass and at other times on the road. This accounted for the broken sounds. When he had come to within about twenty yards of me I recognised the oncoming person as Conlon. I immediately shouted back to the other two at the cross not to fire that it was Conlon. Conlon took no notice of this but ran past me and a few yards further on collapsed on a mound of earth on the opposite side of the road from where I was. I had a flash lamp and I could see blood on Conlon's trousers and boot.

I shouted to the others that Conlon was shot. Reddington and I went through his pockets immediately and found the dispatch and the two revolvers on him. There was one discharged round in Conlon's revolver which was otherwise fully loaded and Kelleher's revolver was also fully loaded. We did not know how serious his wounds were. He was only just breathing at this time. His trousers and boots were saturated in blood. I decided to have him removed to Pat McKenna's cottage which was about 150 yards down the road from Gaigue Cross on the Ballinamuick side. We carried him there. The McKenna family got out of their beds immediately. Mrs. McKenna had a small amount of brandy in the house. She put some of this down Conlon's throat with a spoon. The leg was still bleeding. We examined his body in general for other wounds but found none. By this time Conlon had revived somewhat and was soon able to tell us what had happened and that Kelleher was dead.

I left Reddington and Reynolds in the cottage and I went and knocked up a neighbour by the name of James McQuaid and sent him for Dr. Reynolds of Sorabby. While I was doing this I had made up my mind that I would have Conlon removed to Patrick Reynolds' place in Cammagh and told McQuaid to have Dr. Reynolds report there. I then returned to McKenna's and told Reddington and Reynolds what I had done and what I was going to do and they agreed. Conlon had now improved very much. I proceeded to procure Patrick Reynolds' pony and trap at Reynolds' residence. Charles Reynolds said he would come with me. I procured the pony and trap and Charles Reynolds then left me. I do not know where he went. When I arrived back at McKenna's Reddington had already departed. He had gone to find out what the enemy were now doing in the vicinity. There were some rifles in this area and he thought he might be able to do something. Drumlish was now clear of the enemy and they had taken Kelleher's body to the top (military) barracks in Longford. This barracks is now called Kelleher barracks.

When I got Conlon to Reynolds' of Cammagh Dr. Reynolds arrived and pronounced that the wound was not serious. A day or two afterwards Conlon was removed to the Parish of Columille to a place near Lough Gowna. Some time later he was ferried across the Lough to a house on the Cavan side where he recovered. It was a patrol that shot up Kelleher and Conlon. This was a regular patrol but we did not know this until afterwards. It could have been easily dealt with had we had the information about it.

We went on to the brigade meeting at Rosses that Sunday. The principal business at the meeting was a check up on the ammunition supplies in the area. Everyone agreed it was a pretty hopeless position. It was arranged that the brigade G.M. - Ned Cooney - would go to Dublin and present

the actual position existing in the Brigade to G.H.Q. I don't know if Cooney ever went and if he did I never heard of any results of his visit.

I now returned to North Longford and joined the column again. Reddington remained in the South Longford area. The column was scattered over the parishes of Columille and Clonbroney. Nothing of great importance took place at this time. Our activities were mostly taken up with intelligence work. The enemy now travelled in large numbers, usually four to six lorries, accompanied by an armoured car, and made sudden swoops on different areas. It put us to the pin of our collar to keep avoiding capture. We were a flying column in its real sense now. Although the roads had been well blocked a lot of the trenches that had been out across them had now been felled by the enemy or by the local people under compulsion from the enemy. When one such trench was being re-opened at "Crosha" a mine exploded in the trench killing one man and wounding a number of others. This mine had been laid by the enemy. This incident made both Volunteers and civilians very chary of re-opening trenches. Furthermore, the enemy now carried heavy planking on their lorries which they used for getting vehicles across such obstructions and obstacles. When they came upon such obstacles they took every precaution possible on approaching it. They dismounted a distance back from it and fanned out across the countryside on the flanks of the obstacle. Even the local Volunteers had got fed up with road blocking and road trenching and were avoiding us. In fact, it could be said that they were 'on the run' from us!

Early in July 1921 we received information that a patrol of six or seven Tans or R.I.C., or a combination of both, from Rathven were wont to visit the Streete area once or twice weekly. They would pass Streete railway station during this

patrol. This patrol moved on foot. We decided to ambush this patrol and the column moved into the Streets area to the district of Tinode and billeted in houses there. On the evening of the first day that we were here we received information that the patrol of Tans were moving out from Rathowan. We collected the members of the column and moved into pre-arranged positions. Conway and I made a reconnaissance of the area in the early hours of that morning assisted by the local Volunteers.

We decided in putting the bulk of the column in and around the cemetery which is on the road leading from Rathowan to Streets and adjacent to Streets village. Conway, Fred Aherne and I occupied a position at the east end of the village. The plan was that the party in the cemetery would attack when the patrol would pass that point and we would be in a position to block access to them to an area that would have given them good cover. This was a wooded area. We would also be in a position to pick up any enemy that might escape in our direction.

We got into position as arranged. The patrol came along, and as they were passing the cemetery, which was on an elevated position, one of the party in the cemetery (Sedn Moore) accidentally discharged a round. Any shooting was the signal for Conway, Aherne and I to jump into position. We were lying back a bit in hiding. We jumped into position and as we did so we saw two or three of the Tans running towards us at about 200 yards distance. At the first volley from us they dropped and got around the corner of the house. We did not see them any more. The remainder of the column in the cemetery evidently took it that all was spoiled by the accidental shot having been fired, and so withdrew. We remained on in the area around the east side of the village but could find not a trace of the enemy or of our own men.

After about half an hour we withdrew as we could hear the noise of lorries approaching in our rear.

We retired across a piece of wooded ground and we could see a military convoy ahead of us on the Castlepollard road. We learned afterwards that this was a convoy moving from Castlepollard to Longford and were not, as we thought, reinforcements for the Tans, but as it happened were of course available as such. They were stopped when we spotted them by some mechanical trouble and moved on again shortly afterwards. We found the remainder of the column in a hayfield east of Edgeworthstown. The column now made its way back again to the parish of Columcille where we were always welcome. I learned afterwards that one of the enemy was wounded. We had no casualties or losses except the few rounds of ammunition we fired. I do not think the enemy fired at all. When the shot went off in the cemetery all the Tans made for cover in the houses.

After the abortive ambush at Streets which took place on the 9th July, 1921, the column returned to the parish of Columcille and rested there in a number of houses for that night. We now decided we would have another crack at Arva barracks or any enemy we could find in that town. On the night of the 10th July all of the column available in the Columcille area proceeded to Arva and carried out sniping operations against the enemy post there. We only fired intermittently as we had not much ammunition to spare. When we withdrew from there the most of the fellows returned and remained in the Columcille area. Brady and I proceeded to Brady's home at Cartreanarkey, Bunlahy. We had a wash up and a meal there and then decided to sleep in a diko at the east end of Brady's house. We slept there for the remainder of that night and at sunrise Brady who was awake before me brought some tea and bread which we had where we slept.

This was early on the morning of the 11th July 1921.

Later that morning someone in the area told us that two lorries full of enemy had passed along the road from Granard to Longford on the previous day or two. Brady and I decided we would try and ambush them and we selected a position on the Bunlahy side of Piper's Cross Roads and on the left hand side of the road looking from Bunlahy to Granard. We contacted two or three others whom I cannot remember now and took up position about 10 a.m. that morning. We were in position about half an hour when we heard the lorries approaching. We immediately got into a position of readiness. We were armed with rifles and revolvers. To our great surprise the enemy turned down a side road about a quarter of a mile from our position and out of effective range. This was most unusual - they had never travelled this bye-road before. They came out again on to the main road about half a mile on the Longford side of our position and continued on to Ballinalee and Longford. They could not have been tipped off about us and I don't think they could have observed us as they approached. I cannot understand why they acted as they did and can only attribute it to good luck on their part. They were a mixed force of police.

Later that day I contacted Seumas Conway who was O/C of the column in this area and we remained in that district until that evening. The Truce was now in force. Conway and I had a consultation and we decided on the following line of action.

(a) To collect a suit of clothes which Conway had got made at MacEoin's - a tailor in Ballinalee. When Seán MacEoin had travelled to Dublin he had borrowed Conway's only good suit of clothes. He was wearing this suit when he was arrested. This left Conway without any decent "duds" to wear and he only had what he was wearing on the column which

were now very shabby. He had made arrangements through an intermediary with tailor MacEoin to make a new suit for him. The tailor had his measurements from previous fittings.

Our second mission was to visit MacEoin(Sedn's) family, and our third was to contact Frank Reilly who was in the Coluncille area. We wanted him to re-assemble a motor car. This car had been commandeered in the West Cavan area and brought to the Ross district where it was taken asunder and hidden under trees. It was a 1920 Ford car. Fred Aherne who had joined the column from the Cavan area had told us about the car and we had decided that we would acquire it.

We carried out all these missions including the getting of the car. We brought the car to Brady's of Cartromarkey and there gave it a proper going over on the following day. At this stage the question of what registration number we would put on our car arose and without giving it any consideration I suggested IZ72 would do and we adopted that. The sequel to this was that this turned out to be the number of a doctor's car. This doctor had left the country many years before this, taking his car with him. The police issued twenty-seven summonses for this car for all types of offences, such as no driving licence, speeding, etc. When they discovered who the owners of the car really were they were amazed. They thought we had gone back over all the registrations for years and picked on this particular one, it having left the country, whereas in actual fact it was really a chance that we had adopted this number.

The column had now disbanded, the men returning to their homes. Each man took his weapons with him and was held responsible for them, also the ammunition he was issued with.



The advent of the Truce found us very indifferent. We did not know what was going to happen. To me and those associated with me it felt like awaking up from a dream and not too clear what the dream was all about. Our first concern was to find out about MacEoin and Conway and I set off for Dublin in our new car accompanied by Dick White of Streets and Frank Reilly of Ballinamuck district. On arriving in Dublin I contacted Christy Harte, the waiter and boots in Vaughan's Hotel. Christy is now a waiter in the Officers' Mess, McKee barracks. I told him I wanted to get in touch with Collins. He said Collins was very busy and he knew nothing himself about MacEoin's position. He said he would do what he could to see Collins before 6 or 7 p.m. that evening. At 6 or 7 p.m. I saw Christy again at Vaughan's, the others remaining <sup>at</sup> Jimmie Gill's of Bride Street. Christy told me that there was someone to see me and he brought me to a large room at the top of the stairway where this man was. I did not know the man and he did not tell me his name. Christy had told me he was one of the "Squad". I believe now that it was Bob Price. This man told me that the "Big Fella" was very busy and that he had sent him to meet me. He (Collins) had said that he was dealing with the matter of MacEoin and wished to issue a special instruction that we were not to do or attempt anything on our own as he was dealing with the matter. I asked him about a visit to MacEoin and he said that Collins' instructions were that we were not to do any such thing, also that we were not to stay in Dublin for any length of time and when we got home to keep quiet. We left next day and returned to Longford. Reilly remained in Dublin with Gill who was a friend of his.

Before concluding this narrative I would like to add a few words about our Brigadier, Tom Reddington. Tom Reddington did not hit the "head lines" as others did and is probably

little known of outside the County Longford. Yet he did more than a man's share in the cause of Irish freedom. I first came to know him about the summer of 1918. I knew at this time that he was the Brigade O/C. He was of smallish build, fresh complexioned and ginger hair; a sturdy young man with a great sense of humour - at the same time you would get the feeling immediately that you were in the presence of someone above the ordinary when with him. Personally, I got this impression from the snappy, tart questions about the organisation and the persons controlling it in the district that I was concerned with at the time.

He had the most perfect grip of organisation of any person I ever met, and if he had any equal in this respect it was Seán Connolly. Reddington was a native of County Galway. He was the woodworking instructor for the county under the Department of Technical Instruction. In this connection he travelled the whole county, holding classes in schoolrooms, courthouses, etc. and travelling on a bicycle. With this work he combined the organisation of the Volunteers. As a result he had an intimate knowledge of the organisation and the personnel, particularly the officer type in every half parish of the county. In a word, I would say that the Longford area would be very low down were it not for Reddington's activities in those days. He was looked up to as the "mystery" man who knew everything and everyone in the area. He had many contacts that we never knew about.

Reddington had never had any pretences of being an active soldier; yet it was never known that he shirked anything that came his way. For example, when the Column moved into south Longford for the Terlicken ambush he joined

us immediately and was with us there. He had business in Ballinalee before the big attack on Farrell's and when he heard about it he remained to see it through with us. He always found time to attend Battalion council meetings throughout the whole period, and if other battalions were not so active as the 1st Battalion, it was not the Brigadier's fault.

After McEoin's arrest in March 1921, Reddington devoted more time than ever to the North Longford Column, and it was rarely that he was not to be found with some group of it. I am personally aware that it was he who selected Paddy Callaghan to be his Vice O/C. after McEoin's arrest. Seamus Conway he appointed O/C. of the Column and M.F. Reynolds to be O/C. of the 1st Battalion. He decided to leave Seán Duffy as column and battalion adjutant, and myself in a similar capacity as battalion and column quartermaster, we having held those appointments so long.

He did more than his share in restoring our morale and maintaining it after McEoin's arrest. He was an intimate friend of Mick Collins and all the G.H.Q. personnel. It could be said that he was the G.H.Q. in Longford.

He met an untimely death at Carriglass Bridge in the harvest time of 1922. May he rest in peace.

I would also like to add a few words of appreciation of another great soldier, friend and comrade of mine - Sean Connolly. Connolly became known to me in 1918. He was then Vice O/C. of the North Longford Battalion, Longford Brigade, and I was 1st Lieutenant, Ballinamuck Company. He was of athletic build, sallow complexion, dark haired with sparkling eyes which shone like diamonds when he was thinking out some

plan of action. He was the son of a substantial, well-to-farmer. He was an athlete of great promise, and very fond of football and games. He walked with a slight stoop. Connolly was about twenty-seven years old when I got to know him. He was in no ways a vain man. He took to some people particularly and made personal friends of them. I was one of those lucky persons. He often said to me and to others too: "If we could only drill and arm in the open I wouldn't give a damn about all the British here". He was a wonderful organiser, but did not put a high value on numbers. He wanted an organisation that was perfect and was in the habit of selecting a few men out of each area in whom he imposed confidence.

I was never big enough to pass a verdict on Connolly, but as far as I know, Mick Collins through the G.H.Q. staff, selected him for an appointment as G.H.Q. organiser in County Roscommon and, in turn, he sent me to Leitrim as an observer to report to him on what was happening there. Everything that occurred or took place in the Longford Brigade up to 2nd or 3rd November 1920, was planned and carried out by him.

It is now being stated that Ballymahon R.I.C. barracks was destroyed because it lay on our lines of communication with Dublin and the West. This is entirely wrong, as a glance at a map will show. Ballymahon was taken because it displayed itself to Connolly as a job that could be accomplished and had nothing to do with lines of communication. Connolly had a special aptitude for appreciating a situation at a glance and sizing up an operation or job that could be carried out successfully. Likewise, he could appreciate an operation that was beyond our capabilities. Lanesboro barracks on the Shannon seriously affected our communications

/with

with the West, and Granard affected our communications with Dublin, but Connolly never attempted to reduce these posts as they were beyond our capabilities. Looking back at it now, I believe that Connolly had as much natural experience then as we have to-day with all our years of service.

As already recorded, I reported the position existing in Leitrim to Connolly. He came to Leitrim in the meantime and at night he was brought to a house in that part of the country which he did not know at Selton Hill. Information of this was given to the enemy and Connolly and those with him were surrounded there on the following evening. Connolly and his comrades put up a fight, but against impossible odds, and he and some others of his party were killed.

Connolly was given away by Dr. Pintland who was the dispensary doctor. A Protestant farmer named Lettinoe had observed Connolly and his comrades during the night. He conveyed this information to Dr. Pintland who, in turn, brought it to the Tans in Mohill - to Inspector Hickman. Hickman wired the military at Headquarters at Carrick-on-Shannon, and from there a mixed force proceeded and, without warning, they got on to the hill overlooking the house where Connolly was staying and opened fire on it with Vickers and Lewis guns, as well as rifles.

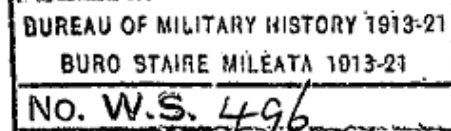
Lettinoe was shot afterwards by the I.R.A. for his part in the affair. Dr. Pintland was missing, having cleared out. We never knew where he had got to until 1924, when I read in the papers where Dr. Pintland had been killed in London by a five-ton lorry skidding on the road and crashing through the

railings outside his own house, crushing him to death.  
So both did not survive Connolly and his men very long.

Connolly and I were the closest pals possible and, although he has long since passed from us, his friendship will forever have a lasting place in my memory. To him I say: "Farewell old comrade until we meet again. May the soil you loved rest lightly on you".

Signed: FRANCIS DAVIS

Date: 30<sup>th</sup> March 1951



Witness: MATTHEW BARRY, COMDT.

30/3/51.