ORIGINAL

ROINN COSANTA.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 511

Witness

Michael Lynch,
Greenfields,
Coolock,
Co. Dublin.

Identity.

Member of 'B' Company 4th Battalion
Dublin Brigade 1915 - ;

Vol. Staff Officer G.H.Q. Staff;
Officer Command Fingal Brigade.

Subject.

(a) Events of national importance 1915-1921;
(b) South Dublin Union, Easter Week 1916;
(c) Biographical notes on Dick McKee and Ml. Collins
(d) Death of Dick McKee and P. Clancy 22/11/1920.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil

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Form B.S.M. 2

ORIGINAL

STATEMENT BY MICHAEL LYNCH,
Greenfields, Coolock,
Co. Dublin.

Pre-1916:

I joined the Irish Volunteers in 1915 and was attached to "B" Company, 4th Battalion, Dublin Brigade, which drilled at Larkfield, Kimmage. The Company Captain was George Irvine. Phil Cosgrove was originally a section commander. Liam Cosgrave was 1st Lieutenant. Eamon Ceannt was Battalion Commandant, and Cathal Brugha, Battalion Vice-Commandant. Seumas Murphy was Battalion Adjutant. I was issued with a Volunteer membership card and paid a weekly subscription.

I was employed as a clerk in the Rates Office, Dublin Corporation, and Eamon Ceannt was a clerk in the City Treasurer's department in the same building. My duties brought me in constant touch with Ceannt who was one of the most charming men I ever met, full of humour and always ready for a practical joke. He came to me one day and told me that he was Director of Communications for the Irish Volunteers and that he had a huge amount of work on hands which he was unable to reach. He asked me would I be willing to assist him, and I said: "Yes". He gave me quite a pile of communication routes to trace out on a map and to make notes in a small diary, which he gave me - something like the following:-

Dublin/Cork route - mark X as motor bicycle.
Fr. _____ - Curate in _____ parish.

He had a complete list of communications from Dublin to Cork.

I also had Dublin/Limerick, and Dublin/Galway routes for him.

I afterwards thought this was just a means to test me out, because one day he approached me and asked me was I willing to join what he called the inner organisation which was behind the Volunteers. He told me that, sooner or later, it meant a fight against the British, but he did not divulge to me the impending proclamation of a republic. He gave me a few days to think it over. I agreed, and he administered the oath to me, one day very early in 1916, at the junction of Grantham Street and Heytesbury Street. He said: "You needn't raise your right hand. Just remove it from the handlebars of your bicycle".

Bulmer Hobson was Centre. Muiris Ó Catháin, Gearóid O'Sullivan, Fionán Lynch and Seán Tobin were members.

I lived at the time at No. 2 Grantham Street. Late in 1915, Tom Weafer called up to the house and asked me would I store some war material in the house. I said: "Yes". His Assistant Quartermaster, Dick Stokes, came along, and they loaded several cases of shotguns and ammunition. They sent over a carpenter, Lieutenant Michael Malone, who was afterwards killed in Mount Street, and he lifted up the boards in the drawingroom and concealed the guns and ammunition between the boards and the ceiling of the room underneath.

The shotguns and ammunition remained there until Holy Thursday, 1916, when I received an order from Tom Weafer to remove all the stuff to Liberty Hall. I hired a cart,

loaded it up, and delivered the shotguns and ammunition personally to Jim Connolly at Liberty Hall.

Although I had daily contact with Ceannt, he never mentioned the rising beforehand. Prior to the date of the actual rising, I had no knowledge whatever as to when the insurrection would take place.

Easter Week, 1916:

I was mobilised for Easter Sunday evening at four o'clock. I attended early Mass that morning in Harrington Street and, coming out of the church, I met Paddy Gleeson in uniform. He was going on his mission of cancellation down the country. I saw the notice in the paper that all Volunteers were to remain at home. I did not go to Larkfield that day but spent practically the whole of Sunday listening to rumours at Camden Row, headquarters of the 3rd Battalion.

The mobilisation order was repeated first thing on Easter Monday morning, and I immediately proceeded to Emerald Square, Dolphin's Barn. Ceannt was already there, and Cathal Brugha. After a short delay, the whole 4th Battalion moved down Cork Street and swung into Marrowbone Lane. The Company in front of our Company, "A" Company, turned into the Distillery, headed by Seumas Murphy. We marched up into James' Street. I was in the front file. When we approached that part of James' Street where the road widens, known then as the South Dublin Union, Cathal Brugha swung round abruptly and said: "You four men, charge that gate and keep it open. Don't let them shut it". Four of

us rushed the gate - myself, Paddy Maloney, Jim Foran and another - and held up the office staff. An officer of the Union immediately ran from the gate office over to an inner office in the yard, unnoticed by most of us, and attempted to use the 'phone. Foran followed him, covered him with his revolver and made him drop it.

I was placed in the front row of buildings overlooking James' Street, under Lieutenant Gerald Murray. Ceannt moved off to the rere of the buildings. We bolted and locked the front gate, and barricaded it with an old broken-down cab. The officers were, apparently, not conversant with the situation. Gerald Murray and W. Cosgrave knew nothing about the declaration of the republic; neither did any of the men in the buildings with me.

About half an hour after the occupation of the buildings, a large party of British military came down from Richmond Barracks, marching in fours, in the direction of the city, with an officer, immaculately dressed, at their head. These men were fired at when they were still far away. They scattered and took cover immediately. There was some intermittent firing going on for half-an-hour or so. They took cover in the houses. Then they returned and re-formed. A golden opportunity of inflicting serious casualties was lost by prematurely firing on this party.

Captaim Tom McCarthy of "C" Company and a party of Volunteers - about twenty - occupied Roe's Distillery, opposite the Union, on the other side of the street. We had no contact whatever with them on the Monday. On

Tuesday morning we were amazed to see them evacuating the post and proceeding in pairs towards the city. I did not see the officer in charge. We shouted at them but they gave no sign of recognition.

Everything at our end was perfectly quiet until the Thursday. My aunt was a ward mistress employed in the Union, and I had a long talk with her on the Thursday morning. She arranged that, after dark on Thursday night, I would slip across to her quarters where she would give me a feed. The food situation was deplorable. We had only the rations we had brought with us. We had no contact whatever with any other units occupying the building.

On Wednesday, about three o'clock, having previously made contact with the main body which was in the Nurses' Home, Commandant Ceannt returned with us to the front building overlooking James' Street. We were paraded by him on the ground floor of one of the buildings, and he praised us for our gallantry. He said that the British had failed to break through anywhere and that they would probably use artillery. He told us not to be unduly alarmed, that it would not be as affective as the British hoped.

On Tuesday morning, after having, as we thought, effectively barricaded all the windows, we were walking round, quite unconcerned. At about 6 a.m., volley fire was opened on us from the top of the Hall Range, about twenty feet higher than our building and about thirty-five yards distant. The British had been in this portion of the building since Monday.

Commandant Ceannt came across to see the place. Everything was perfectly still. There was not a sound of any kind except an occasional sniper from the Royal Hospital, Kilmainham. Jim Foran and myself rambled along through the buildings and into the quarters of a Mrs. Brannigan who, with her family, had just vacated them. The kettle was steaming on the fire. There was plenty of tea, butter, bread and sugar in the cupboard, and we sat down for a good feed. We just had the tea made when we heard voices, with an English accent, and some hammering. Then an English voice said: "Go on. Put your b..... head out!". Foran and I jumped to our feet and opened the door of Mrs. Brannigan's quarters leading into the grounds, just beside the bakehouse. We stood very still. At the end of a small passage, between our building and the side of the bakehouse, a wooden partition crashed down and there slowly emerged the head of a British soldier followed by his body, carrying a rifle. Foran picked up his old R.I.C. revolver and had a quick shot. I saw the soldier pitch forward on his face. We retreated hastily into the hall and barricaded the half-glass door with a wardrobe and some furniture. We then rushed up the stairway to warn Ceannt and the other men. Were it not for that cup of tea in Mrs. Brannigan's kitchen, the British would have cut the position in half.

Ceannt immediately hurried back to his headquarters in the Nurses' Home, leaving us in the front buildings, and the big attack was on. It lasted from about 3.30 p.m. to 9 p.m., the main attack being concentrated on the Nurses' Home. We were brought back from the front building to

augment the garrison in the Nurses' Home, but we actually did not get quite so far. We were in a dormitory on the first floor, firing at intervals through a large window which lit the staircase.

When the attack was easing off, we came down the staircase and into a yard. One of the officers suggested that we should evacuate the Union and make a bolt across the open country. Just at that moment, Eamon Ceannt came along, and I never saw him looking in better spirits, though worn out and tired. He said: "They will never get in. We have them licked". He then told us that Cathal Brugha, who had been at the top of the stairs during the fight, had been very seriously hit. A good number of us volunteered our field dressings to our first-aid man, Doolan, to help to save Cathal's life. When Doolan returned, he told us that he had dressed nineteen wounds on Cathal.

I was so exhausted from want of sleep that I asked Ceannt could I go to bed, and he said I could. I had a sleep till seven o'clock the following morning, the first I had for the week.

The Surrender.

Friday and Saturday were very quiet, just occasional sniping. On Sunday morning I was on duty on the front building, when a Franciscan priest from Church Street came into view. He was carrying a white flag and was accompanied by two British officers, one an immaculately dressed fellow of about 5' 2", and the other an old veteran of about 5'6". They stopped in front of the side gate. We pulled down the barricade and admitted the priest. He asked for Commandant Ceannt. What took place, I do not

know.

Shortly after the priest's departure, Commandant Ceannt summoned us all down to one of the dormitories on the ground floor. He told us that arrangements for a surrender had been made, and that he was handing up his post and surrendering to the British. He said that, if any of us wished to break away, we could do so, but suggested that, as we had fought as an army for the week, we should surrender as an army. Not a single man left. I remember Lieutenant Cosgrave saying to me subsequently in Richmond Barracks: "You're a proper fool! Why didn't you try to get away into your aunt's quarters?".

We marched out on the square behind the main entrance, and I remember one British officer shaking his head when he saw the full strength of our force. The total strength of the garrison was then forty-two, out of our original strength of between fifty and sixty. Of the forty-two, about fifteen had formed the garrison of the front building where I was located. I remember the British officer saying to Ceannt: "Is that all?". Ceannt replied: "Yes - a small but determined garrison!".

We walked along, carrying our rifles. We had no escort except the British officers walking beside Ceannt at the head. We proceeded to Marrowbone Lane, waited there for the completion of the surrender, and thence to Bride Road where we laid down our arms. I handed up my rifle. We then marched under escort to Richmond Barracks.

At the beginning of the week, the civilian population, particularly the women, were very antagonistic. Some of our men were actually beaten on the face with shawls

and hats, and every kind of insult was heaped on us. It was quite different at the end of the week, however, when we marched out to surrender. Although a proportion of the people still seemed dazed and almost afraid to voice their feelings, a small group of men and women cheered us to the echo.

A Prisoner in Richmond Barracks.

On Monday (May 1st) we were brought into the gymnasium of Richmond Barracks. We were all squatted on the floor there, wondering what was going to happen next. A little in front of me, seated in tailor-like fashion, was Major John McBride. I edged over along the floor to him and tapped him on the arm.

"Are you Major John McBride?", I asked.

"I am", he answered.

"I am Michael Lynch - Jim Lynch's son. I met you when I was a little boy."

He wrung my hand very warmly and said, "I am very glad to meet you, Michael. If your father had been alive, he would have been with us to-day". He asked me where I had been, and I asked him where he had been.

"Listen, Michael", he said. "All my life I have waited for the week that has just gone by. I spent it shut up like a rat in a trap in Jacob's factory, and I never fired a shot. I wanted McDonagh to get out several times, but he would not. However, it does not matter - it's all over now."

"You don't mean to say ...?", I asked.

"Yes", he replied. "They have wanted me for many

years, and they have got me now. I am for it, but you, Michael, will live to fight again and, when next you fight, don't let anyone shut you up like a rat in a trap. Get a rifle, a few hundred rounds of ammunition, and get out under God's blue sky. And shoot until they get you, but never let them lock you up." I felt heartbroken, and we talked along about the various things that had happened, but all the time he kept referring to being shut up in a building like a rat in a trap.

Then the door at the far end opened, to admit several members of the "G" Division. One of them - I think it was Hoey - walked along, with a leering smile on his face, and said: "Come on, McBride!". John McBride again wrung my hand and passed out the door, with his head erect. That was the last I saw of him. Commandant Ceannt and all his officers had previously been taken away.

On Tuesday, we were marched down, via Bachelors Walk, to the North Wall where we were put on a cattle boat. On Wednesday morning, we arrived in Knutsford Jail, Cheshire, and were put in solitary confinement.

Knutsford Jail.

Knutsford is a quiet and, from what we could see of it, rather a pleasant little English village in Cheshire, about fourteen miles south of Manchester. The jail, in which we were confined, was actually a military prison. Our jailers were Sergeants and Corporals of the British Army. Their assistants were British army prisoners, who had broken some military regulation, such as, overstaying their leave, deserting or being drunk, and were then serving sentences. It was typical of the British that they

used one set of prisoners to guard another. When we were on exercise in the yard at Knutsford, five or six paces apart, surrounding the ring in which we were marching there were British soldiers - prisoners, of course, serving their sentences - standing to attention, with rifle, bayonet, full kit and one hundred rounds of ammunition each. This had a double effect, of course, of making us most unpopular with the British prisoners, while at the same time punishing them.

I was put into a cell, No. 35, on the third floor of "E" Wing and, for the period of my detention there, I was addressed as "E. 3- 35". Immediately on my entry, the door was banged, and I found myself in a room about twelve feet by eight. The door was iron-studded on the inside. The bed, which was standing up against the wall, was composed of three heavy solid ten-inch planks set on trestles, one at each end and one in the middle, which kept the bed absolutely rigid. There was no mattress. The pillow was a circular piece of wood fixed on to one end of the bed. A small table was in the corner of the cell inside the door. There was no other furniture. I could hear nothing but the banging of doors, the jangling of keys and the shuffling of footsteps outside. Other prisoners were being treated in much the same fashion as myself.

After a while, the din subsided. Then a Sergeant, accompanied by a sentry with a rifle and bayonet, came in and searched me. Everything was taken except one little stump of a pencil, about an inch long, which was in my waistcoat pocket. This little pencil was a great friend for about five days. With it I marked the date of my arrival - 4th May, 1916 - on the wall. I had the intention of marking off the days by a downward stroke each day and a diagonal stroke after four days, as is done in marking up

scores in a game of handball. Unfortunately, after four days I was searched again and my little friend, the pencil, was taken from me.

The only book we had to read was a Protestant edition of the Old and New Testaments with microscopic print. The food which we got for the first day consisted of a mug of what the British called 'skilly', that is, oatenmeal cooked on water, a thick sickly mess. I did not eat it the first or second day, but after that I was very glad to have it when the pangs of hunger attacked me. We only got a wedge of bread and a ration of so-called butter. The dinner consisted of what was supposed to be a stew, made of beef, bones and a couple of potatoes, half of them generally black. We cleaned our boots with the fat of the meat. During all the time I was there, I could not eat the slightest morsel of it.

When sitting down alone in the cell, my mind immediately reverted to Tom Clarke's "Prison Memoirs". Poor Tom, at that time, was just facing the firing squad. He had served fourteen years in jail as a prisoner of the British. In the few months I was in Knutsford, I realised that the British system had not changed, and I doubt if it will every change. To put it quite briefly, it was as follows:-

> "Keep the prisoner practically half-starved; just give him enough food to keep him always hungry. Never treat him as a human being. Never let him know what you want him to do. Keep him shut up, a prey to his own thoughts, twenty-three and a half hours out of the twenty-four, and try to smash his nerves and destroy his intelligence.

Make him as hideous looking as possible. If he wants a haircut, give him one by means of a big clippers. If he wants a shave, put the same clippers over his face. Always give him the appearance of a person of low intelligence, and never leave him without a crop of beard of two or three days on his face. Give his guards liberty to beat him up, to kick him and to steal from him; and always leave him in a condition that he has not got the manhood to lodge a formal complaint. Give him no occupation whatever, no chance of exercising his mind or occupying himself in any way; just leave him there for the whole day to brood, and brood, and brood." It was the very refinement of cruelty.

In justice to the officers in charge of some of the other prisons, I must say that, when we met our comrades in the internment camps later on, some of those who came from Stafford, Wakefield and Perth told us that they had been reasonably well treated. In Knutsford, however, the non-commissioned officers in charge of us were a degenerate, sadistic lot who took pleasure in torturing us and inflicting pain on us.

For the first three or four days, we got no exercise whatever. Then we were ordered out and made stand at our doors, facing inwards, so that we could not even see the faces of our comrades on the opposite side of the corridor. We were marched down and made walk round in a ring, the older and feebler men in the inner ring and the younger ones on the outer. We got, roughly, half-an-hour's exercise. We did a quick march. If the Sergeant was particularly brutal, he gave the order, "Double march" and we had to go at the double

for ten minutes, so that we were ready to drop from exhaustion. Then came another "quick march", followed by a "double march" and up to our cells. We would arrive back at our cells out of breath, panting from the running and completely exhausted. The Sergeant would hand in a bucket of water, scrubbing-brush and cloth, and order us in his brutal way to scrub out our cells. When this was done, we waited for about half an hour and then what they called dinner was served. As I said before, we were always hungry. Most of the younger ones of us, who were growing lads, were not only hungry but were weak from hunger. We bolted this food like wild beasts and, at the end of it, felt hungrier than ever. We spent the remaining twenty-three and a half hours in the cells.

Remembering Tom Clarke's observations, I realised that a man could keep sane, under these conditions, only as long as he was able to keep his mind revolving on something or other. If the mind got blank, or if you started worrying about your loved ones at home, madness was staring you in the face.

I dug up the Old Testament, and I went laboriously through the Four Books of Moses. The Book of Numbers occupied me for three or four days. I tried mentally to calculate the population of the Tribes of Israel. I forget now what figure I arrived at. Then I counted the bricks on the wall. I estimated the weight of each brick and of the bricks in the cell, and tried to estimate the total weight of the bricks in the building. Finally, I had recourse to my music. Luckily, I had this to fall back on. In reading the Book of Psalms, I found the English translation of what we

Catholics know as the "Fiftieth Psalm", but in this edition it was the "Fifty-First". I could never find out how they inserted an extra Psalm in the Protestant version of the Bible, but the Fifty-First Psalm was the "Miserere". From the English translation, I was able to recall the Latin version of it. Then I remembered having sung this Miserere Psalm in Rathgar Church some five or six years previous to the Rising. It was the "Miserere" by Francesco Basily. I remember how happy I felt when, at the end of a week, I could recall each of the four parts of the whole of this Psalm - forty-two pages. Then I used to imagine myself seated at a piano, playing the soprano and alto parts with my right hand, and the tenor and base with my left. With the words in front of me, I found I could play, in imagination, the whole Miserere from memory. These may seem happy reflections now, after thirty-three years, but it was little concentrations like these of the mind that certainly kept me from going mad.

In the evening time, the silence of the tomb descended on the prison, to be broken now and again by a heartrending sob from some distant cell, when an unfortunate prisoner, not having such a store of knowledge packed up in his mind, would remember his wife and kiddies at home in Ireland and wonder how they were. A sob like that immediately galvanised the staff below into activity and they came roaring up, looking for who was making that noise.

We had no means of knowing the time. When a prisoner felt particularly tired, he might put down his bed - the plank bed, with no mattress or pillow, and one rug - and

try to compose himself for even a half-hour's sleep. If, however, the sentry outside, in canvas slippers, peeped through the spy-hole in the door and found a prisoner with his bed down five minutes before the authorised time, he started banging the iron door with the butt of his rifle and, roaring like a madman, told him to put his bed up again. This would awaken every prisoner in the jail. Then perhaps, ten minutes later, the sentry would say: "Put your bed down now".

We were not allowed a speak while going round the ring at exercise. I remember on one occasion a red-headed lad, wearing the green uniform, was caught exchanging some words with the man behind him. The Sergeant in charge of the parade rushed across to him and accused him, in beautiful English soldier's language, of talking. The lad denied it, but the Sergeant drove the butt of his rifle into the man's ribs, knocked him down and then kicked him while he was on the ground. Our blood boiled at this, and it would have taken very little to have caused the whole crowd of us to attack the Sergeant. That was probably what they were waiting for. They would have mown us down if we had attempted anything like that.

Things dragged along, deadly in their monotony. Then one day one of the few brighter interludes happened. We were ordered out on to the Square. We all wondered what this was for, because we had already had our half-hour's so-called exercise. We were drawn up in long lines, about one hundred yards long. I was in the second line and beside me was the little red-headed lad who had been

so brutally assaulted by the Sergeant. We were standing to attention, not allowed to speak. At the far end of the courtyard, a number of figures appeared - a Sergeant and three or four civilians. The civilians passed along from line to line, looking very intently at every prisoner.

The little lad beside me (Whelehan was his name, as far as I remember) said, under his breath: "Oh Lord, I'm done for!".

"What is the matter?", I whispered.

"Do you see the fellow in front? I stuck him up with a gun at Jobstown Quarry the week before the Rising. We took a lot of gelignite from him."

"Steady now", I said. "Don't show any signs".

"Alright", he said. The first civilian in the line came along and stared very intently at me. I met his gaze. He shifted his eyes to the red-headed fellow beside me, gave a long, slow, knowing wink and passed on. We afterwards heard that this gentleman had a great holiday, at the expense of His Brittanic Majesty, visiting every prison in England and Scotland, to find the man who had stolen the gelignite from him. We felt we could have clapped this man on the back.

When we were in Knutsford about a month, Alfred Byrne came to visit us. We treated him very coldly because we had heard, and I don't even yet know whether the reports were true, that the Irish Party in the British House of Commons had cheered the news of the executions. Little Alfie, as he was called, did one good job for us. He sent

for the chaplain to the prison, and asked him why had we not had Mass, or some sort of religious service in the prison chapel during the four weeks we had been interned. He told the priest that he would report him to his bishop. What exactly transpired, I do not know but the result was that we were all brought to the chapel that evening for Benediction. This was the first day on which visitors were allowed, and my mother was, I think, the very first visitor to arrive.

We were marched into the chapel, surrounded by our guards, and we knelt down. The priest had not yet put in an appearance. I saw a little two-manual organ in the corner, and I got an inspiration. So far, we had not been allowed to speak but I startled everybody in the chapel by standing up in my seat and asking the man beside me, in a loud voice, to let me out. I moved over to the organ, just had a glimpse at it and saw that it was hand blown. The nearest prisoner happened to be Paddy Holohan. I had never met Paddy up to then and, possibly, that day marked the beginning of a great friendship between us. I beckoned to him with my finger to get out of his seat. He came over.

"Did you ever blow an organ?", I asked.

"No, but I'll try."

"Look", I explained. "Do you see that plumb line? Up there, the bellows is empty, down there, it's full. Blow like blazes and keep the thing half full."

"I'll blow it", he said. I sat down, fooled round to get the touch of the keys for a few minutes, and then played "Hail, Glorious Saint Patrick". All the qualities of emotion of the men in the chapel were let loose in that

hymn. I never heard more fervent singing in my life. It filled the whole prison. The guards stood with their mouths literally open in amazement. I have played the organ in a great many churches since then, but never shall I forget the outburst of fervour and devotion that filled the dingy little chapel in Knutsford. When they had finished "Hail, Glorious Saint Patrick", I gave them a few minutes' breathing space while I played the organ softly, and then I played "Faith Of Our Fathers". This was even a greater success than the first. Just when we finished the second verse of this hymn, the priest came out on the altar and gave us Benediction. In the middle of the "O Salutaris", the door of the chapel opened and a very well dressed young lady stuck in her head. When she saw me at the organ, she took her head out again and, I presume, went away. I played another hymn at the end of the Benediction, and I sat there for about a quarter of an hour after the service, playing away for my own amusement, Paddy Holohan contributing in no small way to the success.

The following day, I was sent for by the Governor, a very high-ranking superior type of Englishman, and he gave me instructions to play the organ for all services. I refused. I told him that, on religious grounds, I could only play the organ for Catholic services. Strange to say, he accepted this but he asked me to play for the service of the "Roman Catholics", as he called them, who were prisoners in the British Army. I kept at this job until the end.

Sometime in the middle, or towards the end of the month of May, the door of my cell opened, and one of the

Sergeants said, "E.3.35, attention! Quick march!". When I reached the door of the cell, he ordered, "Mark time!". He leisurely searched the cell. "Quick march! Mark time! Left wheel! Right wheel! Mark time! Quick march!" - and so on, as I went down the stairs and along the corridor, the Sergeant slowly walking about ten to fifteen yards behind me. I reached a door. "Mark time!", he ordered. I kept on marking time. He walked up to the door and knocked.

A voice inside said, "Come in".

"Prisoner, left turn! Quick march! Halt! Stand at ease!" I was in a small office.

"This is E.3.35, Sergeant-Major", said the Sergeant to a figure seated the table. The Sergeant-Major looked up. He had a kindly face.

"What is your name?", he asked. I answered.

"Your address?". I answered.

"That is alright, Lynch", he said. "I have a parcel here for you. If there is clothing in it, I may give it to you. If it is food, I am not allowed. Shall I open it?"

"Open it, please", I said. He opened the parcel. There was some clothing - shirt, socks - and underneath there were two big home-made cakes. I was half-mad with hunger, and I probably made an involuntary movement forward.

"I am very sorry", he said. "You may only have the

clothing". I looked as if I could have committed murder. The Sergeant caught me. I ordered him to take his hands off me. The Sergeant-Major asked, in a very kindly voice, "Are you as hungry as that?".

"I could commit murder for one of those cakes", I said. The Sergeant made another rush at me. I said, "Take your hands off". Turning to the Sergeant-Major, I said, "I know it is not your fault. Thank you!". I swung round and left the office. My friend, the Sergeant, started off with his usual "mark time", "left wheel" and so on, but I paid no attention to him. I was enraged at not having got the food, and I did not care what happened. When I came to the foot of the stairs, I sprang up the steps, three at a time, to the accompaniment of a volley of curses from him, turned down and into my cell, and banged the door savagely. He did not follow me in.

The next day, the same Sergeant came into my cell. "E.3.35! Stand to attention! Quick March!". He started off on the same rigmarole, and I guessed that I was wanted at the same office. I walked along, heedless of his roaring behind me, put one leg over each of the railings of the narrow staircase and slid down on to the floor. I walked quickly up to the office that I had visited the previous day. The Sergeant was coming behind me. I knocked at the door.

A voice said, "Come in". I went in. The same Sergeant-Major was seated at the table.

"You sent for me, Sergeant-Major?", I asked.

"I did, Lynch", said he. I have good news for you.

You may have that food that came yesterday. I got instructions this morning". Just as I had heard this, my escort appeared at the door, wild with rage. He started off to complain to the Sergeant-Major that I had disobeyed orders.

I very innocently said to the Sergeant-Major, "You sent for me, did you not?".

He said, "Yes, man". I got away with it. He said, "That is alright, Sergeant", and he gave me the two cakes. I went out of the room and sprinted up to the cell. I did not care what happened. I had two home-made cakes.

When I reached my cell, I found that somebody had thrown in a mattress, which was lying on the floor. Before I had time to become accustomed to this new luxury, we were ordered to stand at our doors because the dinner was coming. In the cell directly opposite me was Tom Boylan, a professor in Castleknock College and ever since then one of my best friends. As we stood at the doors, facing outwards, I took one of the cakes in my hands and, when the Sergeant was not looking, broke it into four sections across my knee. I held up one square so that Tom Boylan could see it. When the Sergeant had passed up, I threw it across to him, and he caught the small piece of cake in his hand. He looked at it, pushed it up under his waistcoat and almost literally went mad with delight. His mattress was lying on the floor and, with sheer delight at getting the piece of cake, he turned one or two somersaults on it and jumped round, his eyes jumping out of his head with joy.

There was a man, named Swanzy, in the cell next to Tom Boylans, and I also threw him a square of the cake. I gave a square each to the two men in the cells beside mine. It is impossible to describe the expressions on their faces. The dinner came along then and I ate it. I ate half of the second cake after my dinner. Then I finished the cake, washing it down with water out of a tin mug. I never tasted anything in my life, before or since, as sweet as that cake.

Shortly afterwards, food began to arrive in plenty. It may give some idea to the reader of the semi-starvation in Knutsford before we were allowed to receive food parcels, when I say that, on the first day on which I worked in the Jail post office, I weighed myself, and I was eleven stone twelve pounds; on the 1st July, when I left Knutsford for Frongoch Internment Camp, I weighed myself, and I was thirteen stone, having gained sixteen pounds in thirty days.

Working in the post office in the jail helped to pass the time away. Conditions were improving somewhat, not through any kindness on the part of the Sergeant, but because we were allowed to speak to one another. We were getting food, and we were getting letters from home.

One day I was working in the post office, which was in the main hall on the ground floor, near the entrance. There were four or five of us prisoners in it, with a Sergeant Hurd in charge. Hearing an unfamiliar noise outside, I listened and then opened the door of the post office, looking out on the main corridor. There was a shuffling noise and a soft, moaning sound. An iron-grilled

gate straight opposite me opened and two Sergeants came out, between them supporting a Brtish soldier, with his right heel completely swathed in bandages. There was no boot or sock on the soldier's right foot. Each of the Sergeants was supporting him by his elbows. The soldier had, of course, his regulation boot on the left foot and he was hopping along, unable to put the right foot on the floor. He was moaning quietly all the time, and his features were convulsed with terror and pain. Quite suddenly, as he hopped, he appeared to stumble. The escorting Sergeants released their hold, and he fell heavily on the tiled floor, giving a roar of pain. The Sergeant nearest me, cursing viciously, drove his boot into the man's ribs, and the unfortunate victim gave another yell.

"You cowardly hound!", I roared out.

Sergeant Hurd caught me, jerked me back into the post office and, shutting the door, said, "Don't be a b.... fool! You can do no good".

I said, "Good God, such brutality!"

"Easy on, man", he said. "Easy on! You'll get fourteen days down in the basement if you make a move."

"Who is the unfortunate fellow on the floor?", I asked.

"Oh," he replied, "he is a conscientious objector. He slashed the tendon of his heel with a razor, so that he would not have to fight. That is how those fellows treat all conscientious objectors.

From the middle of June onwards, the prisoners moved

out in fairly large batches each day to an Internment Camp in Frongoch, near Bala, North Wales. I was kept back until the very last batch because I played the organ at Mass. I left for Frongoch on 1st July, 1916.

Internment in Frongoch.

Life in Frongoch has been written about so much and is so well-known that my experiences will necessarily be brief.

The British Commandant, Colonel Heygate-Lambert, was a real superior type of Englishman who looked upon us Irishmen as being very low in the intellectual and social scale. He was completely without imagination, and kept the camp in a constant state of turmoil by his bungling of every delicate situation which arose. We really deserved the title of "the wild Irish", and the guards regarded us with amazement.

One little episode that occurs to me possibly deserves mention. We had instituted what we called the "Irish Republican post office service", which was a very well organised system of smuggling letters out of the camp, without censorship. The Commandant and his officers did everything they could to stop it, but without success. They changed the guard about twice a month. The only man they did not change was the Quartermaster in charge of the stores, who was our postman.

One day, a new guard arrived from Chester. The Commandant lined them up outside the camp and made them a very pretty speech. Reminding them of their duty to the king and empire, he told them they were about to come into

contact with a most unscrupulous lot of men who would stoop to every trick, no matter how mean, to make them deviate from their path of duty. "They will even stoop to bribery", he said, "in an effort to tempt you from your allegiance to your king and your great empire!".

Later that evening, a few of us were loitering round under an archway, which connected the outer and the inner compounds, when one of the new sentries came on duty. We watched him marching up and down in front of the entrance to the hospital. For a few moments, there was no other guard in sight. He halted and, turning to one of us, said, in a perfect stage whisper, "Where's this bloke wot does all the bribery?".

We aimed at gradually transforming Frongoch into a university school. We felt we had a golden opportunity of keeping the men's minds occupied by teaching them some subject or other. We had, of course, established Irish, English, French and Shorthand classes. Luckily, we had professors for all those subjects in our ranks. I looked after the musical side.

I got together a choir of between seventy and eighty men. We had rehearsals every day, and I was often forced down to a second rehearsal per day, under threat of being dumped, fully clothed, under the cold shower if I refused. We gave concerts about once a month. Towards the last stage of our period in Frongoch, the choir was a special feature. With so much time for practice, it is no wonder that they became very proficient and a really first-class band of musicians.

I remember our second last day in Frongoch. We had intended to celebrate Christmas Day by a Mass, offered by our Chaplain, Fr. Stafford, with religious music rendered by the choir. We were all tremendously keen on making this an outstanding event. I was in the middle of a rehearsal in the mess hall, standing on a chair, with my seventy-five singers around me, when Fr. Stafford rushed in, evidently in a state of great excitement.

"Mr. Lynch! Mr. Lynch!", he called out. "Excuse me! Just a moment!". I stopped the singing.

"What is it, Father?", I asked.

"Well, I have great news for you. I think I am breaking no official secrets when I tell you that you are all to be released."

"We all heard that before", I said. "When?"

"Oh! I don't know exactly, but very shortly".

"Thanks, Father!", I said.

One of the men in the choir said, "Let's get on with the work!". I turned and resumed the rehearsal at the place where we had left off. We carried on for about fifteen minutes, when the door of the mess hall sprang open and the British Adjutant, Lieutenant Burns, came in.

He smacked one of the tables a couple of times with the cane he was carrying, and said, "That's enough, lads. Break it up! You are all going home.". The choir all grumbled at the interruption to the rehearsal.

"Cut all that out!", he said. "You are going home at once."

Inside five or ten minutes, the whole hall was packed, all the prisoners having been summoned there. Burns made the announcement that the order had come for the release of all prisoners. He said that two trains would be leaving for Holyhead, one of them almost immediately, and he suggested that the men, living long distances from Dublin, should go on the first train, so that they might be home in time for Christmas, and that the Dublin men should wait for the second train.

There were no cheers, only a dead silence. Michael Collins asked, in his soft Cork accent, "Are we all going home?".

"Every mother's son of you!", was the reply.

"Are there any conditions?"

"Not a bloody one!"

I may explain, at this juncture, that one of the prisoners, Michael Murphy, No. 1745, was wanted for conscription by the British, and we had been successfully hiding him for nearly three months, because they could not identify him. When the order for release came through, Collins immediately saw that, if we all had to answer our names and numbers on the way out, they would get Murphy. That is why he put these questions to the Adjutant.

The Adjutant then stated that he would have to check

off each prisoner as he went out, and that, therefore, each man would have to answer his name. We refused to do this, and said we would not go home. The Adjutant let fly some choice expletives at us, telling us what he thought of the whole lot of us. He asked us to take his word that we were all going home. We said we would not answer our names and numbers individually. Then we offered a compromise: he would call out twenty names and we would answer each name; then he would pause, and twenty of us would march out through the gate. He agreed to this. Michael Murphy was, of course, in the first batch of twenty that went out, although his number was not called. This worked very smoothly. When the Adjutant came to "Michael Murphy, 1745", about five hundred of us roared out, "Here!". Murphy arrived safely back in Dublin.

The last of the released prisoners arrived in Dublin on Christmas Eve, 1916. Regarding my choir, unfortunately I had no time to get the home addresses of the men, owing to the short notice. On my return to Dublin, I found that all I had left out of my seventy-five singers were thirty-four who lived in the city.

Back in Dublin.

Very early in January, 1917, I called up to Cathal Brugha's house. He was then living in Fitzwilliam Terrace, Upper Rathmines. I met him and his two daughters, and I was delighted to find him alive and healthy again, although permanently crippled as a result of his wounds. He told me that very little had been done in the way or re-organisation, because they were keeping quiet until the internees and, above

all, the sentenced men were released. He said that a temporary Executive had been formed, consisting of one man from each of the Provinces and one man from Dublin city, and that he, Cathal, was the member for Dublin city. He told me that I was to start immediately on the re-organisation of my own Company, "B" Company, 4th Battalion, Dublin Brigade.

I succeeded in getting together about forty of the old members of "B" Company. When this was done, a series of courts martial were held on the men who did not turn out for the Rebellion.

I was ordered by Cathal to hold an election, which we did, and I was elected Captain of "B" Company. We met in a small hall on the Kimmage road, between the gates of Mount Jerome cemetery and Mount Argus, and I transmitted whatever orders came to us. No really serious attempt at re-organisation was made until about June, 1917, when the sentenced men were released.

A Trip To Liverpool And The I.R.B.:

Touching on the I.R.B.,-I went across to Liverpool at Easter, 1917, to see the lady who is now my wife. I wrote a letter to Cathal Brugha, telling him of my intention and asking him if there was anything in Liverpool that I could bring back. I called down to Lalor's of Ormond Quay before going to the boat, and Cathal gave me a letter of introduction. He stated that a cargo of Spanish automatics had already been landed in Dublin, but that the ammunition for them was lying in Liverpool, waiting for someone to bring it across. He said that the letter was an introduction to someone in Liverpool to let me bring over much of the ammunition as I could carry. I had also received

a letter of recommendation from Joe O'Connor, afterwards Commandant of the 3rd Battalion, Dublin Brigade, when I had informed him that I was going to Liverpool. I do not know which letter each of them gave me, but one was addressed to Peter Murphy, Scotland Road, Liverpool, and the other to a man, named Geraghty, Wavertree Road, Liverpool.

In Liverpool, I called to Scotland Road to see Peter Murphy whom I found very garrulous and altogether unsatisfactory. On the following day, I called to Wavertree Road and, after a couple of efforts, succeeded in interviewing Mr. Geraghty. I told him that I had already been with Peter Murphy. He lectured me on how to do things properly, and stated he would give me nothing. I pleaded with him, pointing out that events in Dublin were quickening up and that it was a shocking thing to leave men without any ammunition for their guns. He told me that, for all he knew I might be a British spy. I thought this a very stupid remark, in view of what had transpired already.

On the following Sunday, I called again to Peter Murphy and found him in a shocking state of panic. He told me that some police officers had been watching the house all the morning, and that there was to have been a meeting of the Circle of the I.R.B. in his house but that it had been called off. He craved me to get out as quickly as I could, and I'm afraid I cursed him quite a bit. "Where do I get the stuff?", I asked. He said there was no stuff.

I returned to Dublin, empty-handed, and immediately went to Cathal Brugha. I shook my head and said, "Nothing!".

"I thought as much", he said. Then he asked,

"Micheál, are you a member of the I.R.B.?".

"I was, of course, up to Easter 1916", I replied, "but I have not, so far, been approached to rejoin, and I don't know anything about it".

"Listen", he said. "I was with Tom Clarke a few hours before the Proclamation was drawn up, and I did not know that he and Seán MacDermott had decided to make public in the Proclamation the existence of the I.R.B.. And since they did make it public, I believe that they were as convinced as I was that it had ceased to serve any useful purpose and that it should be buried and never revived. You cannot train men to fight in a secret organisation; you merely succeed in turning them into petty conspirators. We are going to train men to come out into the open, and to fight. The people in Liverpool know my views, that I will not touch the I.R.B. again, and that is why you got nothing in Liverpool. Neither de Valera nor myself will ever touch it again. You do the same, and have a bit of sense". I did not take his advice. Cathal was right, of course, as I think he almost always was.

About this time - the conscription crisis of 1918 - a Bill was introduced into the British House of Commons for the enforcing of conscription in Ireland. In every Brigade, the numbers of Volunteers swelled rapidly. Some of the new recruits were evidently under the impression that, by joining the Volunteers, we would do the fighting for them. We had other ideas, however. We were determined that these men, who had recently joined, would fight for themselves, along with us, if called upon. For this purpose, all Brigade Commandants were instructed to administer the Oath of

Allegiance to the members of the Irish Volunteers, both old members and new recruits, without discrimination.

Early in 1919, I administered to about a thousand men, drawn up on the road at Ballyboughal, the Oath of Allegiance, which ran somewhat as follows:-

> "In the presence of Almighty God, I solemnly swear to bear true faith and allegiance to the Irish Republic as by law established, the government of which is Dáil Éireann. And I further swear to defend the Republic against all enemies, internal and external. And I further swear that I take this oath without any mental reservations or for any purpose of evasion whatsoever. So help me, God!"

Few of us, unfortunately, saw far enough at that time. Some months later, I realised, after reflection, that, for men who were in the I.R.B., there were two conflicting oaths of allegiance, one, the oath of allegiance to Dáil Éireann, the Government of the Republic as by law established, and two, the oath of allegiance to the Irish Republic, the Government of which was the Supreme Council of the I.R.B. I raised this very important point at a Circle meeting of the I.R.B., and was informed by our Centre that the matter was having their complete attention. I was requested not to press for an answer at that stage.

Shortly after Easter, 1917, I had rejoined the I.R.B.

the same Circle - when called up. Diarmuid O'Hegarty became Centre. Piaras Beaslaí, Garry Holohan, and Dinny O'Callaghan were amongst the members. Seumas Murphy was Battalion O/C and Joe McGrath, or Liam Clarke, was Battalion Vice-Commandant. I continued in charge of "B" Company, 4th Battalion, until I resigned in September, 1917, when we moved residence over to Richmond Road, Drumcondra. About a day or two after my resignation, a request came in from Diarmuid O'Hegarty, who, I think, was Director of Organisation, to send out an organiser to Finglas, where there was a very good Sinn Féin Club already started. I was sent out to Finglas. I walked out from Drumcondra two night a week, and established what I think was the best Company I ever worked with. In about two months, the Company swelled to seventy-five men, a marvellous contribution from a small village.

Reorganisation in Fingal.

About November, 1917, Dick Mulcahy, who was O/C of the Dublin Brigade, told me that he was about to re-organise the Fingal area, which would be the 5th Battalion, Dublin Brigade, and he asked me to accompany him. He and I went out on bicycles, and we stopped at Weston's, of Turvey, where he introduced me as the new Battalion Commandant of the 5th Battalion, Dublin Brigade. I asked for some help, and the officer appointed Vice-Commandant was Archie Heron.

I worked hard in Fingal until May, 1918, when the German Plot scare was raised by the British and the Conscription for Ireland Bill was about to be introduced into the British House of Commons. Re-organisation of the

Dublin Brigade was then in progress. I was summoned, with some delegates from Fingal area, to a meeting in Parnell Square, at which Dick McKee was elected O/C of the Dublin Brigade, and I was elected Vice-Commandant. Immediately prior to this, I had been advocating the establishment of the Fingal area as a separate Brigade unit, because all the plans, discussed at the Dublin Brigade Council, for resisting conscription had reference to the city only, and I felt that the Fingal area was really not interested in these, if a fight came following the passage of the Conscription Act. As far as I can remember, this request of mine was acceded to, and Fingal became a separate Brigade area. In the meantime, I came back to the Dublin Brigade as Vice-Commandant.

South Armagh Election.

In the autumn of 1917, Sinn Féin decided to contest the constituency of South Armagh, thereby introducing Sinn Féin ideals into the northern counties. All we knew in Dublin was that the campaign was being pushed forward with great vigour, but we did not realise the methods that were being adopted by the Unionists to prevent our speakers getting a hearing. Eamon de Valera was the principal speaker, and with him were Count Plunkett, Countess Markievicz, Joe MacDonagh, Austin Stack, etc. De Valera sent several messages to Dublin to bring up as many Volunteers as we could muster, in order to get our speakers out alive. It appears that, at every public meeting at which they spoke, some of them were wounded by stones or broken bottles.

There was a very hasty mobilisation of the Dublin Brigade. All officers were to wear uniform and all men were to come armed, but only concealed small arms were to be carried. We created quite a sensation at Amiens Street Station, as men came pouring in up to the last minute, regardless of all railway regulations, jumping barriers, etc. I was Quartermaster on the occasion, and I remember well going up to the ticket-office and buying something like sixty-eight third-class return tickets to Newry. While the clerk in the office was recovering, about one hundred and twenty-eight men passed the barrier, and all got on the train.

We had an uneventful journey. Everybody was in the best of spirits. When we arrived at Newry, we formed up in fours on the station. The ticket checker at the exit gate looked bewildered when I handed him the huge bulk of tickets and said, "You can count those when we are all gone!". I don't know how many men got up free.

We arrived in Newry at about nine o'clock, and we marched to our quarters in a temporary barracks which, I think, had once been a mill. There was a very large number of young girls from Newry there; great girls they were. They cooked our food for us and did everything they could to make us comfortable. The usual routine was gone through of appointing guards of thirty men, to be changed every two hours, because we feared an attack on our whole transport system.

The guards mostly had a very rough time, because it became obvious that the policy of the Unionists was to import very large numbers of Orange supporters from Belfast. These supporters were male and female, and appeared at all the meetings in various stages of intoxication. The language was shocking, and the blasphemous, filthy epithets hurled at the Pope were particularly offensive to Catholic ears.

It was believed that the election would have been a complete collapse, from our point of view, were it not for the presence of such a large number of Volunteers. We had found, when we got there, that there was a large contingent from Clare, headed by Michael Brennan. Even while the polling was on, interference was anticipated, and large squads of our troops were sent to the outlying districts to prevent intimidation of the voters. We also had to see that the ballot boxes were brought back, untouched, to the Newry Town Hall and locked up for the night. It was my first contact with an Orange mob, and I would never wish to have to endure it again.

On the night of our arrival in Newry, the Brigadier, Dick McKee, called me and stated that we would require a guard of thirty men to protect our transport in a yard at the rear of the committee rooms, as he had received information that it was the intention of the mob to slash the tyres of the cars, if they could, and so immobilise our complete transport system.

"Let me have the first guard, will you?", I asked.

"You're very anxious for work!", Dick remarked.

"Not a bit of it", I replied, "but I want to get finished and get a good sleep. I don't want you wakening me up at three o'clock in the morning to go out on guard."

"Very well", he said, "but you are in for a rough time. Pick thirty men and relieve the present guard, from 11 p.m. till 1 a.m.".

Having got thirty of the biggest men I could find, I formed them up into fours, and asked for a guide to bring me to the committee room. My guide was none other than Tomás MacCurtain, afterwards Lord Mayor of Cork, who was brutally murdered by the Black and Tans. My first impression of Tom was that he was one of the jolliest men I ever met in my life. As we marched through the almost deserted streets, he kept chuckling to himself, and it was not until we reached the committee rooms that I began to realise the cause of his humour. There was a milling, screeching, mostly drunken mob of about three hundred men and women gathered on the roadside outside our committee rooms. Four of our motor cars were drawn up alongside the kerb; the remainder were in the yard at the rear of the building.

I formed the men into single file and placed them between the mob and the cars, in a crescent-shaped formation, each man clasping the wrists of the men beside him, so as to prevent a breakthrough. I can safely say that I never believed it possible for human mouths to utter such blasphemy and such filth, mostly directed against the Pope, as came from that mob. I marched slowly around the outside of the crescent, that is, between the mob and my men, striving my best to appear unconcerned. Every minute I

expected a blow from a bottle in the back of the neck, but, beyond yelling, screaming and dancing, there was no assault from the half-drunken mob.

Then, quite suddenly, in the semi-darkness of the far side of the street, I observed six R.I.C. men standing stolidly against the wall, with a Sergeant evidently in command. They made no move to stop the drunken mob. I kept walking to and fro, and the crowd kept in milling away and cursing Sinn Féiners, the Pope and everything that we Catholics hold sacred.

One of my men said to me, in a hoarse whisper, "Commandant, we can't stick this much longer!". Then, as I passed, I heard, behind my back, the resounding sound of a fist striking flesh. On turning round, I saw one drunken, half-naked woman withdrawing, after having struck one of my men with her shut fist across the mouth. Letting go the hold of his comrades' wrists, he took a half-step forward and pulled back his fist to strike her.

"No, no, no! Don't!", I said. "Wait a minute!". I forced my way, through the crowd, over towards the police. I was in a savage temper.

"Who is in charge here?", I shouted at the police.

The Sergeant, detaching himself from the shadow of the wall, said, "I am".

"I want you to clear this mob away!", I roared at him.

"Och, sure, I haven't enough men", he replied.

"Look here!", I said. "We came up here to give no

offence, but I am not standing for this any longer. I want you now to arrest a woman, whom I will point out, on charges of assault and indecent language. Go and arrest her, and I will make the charge against her!".

"No, I can't do that", he said.

"No, you can't", I said, "but you can stand there, aiding and abetting them by your silence! Well, if you won't clear the street, I will. Take yourself and your men away, and I'll clear the street. I'll give you till the clock strikes twelve to do it. If it is not done by then, I am clearing the streets."

He said nothing to that. I left him and pushed my way, through the crowd, back to the men. One of the men said, "Let's get at them, quick!".

I pushed through our own formation and arrived at the steps of the committee rooms. Tom MacCurtain was standing there, grinning.

"Good man, Micheál!", he said. "That's a great bluff, if only it comes off."

"What the hell am I going to do at twelve!", I exclaimed. It was now a quarter to twelve.

"Wait now! The bluff may work."

"Listen, Tom! Have you a bike?"

"I have", he said.

"Well", I said, "if these policemen don't move the crowd by about two minutes to twelve, will you go down to the barracks and get me another thirty men?" I may

mention that I hated the idea of having to do this, because the Brigadier might possibly accuse me of making a fool of myself for making a threat that I could not carry out. However, I felt certain that, if the crowd in the street should hear the sound of another thirty men marching up in their rear, they would scatter.

The minutes wore on slowly. At about two minutes to twelve, I looked at Tomás MacCurtain from outside the crescent, and saw that he was standing on the footpath, beside his bicycle. I hesitated for just one minute more. Just as the clock was on the stroke of twelve, the six policemen came out from their seclusion and went around to the crowds, saying, "Come on, now! Its getting late. Time to go home!". They just waved their hands, and the crowd melted away. By five minutes past twelve, there was no one on the street except the police.

The Sergeant came over to me and said, "Now, they are all gone. I think you can take your men in off the street".

I said, "You go to hell. I'm in charge here".

"The greatest piece of bluff I ever heard of in my life", exclaimed Tom MacCurtain, "but then it worked!"

Then I broke up the formation of the men. I left six of them sitting in the cars, posted a few men on guard at the back of the building, so that no attack would be made on the rear, sat myself in the back of one of the cars and had a good, long comfortable smoke.

Munitions:

Some years ago I sat in a cinema in Dublin, looking at a picture, entitled "Forgotten Men". It was a short summary of some of the outstanding acts of bravery performed by men of the British Army during the 1914-1918 war. It showed pictures taken actually from press photographs of deeds of horror and of outstanding bravery done by these men, and it showed also the horrible price some paid for their valour. The picture was a propagandist one and it struck me, at the time, that it had been produced by a set of men who were determined to do all that they could to prevent the recurrence of the horror of war. The men, whose faces appeared on the screen, were just shattered hulks, battered humanity, distorted faces built up by the skill of the plastic surgeon and rendered hideous in the process. These were the forgotten men of all nations.

We, too, have our "forgotten men" and, if any mens' names should be enshrined in the memories of their people, they are the names of these "forgotten men" who worked, slaved and fought, without pay, without hope of material advancement and without even the compensation of the gratitude of their people. There are thousands and thousands of them in Ireland to-day, whose names will never see the light of publicity, to whom no monuments have been erected, and who have gone, or are going to their graves with all their fine, manly work unrecorded. The men, to whom my mind reverts when I think of the "forgotten men", are the men who worked under me in the little shop at 198,

Parnell Street and, afterwards, in similar small shops at Crown Alley, Luke Street and other back streets of Dublin; the men who made the munitions, the men who made the hand grenades and who, in a greater measure perhaps than any others, made possible the glorious conclusion of Ireland's last fight for independence, which terminated in the Truce of July, 1921.

These men worked in the basement of a bicycle shop. There was one entrance to it, down a flight of rickety stairs from the shop. There was no exit, except by the same stairs. To be caught in there by the enemy meant, in the earlier stages, imprisonment and, in the later phase of the struggle, certain death. In the beginning, they relied on their ingenuity to outwit any visits that might be paid by their detectives. In the end, they worked with a loaded automatic on the bench beside them, determined to shoot the enemy until they themselves were shot. How they escaped with their lives is told in the following short account of the manufacture of munitions. It was nothing short of miraculous. Even now, when I meet the survivors, they still laugh over the problems we had and the escapes. I never heard a complaint. They were happiest when the output of hand grenades rose. They were dejected and inclined to grumble only when production had to slow up or cease because of enemy activities.

The following is a list of the men who deserve the gratitude of all lovers of freedom throughout the world:

Joe Furlong, Matt Furlong, Seán O'Sullivan, Gabriel McGrath, Paddy McHugh, Tom Keogh, Michael Keogh, Jimmie Coughlan, Christy O'Reilly, A. Mayne, D. Holmes, Joe Lawless, Michael Lynch, Tom Young, Martin Kelly, Tom Roche, J. O'Hara, Frank Kelly, T. Garrett, T. Hussey, P. Drennan, Christopher Healy, J. McDonald, J. Kirby, J. Daly, B. Maher, Frank Gaskins, ____ Doyle and W. Gannon.

The first job Dick McKee gave me, to the exclusion of all others, was the establishment of a munitions factory. I knew nothing whatever of machinery and I told him so. He told me to go down to No. 70, Seville Place, and there I would meet Matt Furlong and Joe Vize, who would give me all assistance I wanted, as regards the special machinery which had to be purchased. I then began to learn and, very shortly, I became proficient under the expert guidance of Matt and Joe. After a long search for premises, we were finally forced to take over the basement of 198, Parnell Street, the ground floor of which was a bicycle shop, with the name of "Heron & Lawless" over the door, the Heron being Archie Heron, who was my Vice-Commandant in Fingal, and the Lawless, now Colonel Joseph Lawless.

The purchase of the lathe, I think, deserves s pecial mention. I was at my wits' end to get a four-inch screw-cutting lathe. One day, Matt Furlong came to my office and

told me that he had been employed in the National Shell Factory, Parkgate Street, and that he there used a beautiful German lathe, which had been commandeered by the British from Ganter's, Watch and Clock Manufacturers in South Great George's Street. I saw Leo Ganter, being introduced to him by Mick Walker, a famous cyclist in his day, who worked in Lalor's, Candle Manufacturers, Ormond Quay. Leo Ganter told me that the British had commandeered the lathe from him some years previously, and had paid him £80 for it. I told him that it, together with a pile of other similar equipment, was advertised for sale by auction. I told him to go up to the British authorities, make a great case as to how his business had suffered during all the years the lathe had been used by them, and to offer any price he liked to get his own lathe back. He did so, buying it back for £50. He gave me the delivery docket, and we transferred it from the British Munitions Factory to the Irish Republican Munitions Factory in 198, Parnell Street.

The staff in the munitions factory, at the commencement of operations, in Parnell Street consisted of Matt Furlong, in charge, Tom Young, moulder and general manipulator of the crucibles on the furnace, Sean O'Sullivan, known to the police as "Eamonn Byrne", and, after a few weeks, Tom Keogh.

We proceeded to manufacture hand grenades, built on the pattern of the German "egg" grenades and, as long as our supplies of factory coke lasted, the output was very rapid. When foundry coke failed, we were driven to some extraordinary remedies but, through the kindness and

patriotism of one man - Billy Mombrum, manager of G.E.C. - all our difficulties were overcome. I told Billy of our troubles, and he told me that he bought quite a considerable quantity of foundry coke from a firm in Waterford, that he would order as much as we wanted from these people, hand us the delivery docket and we could draw it ourselves.

About this time, a man was recommended to me who had played a violin for me in an orchestra. He was known as Seán Kiernan and, after one of our orchestral performances, he confided to me that he was Paddy McHugh from Dundalk, who was "on the run" at the time. I engaged Paddy and told Dick McKee. Dick was perturbed and told me I should not have engaged him without looking up his record. One night, we were discussing him in the presence of Michael Collins and, when Collins heard his name mentioned, he said, "If you have got that fellow, you have got the best b.... man in Ireland!". He showed me his photograph out of "Hue & Cry", and I recognised my friend, Paddy McHugh. Paddy was a most capable engineer, and all the little gadgets that we invented, for the saving of time and for the quickening up of output, were due to his ingenuity and, of course, to Matt's. They were a wonderful pair.

After some months of operating, we found it unsatisfadtory because of the dual ownership - Joe Lawless and Archie Heron on the top floor, and we underneath. At Dick McKee's suggestion, I bought out Joe Lawless, and we became the tenants of the whole ground floor and basement.

In the taking over of the business from Joe Lawless,

there was one problem which I had not foreseen. Joe had a messenger boy employed, a young lad whom we knew as Reilly. I spoke to Dick McKee and said, "What am I to do with him?".

"Do you think he knows anything?"

"Well, he has never been downstairs and I don't know. He had probably heard talk."

"Get his name, send it round through all the Battalions and find out if he is a member of any Company."

I did so. The answer came back, "No. Unknown".

I put it to Dick: "If he knows anything and we knock him off, he may talk; and if I offer him the job and he refuses, he may still talk".

Dick said, "Do whatever you think best".

So I proceeded to interview Reilly. I told him that Mr. Lawless was going out of business and that I was taking over; that I was afraid there would be no work for him because things were pretty slack and wages were very high. The poor youngster looked very downcast. I enquired how much Joe Lawless had been paying him. He mentioned a very small sum. I asked was his father alive.

He said, "No". His mother and sisters were practically depending on the few shillins he was getting.

I said, "I'd like to keep you on, Reilly, if I could", and then, quite suddenly, I shot the question at him: "Do you know what's going on downstairs?".

The answer came: "Yes, sir".

"What?"

"Making bombs."

"Good man, Reilly, you are engaged! You know the risks?"

"Yes, sir."

"Alright. You are hired, and keep your mouth shut. Your wages are raised to thirty shillings." His face lit up, and I brought him downstairs and introduced him to his new comrades. He got a rousing cheer.

Before starting work in the factory, we had to give it a semblance of being a properly organised business. For this purpose, I kept a set of wages books, with each man's wages, the deductions for National Health Insurance shown on it, their Trade Union cards, the list of money received each day and the payment, by way of petty cash, each day. All the payments, of course, were faked; so were all the orders.

We had an order book for Lalor & Company, Candle Manufacturers, Ormond Quay. The Dublin Brickworks, Dolphin's Barn (Crumlin), supplied us with very many large orders, because one of our members had access to their printed notepaper; and, in almost every other shop where we had men working, we managed to obtain some of their headed notepaper, and I typed out orders and quotations, etc.

We also had an elaborate alarms system. There was a warning light immediately over the furnace, which was connected upstairs by means of a three-way switch. One

switch was on the floor behind the counter in the shop; a second switch was on the floor in the workshop at the rere of the shop; and a third switch was behind the light in the basement. The idea was that wherever the occupant of the shop was working, at the time when a suspicious-looking person came into the shop, who might, for some reason or another, want to go downstairs, a switch was clicked on. The man working at the furnace below immediately switched off his warning light.

Very little stock was kept in the foundry, only fuses, the minimum number of grenades, cases which had to be screwed and threaded on the lathe; and the hiding place for these was an improvised one under the wall and under the floor of the basement next door.

They were actually subjected to one lengthy raid by the "G" Division. At the time, the warning light went on, Matt was working at the lathe, with about forty shells. These were immediately dumped under the floor of the house next door. Tom Young was just about to make a casting of the brass necks for the grenades, when down walked three or four members of the "G" Division. They asked Tom Young what he was working at, and he said they were patent plumbers' cocks. He actually took one of them, which he had cast the previous day, and pointed out how they worked. These, I think, were supposed to be for Maguire & Gatchell, and there was an order in the book corresponding to the number he had on hands. They had also some axle boxes for carts, and Matt had shaped some of these and was actually working at them on the lathe when they came in. These were for the Dublin Brick Company, as far as I know. Matt

Furlong laughed very heartily as he recalled to me how one of the members of the "G" Division made a dive over towards one corner of the room and picked up a large roll of electric cable. He examined it very carefully, apparently under the impression that it was a fuse, but, after about an hour of this, one of the members of the raiding party said, "Come on, these fellows are only doing ordinary work to earn their living", and they went out.

About a week after the raid on Collinstown Aerodrome, Joe Lawless came to me with a large wooden box and said: "Some b------ fool on the raiding party at Collinstown has lifted this thing and put it on the back of my car". Joe's car was a taxi and, the day after the Collinstown raid, was used on at least two jobs, and was used for about two jobs every day. One day when Joe opened the rere door of his car, he saw, lying on the floor, this large box with a label, "Collinstown Aerodrome", in big letters printed on it. He brought this to me. I opened it and found about two dozen very long cartridges, similar to a twelve-bore shotgun cartridge, with a percussion cap on one end. It struck me that they were Verey lights, and I told Joe I would call for them and bring them away to have them examined. "But", I said, "for God's sake, destroy that box". Joe did so. He parcelled up the contents very carefully and left them in the foundry, luckily on the ground floor, not in the basement. When the members of the "G" Division were about to depart, following a raid on the foundry, one of them spotted the "parcel", opened it and asked Joe Lawless where he got it.

Joe said, "The was on the carrier of a bicycle that

was left in, to have a puncture repaired, and I just took it off without opening it".

"Who owned the bicycle?"

Joe, of course, did not know, but described him. He gave a description that would fit about half a million men in Dublin; and that was all he knew.

"When is the man to call for the bicycle?"

"Tomorrow evening."

"What is wrong with the bicycle?"

"Puncture." - etc.

Finally, one of the "G" Division said to Joe: "You know quite well who owns the bicycle, but you won't tell".

Joe lost his temper, told them "to go to h---", and was arrested. Dick McKee was very seriously perturbed with this, because, of course, it held up our work in the foundry. We cleared everything out while Joe was locked up, fearing another intensive raid.

A few days went by. Matt Furlong was cursing to try and get back to work. I was afraid to give him leave, when in walked Joe Lawless as "cool as a cucumber". He was released "without prejudice". I asked Michael Collins afterwards how they came to let Lawless out. He said that the "G" Division sent the parcel along to a military arms expert and asked him: "Did that box come from Collinstown Aerodrome?". His reply was that it could have come from any aerodrome, that the things were perfectly harmless and that they had no case against the person who owned it. So they let Joe out, and the work went on.

During my period in charge of this foundry, we turned out five thousand hand grenades, and how we got away with it, only Providence can tell. We cast the necks of the hand grenades in brass, and why the Corporation authorities did not come down on us for committing a nuisance on the street, I do not know. The fumes from brass casting lay around the street, and anybody with the slightest knowledge of foundry work must have known what caused them. However, we got away with it.

After about two years' work, I was taken away from this and sent out to Fingal; and one of the last jobs I did there was to give Matt the drawing of the Stokes trench mortar, asking him could he make a gun of this type. We all realised that we would only take police barracks wherever they were in a terrace, or where, for some other reason, we could climb on to the roof, but a police barracks, standing on its own in the country, was impregnable unless we had some sort of a gun. Matt set to work on the plans of the drawings, and was actually half way completed when I was taken away.

The destruction of our foundry by the British came about by one of the greatest strokes of good luck the British had in the whole campaign. A raiding party of auxiliaries started off very early in the morning and raided the tenement house adjoining No. 198. They went through it but failed to get the man they were after. When departing, one of the auxiliaries, on passing the hallway of the tenement house, was the door leading into the bicycle shop. He stopped and asked the woman of the house, "Where does that door lead to?". She said that it led into the shop

next door but had been barred up for many years. He said, "We may as well have a look at it from the outside". They turned around to the front, broke open the lock and walked in. They found the whole plant absolutely complete, but nobody on the premises. There was a large stock of grenades almost completed. They quietly, after having sent for a lorry, dismantled all the machinery, lathes, furnaces, crucibles, etc., loaded them on to the lorry. They moved away very quietly but they left a few of their members in the shop, leaning on their rifles on the counter, waiting for the proprietor to come in. Tom Young appears to have been the first a arrive. When Tom was going to work, he was always immaculately dressed. He strolled into the shop next door to 198, bought the morning paper and some cigarettes, and the woman behind the counter threw up her hands and said, "Oh! Don't go in there! They have been in there this morning and they got everything". Tom did not turn a hair but walked out of the shop. No one would suspect him of being the fellow who made the grenades.

He stood on the path outside, where he met the next arrival - I think it was Paddy McHugh - and told him quietly that the auxiliaries were inside. Paddy went to one end of the street and Tom went to the other end, and warned off the other members as they came along. One of the staff was Mick Keogh, a long, ungainly-looking fellow of 6' 3", who was a great soldier. Mick had evidently had a strenuous night the night before, because he dropped into Mooney's, opposite the Rotunda, for a bottle of stout or a pint in the very early morning before going in to work. He was the only

occupant of the pub. He sat on top of a high stool, getting the greatest enjoyment out of his pint. The attendant was polishing the marble top of the counter, and he said, "That was a big haul they got this morning?". Mick Keogh took no interest, and the lad said, "Oh, yes! They got a terrible lot of stuff". Mick said, "Where?". He nearly fell off the stool when the fellow told him it was in the bicycle shop. He reported that he swallowed that pint in record and, for quite a long time, he stood on the street with other members of the staff, looking at their beloved shop which was closed against them for the duration of the war.

As regards the manufacture of the hand grenades, we made the necks in brass, because we could cast the brass with ordinary Gas Company coke or soft coke. We could get foundry coke for the casting of the body of the grenades, so that, in times of shortage when there was no foundry coke to be got, we cast little stocks of necks for the grenades, finished them and machined them, inserted the strong percussion cap, cut the fuses and had everything ready for the time when we would get a supply of foundry coke.

The question of the springs was one that had me guessing for weeks, and one day I went over to Mr. J.J. McQuillan of Capel Street. Working in this shop and, I am glad to say, still working there, was Sean O'Shaughnessy, who was 1st Lieutenant under me when I was Captain of "B" Company, 4th Battalion. I asked Sean O'Shaughnessy was Mr. McQuillan "alright", and O'Shaughnessy said he was a fine fellow. Having been introduced to Mr. McQuillan by Sean O'Shaughnessy, I produced a spring of a Mills hand grenade,

put it on the counter and said, "Do you know what this is?".

He looked at the spring, looked at me and said, "I think I do".

"Can you order any for us?"

"Yes. How many do you want?"

"As many thousand as you can get."

"Oh!", he said. Then he produced a catalogue and found the list of manufacturers in England, who supplied these springs. He said that, owing to the length of each spring, he could only order a gross from each of the manufacturers. That he did, and I waited about a fortnight or three weeks before getting delivery of the first gross. By this time, we had three or four hundred grenades finished, waiting for the springs, and I felt that getting a gross at a time was little or no use. I went to Mr. McQuillan again and I said, "Could you ever buy those springs twice that length?". He rushed for the catalogue and found that they were made in lengths of from two inches to fifteen inches, so I ordered a gross of fifteen-inch springs.

When I got the 15" spring, nobody in the world would have suspected it of being for a Mills hand grenade. We shortened the length of the spring in each grenade from 2" to 1⅞", thus giving eight springs for fifteen inches. This was just the same as getting eight gross of the two-inch.

The percussion cap had me completely beaten at the beginning. We tried everything, visiting every gunsmith's shop, but never succeeded in getting a cap that was reliable.

One night, after a Brigade Council meeting, a small delicate-looking man came to me and told me that he was a member of such-and-such a Company. He produced a .22 cartridge, from which the bullet had been abstracted, and said, "Do you want caps for hand grenades?".

I said, "Take that thing away. We have tried it".

He said, "What happens?".

I explained that it blew the fuse out.

"It wouldn't blow out if you bored a hole in the middle of it. .22 ammunition is rim fire. Wait till I show you!"

He put it on the table, took a nail out of his pocket and, with it, bored a hole in the centre of the cartridge; and nothing happened. The hole, of course, minimised the initial shock. It never, to my knowledge, failed to ignite the fuse and it never blew one out. This meant a little bit of extra time and trouble over the making of the striker, which had to be ridged along its extremity to hit a .22 case on the rim. So we turned our attention to Morris tube ammunition, which was central fire, drilled a hole with the lathe in the side of the casing and pointed our striker. This worked just as well as the .32 and had the additional advantage of using up ammunition for which we had very little other use. There was no shortage of fuse.

Accompanied by Paddy McHugh, I made the first test of these hand grenades at some of the locks on the Grand Canal. Here the British had a bombing school. Paddy brought me

there early one morning. I saw a field, with mounds, about four to five feet high, spaced at intervals of about fifteen yards. The idea, of course, was that the British soldier was trained to throw his hand grenade from behind one mound over the parapet of the next one, then bend down and wait for the explosion. We used that very advantageously a few mornings and we took it for granted that our grenades were alright.

About this time, a member - I think the Quartermaster of the Tyrone Brigade came to General Headquarters, and was referred to me. He wanted to attack a police barracks, and required some large hand grenades. I showed him the small ones. He shook his head and said, "No good".

I said, "What do you want them for?".

"We climb on to the roof and throw them down the chimney, thus blowing out the steel shutters."

We then turned our attention to making a larger hand grenade. The first of these was as big as a fairly large swede turnip. I brought it home with me, and told Tom Keogh to come up to my house at Richmond Road at about 7.30 the next morning.

When Tom arrived, we loaded up this grenade and went out on our bicycles. I may add that it contained a half-pound of gelignite. We cycled up Drumcondra. Just at the dip before coming into Santry village, we left our bicycles in the ditch and walked across the fields towards Ballymun. I said to Tom, "When this grenade explodes, we stop here and

examine for fragmentation".

Tom said, "Yes, of course".

We proceeded across the fields until we got a field with a ditch on one side and fairly level ground on the other. Tom lay down in the ditch. I stood on the surface of the field, went through all the approved gestures of hand-grenading, and fired this huge turnip a distance of about ten yards. I dived into the ditch, waited and then heard the bang. This was in the very still, early morning. There was a report like a modern block buster and, when we raised our heads, there was a pall of blue smoke drifting slowly away towards a house some few hundred yards away. Every animal, within a radius of a mile, came to life with a bang - dogs, sheep, cattle, pigs, etc. Tom looked at me with his mouth open and said, "For God's sake, let's get out of here!". We both got on our bicycles and went on. There was no search for fragmentation.

We arrived home at Richmond Road. We went in the back way. When my mother saw me, she said, "What were you men up to?".

I said, "Oh, nothing very important - just a little test".

"Well", she said, "about half an hour ago, I heard a bang. It almost blew me out of the bed, and shook all the windows in the house".

Our little test took place about two miles from our

house as the crow flies. We went back the next day, and found the fragmentation very satisfactory. This type of hand grenade was used with great effect later, on Kilmallock Barracks. I think it was Sean Forde who told me that they threw nineteen of them down the chimneys of Kilmallock Barracks. It is not surprising that they captured the barracks.

Working with me, outside the foundry, was a team of qualified chemists, best of whom was Seumas O'Donovan at that time. He had his B.Sc. degree. Des Dowling was another and, strange to state, a student for the priesthood, a Jesuit, named the Rev. Bill Hogan. Bill Hogan was introduced to me by Mrs. Tom Clarke. He taught in Belvedere College during the day. After school hours and during the holidays, he came out and worked in a dirty old tenement in Peter Street where we made "war flour" and "cheddar". The war flour recipe was given to me by Dick McKee who had received it from a sailor, who came over on an American ship. There was no specific formula; it was just half a pound of this, mixed with three ounces of that, and so on. Unfortunately, I cannot remember the ingredients but I remember that, when I first got the recipe from Dick McKee, the pattern of the ribbing of a man's sock was all over it. I handed it to Seumas O'Donovan. He gave it back to me in a week, and stated he had succeeded in making a pretty hefty explosive. Seumas also manufactured some thermite bombs. Incidentally, we worked together for weeks on this and, only for Seumas O'Donovan's expert chemical knowledge, we would have been probably hard hit to make an efficient one. We used aluminium powder and black oxide of manganese instead of the prescribed black oxide of iron.

These were, as far as I know, never actually used, but we had got so far as to make them on the Mills pattern, in case they were ever to be required.

The next job was to find a suitable premises for filling the hand grenades and for lecturing the officers of the different Companies in the Brigade in the method of filling and, above all, in the method of use. There was a little tobacconist shop at No. 10A, Aungier Street, run by Seumas Donegan. Seumas was a Liverpool or London boy, who had come over to fight in 1916 and had set up business as a tobacconist at this address. The room at the rere, which was long and narrow, had one entrance leading into the shop and another entrance leading into a courtyard, which came out on to the street beside No. 10A.

I lectured to quite a number of officers down there, and one night I had the misfortune to bring Dick McKee there. The minute Dick saw the premises, he said: "This is the very place I have been looking for. Can you not get out and get some other place of your own?".

I said, "You go to blazes! I found this place, and I am going to stop here."

"What did you want it for?", he inquired.

"For the lecturing of officers of the different Battalions on the construction and the use of grenades".

"I'll tell you what we'll do! Could we partition it off, and I'll take the rear portion of it?". This meant that Dick could get into his small room from the street, without going through the shop.

This was our trouble always, finding suitable premises in which to carry on our work. We built up the partition in the room, which meant that the back portion of the room could only be entered from the courtyard, not from the shop. Dick used this as an entrance, and many an hour I spent with him.

It was in this little room that "An tÓglach" was printed, and Dick McKee was the printer. He had a linotype machine and he set all the type by hand. Incidentally, I remember Dick come up to me one day, in No. 10A, looking very depressed. I asked him what was wrong. He told me that the British were bringing in a new R.I.C. force composed of English recruits. The privates were to be taken from any source possible in the slums of English cities. Many of them, in fact, came from the jails. The officers, who were to be named "cadets", were the toughest gunmen they had in the British Army and who previously had held rank in the 1914-1918 war. I made light of the news and said, "They will be of very little use".

"No, no!", Dick said. "We are in for a pretty tough time, and a lot of us are going to go under. I feel that I am one of them who will go." I laughed at him for being such a gloomy prophet. He shook his head. He was really worried that day, and it was the only occasion on which I ever saw him depressed.

Dick McKee and Peadar Clancy.

Dick McKee and Peadar Clancy (Brigade Vice-Commandant) were, in common with the rest of us, "on the

known since as Bloody Sunday, Dick and Peadar were both tracked by a spy to Fitzpatrick's house, and the house was raided in the early hours of Sunday morning. The news of the shooting of some sixteen British spies in their beds, in the Mount Street area, and the reprisals carried out by the auxiliaries on a crowd of some twenty thousand people in Croke Park, in the afternoon, drove every other thought out of their heads. In the evening of that Sunday, Molly Stokes (sister of Dick Stokes) came over to Walter House, Drumcondra, and told us the heart-breaking news that Dick McKee and Peadar Clancy were in the Castle. On the following day, the British announced that they had been shot while attempting to escape.

I saw Dick McKee's body afterwards, and it was almost unrecognisable. He had evidently been tortured before being shot. Peadar had a clean bullet wound in the temple and apparently was put out of pain at once. News leaked out that, after the shooting in Mount Street, the auxiliaries, infuriated at the loss of so many of their special agents, endeavoured to force information out of Dick and Peadar. They must have beaten Dick almost to pulp. When they threatened him with death, according to reports, Dick's last words were, "Go on, and do your worst!".

This was a shocking blow to the Dublin Brigade. Never was an officer so popular and so thorough as Dick McKee. Every man in the Brigade loved him. Peadar, a slight, boyish-looking lad from Clare, was very little behind Dick in general ability, and second to none in courage and intelligence.

Dick McKee was tall, slight, very wide between the shoulders, but stooped, and seldom stood up to his full height of over six feet. He had jet black hair, a slightly hooked nose, a small black moustache and a magnificent set of small white teeth, which he showed when he laughed. He was possessed of tireless energy. His very appearance gave the impression that he was always in a hurry and that he always had so much to do before he died. He had a premonition that he would not live through the fight. He spoke to me about it in the course of a conversation which took place at 10A, Aungier Street, and to which I have already referred.

Dick had one fault, if it could be called a fault. He was not sure of himself in the beginning. He was inclined to be hesitant and to consult other officers before making a major decision. I knew at that time practically every thought that passed through his mind. I remember one night meeting him in Drumcondra Road, and we walked along, wheeling our bicycles. He asked me what did I think of Collins. I told him that Collins was a tremendous personality; he was forging his way to the front, and he did not mind whom he trampled on; he had come over from London to represent the exiles on the I.R.B., of which he would be in control eventually. Dick said, "We will see about that!". In less than a month, however, Dick, in common with every one of the other officers, looked up to Collins. Possibly from his association with Collins, he shook off that hesitancy and never seemed to have doubts on any problem. He always had his mind made up and saw into every detail.

Raid on Collinstown Aerodrome:

One afternoon when returning from my job in the Accounts Office of the Corporation, I overtook Tom Byrne, who was then O/C, 1st Battalion, Dublin Brigade. He told me, quite confidentially, that there were big things in contemplation by his Battalion during the coming week. I asked him what was in contemplation.

He replied, "A raid on Collinstown Aerodrome for about seventy-five rifles and two thousand rounds of ammunition".

I asked did the Brigade know of this, and he said, "No". Acting on my own initiative, I forbade him to go any further with it until he had received authority from Dick McKee.

When I informed Dick of this plan, he approved of it and, with his usual thoroughness, insisted on knowing every single detail, before it was even seriously considered. We had several meetings with the officers concerned in the 1st Battalion - Seán Flood, Paddy Holohan and, I think, Peadar Breslin. These men informed us that they were employed, working at their respective trades, in the Aerodrome, and they claimed to know everything about the routine of the British military there at the time. They said there was a guard of, approximately, thirty men always on duty, discipline was very lax, and the chief sentries around the place were two Airedale dogs. These dogs, it appeared, would literally eat up any person in civilian attire approaching after dark, but they were not interested in persons in uniform.

I remember we called in all our veterinary students to know how best to deal with the dogs, and Seán O'Donovan gave us really good advice. He told us to give them a dose of morphia, in pieces of raw meat, when the men were knocking off work in the evening, and he guaranteed that the dogs would take no interest in what might take place afterwards. The meat was duly handed to the dogs and, during the whole operation, they slept quite soundly.

The job I got was the mobilisation of transport. Assuming that the raid was successful, two cars would have to be allotted to take away the loot, both going into the Fingal area. There would be, approximately, thirty-five men going on the raid. I felt that I would need to have nine cars, that is, seven to bring home the victorious raiding party and two to carry away the rifles. As usual, numerous difficulties arose. I was at my wits' end to obtain the required number of cars.

After having been forced to postpone the job once through lack of sufficient transport, I was coming out of the Municipal Buildings one day and I saw a very trim-looking Ford car, newly painted, etc., with one of our men, Jim Fitzgerald, seated at the wheel.

"Who owns the car, Jimmy?", I asked.

"Dr. Kathleen Lynn", he replied.

I said to myself, "Good!"

I said to Dick McKee, "I have secured another car if anybody knows Dr. Lynn".

"Come on, over to Collins", he said.

We went to Michael Collins at his office at 32,

Bachelor's Walk. I asked him did he know Dr. Lynn.

Collins said, "Yes. What do you want?".

"I want a loan of her car for a job. Will you give me a note of introduction?"

"What is the job?", he asked.

"We both told him, "Collinstown Aerodrome".

"When is it on?", he asked.

We told him, and he nearly hit the roof. He jumped from his chair and said, "There will be no b------- raid on Collinstown that night!".

"Alright", I said, "you go down, and tell that to the 1st Battalion. I have called it off once already."

"Well", he said, "there will be no raid that night. I'll tell you and Dick only. Dev. is coming home to Ireland that night" - this was after his escape from Lincoln Jail. "He is going out in that area and, if you start a raid on Collinstown, you will have every British soldier and R.I.C. man out around every road at about two in the morning, just when he is passing through. We cannot have Dev. caught, so you better put off your job for another night."

I had to report officially to the Brigadier that I had again failed to secure the transport. However, eventually the raid took place. The dogs were given the dope. Paddy Holohan, dressed as an immaculate British officer, came through the gateway and walked, rather noisily, over to where the sentry should be. It had been

a wet night earlier on, and the sentry, apparently feeling cold and miserable, was not at his post. The dogs were sleeping peacefully. Paddy walked around the hut twice, looking for the sentry. The plan was to walk up to the sentry and, while he was presenting arms, to hit him on the chin, but there was no sentry. Tired of walking around the hut, Paddy said, "Ah! Come on, lads!". His party, in the meantime, had crept up, silently, behind a coal dump. When Paddy said, "Come on", they all charged in from both ends of the hut and stuck up the whole guard. The Corporal was in bed, and the sentry was warming his toes at the stove. The raiding party soon secured seventy-five rifles, the ammunition and approximately seventy-five sets of equipment.

Then the poor sentry said to them, "For the love of -------, don't leave me here!". To save his skin, they took him outside, rolled him around in the mud, with his consent, tied his hands and feet behind his back and smeared his face with mud. The men on that job certainly were thorough, but it was all because of the extraordinary knack of foreseeing things that the Brigadier possessed. They all had revolvers, knuckle-dusters and daggers combined. After each member of the guard was bound and gagged, he was dragged on his back over to a shelf that ran along the side of the hut, his feet tied together, lifted off the ground and tied to the rack. Then the raiding party set off.

As regards the transport, one car that I had secured, with, of course, the consent of its owner, was a

Talbot touring car, the property of Paddy Corrigan or, as we call him politely, "Alderman Paddy Corrigan", the undertaker in Camden Street. This car was loaded with forty-nine rifles, a pile of equipment, the driver and two men. They were to drive out to a dump at the top of the Nag's Head, on the road towards The Naul, about fourteen or fifteen miles from the city. We had not reckoned for such a huge weight on the car and, unfortunately, one of the tyres burst. Owen Cullen was the driver, and he stuck at it, in spite of the burst tyre, until he met two Fingal Brigade Officers, Michael Rock and Willie Rooney, at the top of the hill, leading to the Nag's Head. There the rifles were taken off and transferred to horses and carts.

Owen Cullen and his friends drove off in the Talbot car, with its flat back tyre. They turned to the left, down by Malahoo off Garristown road, at Springhill. The tyre was in ribbons and the row the car made would almost waken the dead. So they abandoned the car and set off to walk back to Dublin. They arrived back pretty well footsore and weary, and reported to Dick McKee. They had taken the precaution to note the sizes of the tyre and wheel of the car, and Dick, with his usual alacrity, procured another wheel and a new tyre. He hired a taxi, and they drove out to try and salvage Alderman Corrigan's car. They found it very well guarded by a few R.I.C. men on the side of the roadway at Springhill. They drove on, and came back to town.

Things looked black for poor Alderman Corrigan, but he got out of the trouble in the most ingenious way. He had arranged, prior to lending us the car, to have it

transformed into a motor hearse. As far as I know, Callow's of Westland Row were doing the job. Immediately on receiving information that the R.I.C. had his car, Alderman Pat went down to Callow's and asked to see a new motor hearse body. The management were most anxious to accommodate him, and showed him a beautiful new body.

"Have you not put it on the chassis yet?", asked Pat innocently.

No, Mr. Corrigan. We will send up for the car to-day."

"You have already got it", said Paddy. "You got it yesterday".

"Oh! No!", said the man in Callow's.

"Oh! Yes!", said Paddy. "One of your men came up. I gave him the switch key, and he drove away the car."

"Could you identify him?". Paddy assured him, of course, that he could. The whole staff was lined up, to see if he would recognise the man who was supposed to have taken away the Talbot car. Paddy raised hell when he found the man was not present, and reported the theft of his car to the police. Just as he reported it to one station, the police were waiting for him when he arrived home. So the car was recovered from the R.I.C. A few days afterwards, I said to Dick McKee, "I suppose you will give it back to him".

"Oh! No!", he replied. "It has to do another job yet." I do not know what the other job was.

The G-Division:

About July, 1919, Dick McKee rang me up and asked me to meet him at 5.30 p.m. at the rere entrance to Gill's in O'Connell Street, where he was employed at this time as a printer. I met him and we came across to 44, Parnell Square, our newly acquired headquarters. He told me that he had been talking very seriously with Michael Collins and Dick Mulcahy, and that they had decided that the time had come to wipe out the G-Division. This came as a shock to me. I said nothing.

"The position is this", said Dick. "These fellows are watching us night and day. They know where we live, where we sleep, where we eat; and, when they have got all the information they want about us, they will spread the net a bit wider, and follow and find out the same information about the people with whom we associate. We know that they are almost ready to strike and some night, when we are all sleeping in our beds, they will get every officer in the Dublin Brigade." I agreed.

"We will go down in history as a "laughing-stock"," he said, "if we let them get away with that. We have already given them a final warning. We have told them that, if they did not resign, the next reminder they would get would be a bullet. We have got to go ahead at once."

"Well, yes", I said, "I agree but, Dick, I want to make my position clear in this. It is a job I would not be prepared to do myself. I simply could not do it, even if you ordered me to do it; and, for that reason, I will never ask any other man to do what I would not be prepared to do myself. So, when you are picking your men for it, will you please leave me out?". He was, I think,

disappointed, but he did not say so.

"We know quite well", I went on, "that Cathal Brugha will raise hell over this, because he won't have it".

"Whether Cathal wants it or not, we are going ahead, and I am making arrangements to have Smith shot during the coming week."

"If Cathal disapproves", I asked, "what will happen then?".

"Well", he replied, "what we assume will happen is that, at the next meeting of G.H.Q., Cathal will ask by whose orders was Smith shot. I will say by mine."

"What then?"

"Well, I will almost certainly be suspended and tried by courtmartial for breaking orders, or exceeding them."

"What will happen then?"

"You will have to carry on the Dublin Brigade!"

"Well, Dick, I won't. If Cathal suspends you for carrying out this operation, I'll tell him that you did it after consultation with me and that I approved; and I shall decline to carry on the Dublin Brigade if you are to be punished."

He smiled. "That is all I wanted to know!" - and so it ended on a happy note.

One little matter is perhaps worthy of comment here. I warned Dick that, if he was shooting the G-Division, he should start with Bruton. Bruton was a brave man and, from our point of view, a dangerous man. I told Dick that,

if he shot Bruton, I felt certain that Smith would resign and clear the country.

Dick laughed and said, "Go on! You are only saying that, because Bruton raided your house!".

"No, it is not that, Dick. Smith and Bruton raided my house, with about fifty others, looking for Michael Collins. The first man into every room was Bruton, and he fully expected to find Collins behind the door, staring him with a gun. Smith spent about three-quarters of an hour searching the outhouses, and only came up when he was quite sure Collins was not there."

Dick did not heed me, but went on with the job, and Smith was shot up very badly, at the corner of Millmount Avenue and Drumcondra Road, within the week. We afterwards found out, to our cost, how right I was. After the death of Smith, Bruton did not resign but took up his residence permanently in Dublin Castle, and many a brave man went to his death or torture at the hands of the Auxiliaries, after he had been identified by Bruton.

I looked forward to the next meeting of G.H.Q. with great trepidation. I had a great love for Cathal Brugha, but I felt that I would have to side with Dick McKee if there was a row. I waited for Dick after the meeting of the Staff.

"How did you get on with Cathal?", I asked.

"Oh, that!", said Dick, with a big hearty laugh. "Cathal said, 'Who shot Smith, McKee?'. 'Certain members of the Dublin Brigade'. 'A damn good job!', said Cathal."

But he did not tell him to go ahead with any more.

Smith lingered for quite a long time, though he must have had at least ten holes in him. He ran up the length of Millmount Avenue to his own house, with about five bullets in him, and knocked at his door. Tom Keogh came racing up the street after him and put two more through him as the door opened; yet Smith lived three weeks.

This job against Smith was the first time that Tom Keogh became officially known. Before I had parted from Dick McKee, after having asked him to exempt me from looking for men, he had said to me, "Very well. Get me Mick McDonnell, and tell him I want to see him". McDonnell was Quartermaster of the 2nd Battalion at the time, and a really efficient quartermaster he was. I called over to his house, or rather to the house where he was staying, No. 482 North Circular Road, in the early morning. I was shown up to the bedroom, and Mick was dressing and washing. I told him the Brigadier wanted to see him.

Mick asked, "Is it a job?".

"Yes", I said. "You will learn about it from him."

Then I noticed another bed in the room, a small bed, and on it was the figure of a boy. I looked at the figure in the bed, and Mick said, in his rather high-pitched voice, "He is alright. He is my half-brother, Tom Keogh. If there is any job being done, he is going to be in on it

with me". Tom woke up, sat on the bed, and I shook hands with him. That was the first time I met him, although in after years we worked a tremendous lot together.

The reason Dick McKee feared that Cathal would protest against the shooting is best illustrated by the following incident:

This took place shortly afterwards, when Dick was in jail. He was arrested in 76 Harcourt Street about October, 1919, during a raid by the British military on the headquarters of the American Loan. On his arrest, I was appointed O/C of the Dublin Brigade in his place.

One evening, Frank Henderson, O/C of the 2nd Battalion, came to me with a worried look and told me that there was something approaching a mutiny on foot in the 2nd Battalion. He said that two of his men - really excellent fellows - had come to him a few nights previously and stated that they were fed up with running away from police whenever they went out to drill. They said that the Company would be drilling in a field and, when three or four policemen would appear at the corner of it, the officer would order the men to move on. These two men, Jim Brennan and Mick Keogh, said that the next time they went out to drill they were bringing guns, and they were going to start the war by shooting any policeman that followed them across the field. I told Frank I would go down to interview the two men and try to talk a bit of sense into their heads.

I did so. They repeated their intention, and they accused all the officers of the Dublin Brigade of being too

cowardly to allow anybody to shoot. I pointed out that they were members of an army, that G.H.Q. decided on policy and sent down their orders to the Dublin Brigade, through me, to the Battalions, right down to the individual members of the Company; that they were never to shoot except on orders; if they did, they were guilty of murder - nothing short of it. I said it was not a question of the Dublin Brigade officers being cowardly but the position was that we had to await orders from G.H.Q. before we dared embark on any policy, such as, the shooting of enemy forces. They gave me their word that they would keep quiet until I had the matter raised at the next meeting of the G.H.Q. staff, which took place in the Dublin Typographical Institution Office, 35 Lower Gardiner Street.

I spoke to Michael Collins and Dick Mulcahy. They both said, "See Cathal about it". When the meeting was over, I asked Cathal would he mind staying back, as I wanted to discuss an important matter with him. He said, "Yes". All the other officers went home except Paddy McGurk, Quartermaster of the Dublin Brigade. McGurk was on Headquarters staff, taking the place of Diarmuid O'Hegarty who had been arrested with Dick McKee in 76 Harcourt Street.

Cathal stood with his back to the fire, and I proceeded to announce the grievances of my friends, Mick Keogh and Jim Brennan. McGurk, who evidently did not know Cathal as well as I did, kept butting in and, eventually, I got so tired of this that I stopped talking altogether. I let McGurk continue on his own, and he went on for a long time. He had the knack of addressing Cathal as "A chara".

I sat waiting for the explosion, which I knew was about to come.

When McGurk had finished, Cathal joined his hands behind his back, in front of the fire, and said, "Right! What's this your name is?".

"McGurk."

"Righto, Mack! That thing you have been talking about can't be done. That is all."

"But, a chara" -

"No 'buts'! It can't be done. Do you understand that? That is all." Cathal waved his hand, terminating the interview.

I was leaving with McGurk and, when we reached the door, Cathal said, "Come here, Micheál, for a minute!". I went back.

"What's that fellow, McGurk, doing here?"

"He has been appointed deputy on the staff, in lieu of Diarmuid O'Hegarty", I replied.

"Well, now", said Cathal, "I'll tell you why that won't be done, but it is only for yourself. When de Valera went to America, I told him that our activities here would keep pace with his progress in the States. I told him I would do nothing which might cause him to suffer any setback there. You will realise that our main hope of ultimate success lies in the successful organisation of American opinion. If we start shooting here, before Dev. thinks

they are ready for it in the States, he will probably have to run out and come home, and we'll hardly ever recover from a blow like that. Now, I have written him a letter, which he should have received by now, asking him how does he think the American public will react if we start attacking the British military, police and detectives. If I get back the answer that I hope to get back, I'll start off at once. Tell your two warriors to keep their powder dry and wait for another few weeks; and, if its fighting they want, I will give them their bellyful but, in the meantime, no shooting! The order previously issued, that Volunteers are to evade arrest, must stand." Within a few weeks, Cathal gave the word "go" and we went.

Attack on Lord French:

As I have already mentioned, Dick McKee was arrested in the autumn of 1919, during a raid by the British on 76 Harcourt Street, and I was appointed Acting O/C of the Dublin Brigade. About this time, it was decided by G.H.Q. Staff to hold conventions in every Brigade area in Ireland, with a view to tightening up organisation and co-ordinating our efforts. Incidentally, I think this was the first occasion on which the Irish Volunteers became officially known as the I.R.A. As a result of these conventions, arrangements were made to sub-divide the country into Divisions, co-ordinating a number of Brigades in each Division.

We held the convention, as instructed, in No. 25 Parnell Square. It was a very risky undertaking, and we met under possibly the heaviest guard that ever was placed

on an I.R.A. function in Dublin. I realised that, if a successful raid was made by the British on the convention, we would lose almost every officer in the Dublin Brigade. It was amazing the amount of concentration that was given to the work of the convention by the delegates; every man's attention was completely devoted to the job before him, and there was no sign of nerves of jitters of any sort.

At the conclusion of the meeting, I sent for Martin Savage. He was a very cheery young boy, goodlooking in an almost girlish way, with a big shock of dark hair brushed back from his very mobile face. I never had seen him that he was not smiling and everybody, who met him and knew him, loved him. I handed him all the papers belonging to the convention and, in addition, Dick McKee's private papers. These private papers of McKee were most important and contained, amongst other matters, the names of all the Squad, which was then operating against the British G-Division and the British spies sent over to take their place as they were wiped out. I warned Martin that he was to appear at no parades, drills or functions of any sort, while he had those papers in his possession. His face fell, and he appealed to me not to shut him off from his pals in his Company. I impressed on him the importance of the papers, which I was handing into his keeping, and, after a lot of persuasion, extracted from him a promise that, until the Brigadier was released, he would act as my orderly and nothing else. I went home, happy in the knowledge that the papers were safe.

The report of the convention contained the names of all the delegates. As far as I can remember, they

consisted of three delegates from every Company in the Dublin Brigade, or close on a hundred names in all. The report contained also a list of the resolutions, a short summary of the discussion which followed, and the voting wherever voting took place.

At this time I was able to attend my office work regularly and, one day when cycling home towards Drumcondra for lunch, coming down Parnell Square at breakneck speed on a push bicycle I saw Joe Leonard. He looked very excited and almost worn out, and his waterproof coat was flapping in the wind behind him. When he saw me, he half stopped and then rushed away on the bicycle. I said to myself, "I wonder what that fellow has been up to". Then, realising that I would know it all in good time, I pursued my way home towards Drumcondra.

I had just finished my lunch in Walter House when the side gate opened, and Seán Treacy and Seumas Robinson came in, pushing their bicycles before them. They walked around the garden and came in, through the kitchen, to the livingroom in the front of the house. They opened the door of the livingroom and stood on the threshold, both looking tired out and splashed with mud up to the knees. My mother invited them to have some lunch, and Seán said, "No. We are only stopping a few moments".

I said, "You ought to get some of that muck off you. Slip up to the bathroom, and I will bring you some brushes". I followed both of them up to the bathroom and said, "What is it, Seán?".

Either he or Seumas said, "We were out after Lord French".

known since as Bloody Sunday, Dick and Peadar were both tracked by a spy to Fitzpatrick's house, and the house was raided in the early hours of Sunday morning. The news of the shooting of some sixteen British spies in their beds, in the Mount Street area, and the reprisals carried out by the auxiliaries on a crowd of some twenty thousand people in Croke Park, in the afternoon, drove every other thought out of their heads. In the evening of that Sunday, Molly Stokes (sister of Dick Stokes) came over to Walter House, Drumcondra, and told us the heart-breaking news that Dick McKee and Peadar Clancy were in the Castle. On the following day, the British announced that they had been shot while attempting to escape.

I saw Dick McKee's body afterwards, and it was almost unrecognisable. He had evidently been tortured before being shot. Peadar had a clean bullet wound in the temple and apparently was put out of pain at once. News leaked out that, after the shooting in Mount Street, the auxiliaries, infuriated at the loss of so many of their special agents, endeavoured to force information out of Dick and Peadar. They must have beaten Dick almost to pulp. When they threatened him with death, according to reports, Dick's last words were, "Go on, and do your worst!".

This was a shocking blow to the Dublin Brigade. Never was an officer so popular and so thorough as Dick McKee. Every man in the Brigade loved him. Peadar, a slight, boyish-looking lad from Clare, was very little behind Dick in general ability, and second to none in courage and intelligence.

"Did you get him?".

"We are not sure. We almost blew one car off the road but we are not sure whether he was in it or not".

Seumas said, in a broken voice, "We lost one man, killed".

I said, "Who?".

"Martin Savage".

I don't think I ever got such a blow in my life, one reason because of the love I had for Martin. Then I realised, in a flash, what his death might possibly mean to the whole Dublin Brigade. I said, "Who sent you on that job?", and he replied that they had got instructions from Collins late the previous night.

Seumas Robinson produced an unused Mills hand-grenade out of his pocket. "What am I going to do with this?" he said.

I took it from him and said, "I'll look after that, Seumas".

He then told me he had commandeered a bicycle on the way in. I told him not to leave the bicycle in Walter House, as the house had been used by a number of men who were on the run, including Michael Collins. I sent him out on the bicycle, and told him to leave it against the kerbstone outside a shop and to go away as if he had forgotten it. I dumped the grenade in the Tolka river.

I rushed off on my bicycle down to Ballybough where Tom Keogh lived. I knocked at the door, which was opened

by Miss McDonnell, Tom's half-sister. I ran into the little parlour and saw Tom Keogh sitting on a chair, with his arms flung out and his head resting down on the table. His whole body was shaken with sobs. I shook him and said, "Tom, I want to talk to you quickly".

He lifted a tear-stained face to me and said, "Did you hear about Martin?".

"I did. But we can't sit here lamenting now. Do you know where he worked?"

There was another officer with Tom, I think Tom Ennis, but of this I cannot be sure. I assumed that it was Tom Ennis. He said, "Yes, I know. In Quirk's of the North Strand".

I said, "Get over there, quick, and clear out Martin's room. All the Dublin Brigade papers are in his room and, if the British get them, we are destroyed. Clear the room out completely, but be sure to get at least three bundles of papers, tied up in rubber bands. Get them at all costs!". He rushed off on his bicycle and I waited, endeavouring to console Tom Keogh.

After half an hour, Tom Ennis came back with the papers, every one of them intact. I said, "How did you get on?".

He said, "They were just coming up on the lorry to raid the house when I got out, and they actually fired on me as I crossed the road". They had evidently identified Martin but, by a few minutes, thanks to the pluck and skill

of Tom Ennis, we were able to save the whole Dublin Brigade organisation from extinction.

The attack on Lord French, as is generally known, was a failure. It was a job carried out by a small handful of very brave men, but rushed into without proper military planning. I made exhaustive enquiries as to why the job was taken on without proper preparation, what arms were used on it, and how was Martin killed. It appears that the men got orders to go on the job very late on the previous night. The Dublin Brigade Quartermaster, who had a list of all the dumps containing the hand-grenades which had been turned out in Parnell Street, entered these dumps and took out a quantity of hand-grenades. The tragedy, from the military point of view, was that each hand-grenade was fitted with a five-seconds fuse. This had been done deliberately by me, after consultation with the Brigadier. It was a small grenade, capable of being thrown a long distance and primarily intended for use in open fighting, and, for this reason, the fuse was cut longer than usual. If I had been consulted - and this is not a case of knowledge after the event - I would have cut the fuse down to 1½/2 seconds. The result of the whole operation would probably have been different, and we might possibly have saved Martin's life.

The attacking party took up its position in the yard belonging to Peter Kelly's publichouse. What had not been foreseen was that a policeman was put on point duty at the inter-section of the road leading from Ashtown station to the Park into the main Navan road. The policeman naturally cramped the style of the attacking party in the

yard. A member of the attacking party was sent down to Ashtown station, and a signal was agreed upon whereby the attackers would know which car contained Lord French and which his private escort of detectives, apart from the military escort in a Crossley tender. When the agreed signal was given, locating Lord French, as far as I can remember, in the first car, and just as the party were moving off from the station, the escort car shot out very speedily in front, with the result that Lord French was in the second car, not in the first. There was a cart of some description in the yard at Kelly's and, as the escort and Lord French's car passed up with great speed, Martin Savage pulled this cart out across the road in an attempt to obstruct the party. The original intention appears to have been that Martin was to push it out but, for some reason or another, he had not time to turn it. Like the brave little soldier that he was, he pulled the cart into the line of fire. The military escort immediately opened fire before he could completely block the road, and he dropped. The car swerved by him and flew on towards the Park. Numerous grenades landed on the top of both the first and second cars, but the fuse was so long that they only rolled off and blew holes in the ground. The escort fired rather wildly and wounded another of our men, Dan Breen, in the thigh. The car then sped across the road and disappeared into the Park.

I did not know that Dan had been hit until the following day, when I heard that not only had he been wounded but that, with a hole in his thigh, pumping blood, he had pushed a bicycle down to Phibsboro. I was informed

that the British had traced him, with blood-hounds, as far as Phibsboro Church, and that Dan was lying between life and death, from loss of blood, in Twomey's house on the Phibsboro Road, a few hundred yards from Doyle's corner. I felt that it was fatal to leave Dan there and, without consulting anybody, I rushed down to Dr. John Ryan, who lived in 69 Lower Gardiner Street. I asked him had he any news of Dan's condition. He told me that he dare not go near Dan but that one of his staff, Dr. Geraghty, had visited him and found him very weak from loss of blood and in a very critical condition. I asked Dr. John if I could dare shift him, because I felt that, if the British had any sense, having trailed him so far, they must know that, when the blood-hounds lost the trail, he could not be very far away from Phibsboro Church.

Dr. Ryan got a further report on his condition the next day, and told me that I could take a chance but that it was a very grave risk indeed for Dan. I made arrangements to move Dan, after having first consulted Michael Collins and Dick Mulcahy. I hired a car and drove up to Twomey's, with the intention of taking Dan away. When I arrived, I found Liam Tobin and Tom Cullen half-carrying Dan down the front path. I drove on. I do not know where they took him but, in view of his condition at the time, Dan Breen must be a super-man to have survived that ordeal. He is still alive, in spite of all the wounds and all the lead he carried in his body.

Reprisals:

On the day after the attack on Lord French, the "Irish

Independent" published a leading article, deprecating any such attack, and it actually went so far as to state that one of the assassins had been killed in "this dastardly attack". The night after the issue of this leading article, I was crossing over to Parnell Square and, just outside the Rotunda Hospital, I met a crowd of Martin's pals. I stopped and asked them where they were going. They said they were going over to the Independent office to bump off the editor, Harrington.

I said, "Oh, no! You are not!".

They said, "Did you see what he said about Martin?".

"I did, but you men have no moral right to shoot any man without orders. If you do, you are guilty of murder, and we have no place for murderers in our army."

I prevailed on them to come back with me to 44 Parnell Square. They were still determined to shoot the editor, and I persuaded them to wait while I went for the Chief of Staff, Dick Mulcahy. I said that, if he gave the order, they could go ahead and do the job, but that I would not sanction it.

Dick Mulcahy came along and admitted that the circumstances clearly called for a demonstration against the "Independent" newspaper. It was decided to proceed at once with the dismantling of the printing machines in the offices. We sent for Paddy McGrath, who was then in charge of the linotype room in the "Independent" and was afterwards Works Manager, I think, of the "Irish Press". He was instructed to tell the raiding party where the big rotary machines were

situated and how best to put them out of commission. He gave all the information which he was ordered to give, and then I remember him drawing himself up to attention and saying, "I have obeyed my military orders. It is my job in the "Independent" to have the paper out on the streets in the early morning. I won't guarantee that there won't be an "Independent" on sale in the streets to-morrow morning".

Some of the party laughingly said, "When we are finished, if you have an "Indepēndent" on the streets to-morrow morning, we will clap you on the back!"

He said, "Alright!", and he went back to his work in the "Independent". He was as good as his word. He had an "Independent" on the streets the next morning but it consisted of only four single sheets, which one could have folded up and put in a small envelope. I don't know if the man concerned clapped him on the back but he certainly did his job well. The machinery was completely demolished. It appears it was the "Irish Times" which printed the abridged copy of the paper.

<u>The Escapes from Lincoln Jail</u>;

Seán McGarry was one of the officers captured in the big round-up made in 1918 by the British, in justification of what they called their 'German Plot'. He was locked up in Lincoln Jail, together with Eamon de Valera, Seán Milroy, Peadar de Loughrey, etc. All the prisoners were there for about eight or nine months.

One day Mrs. McGarry, Seán's wife, called in to see us at Richmond Road. We said, "How is Seán?".

"I had a funny postcard from him, and I don't know what to make of it." She showed it to us. There was a drawing (pencil sketch) showing a gentleman in a top hat, very much inebriated, standing outside what was obviously intended to be his own hall-door. He was groping around the keyhole of the door with his right hand, and underneath it was, "1918 - can't get in".

I said, "Did you show this to Michael Collins?".

She said, "No. Why should I?".

I said, "I think you had better".

A few days later, another drawing arrived, showing the picture of a man, looking very disconsolate, sitting in his cell, and underneath it was, "1919 - can't get out". Mrs. McGarry brought both these postcards over to Collins. He blew up and asked her what the hell she meant by keeping them so long. Obviously, the prisoners wanted a key sent in.

An impression of the key was taken by means of a piece of soap in the jail and, apparently, a drawing of this was sent out, but of this I am not quite sure. Several keys were sent in, in cakes, to the prisoners, made from the drawing taken from the impression, but they were no use; they did not fit. Eventually, a blank key and a file or two were sent in, in a cake, and in Dublin we waited for the result.

Peadar de Loughrey, who was a wonderful man with his

hands and had kept a foundry in Kilkenny, set to work to cut a key, fashioned after the master key in the prison. It appears that every afternoon all the prisoners were allowed to assemble in a common-room to read, write, play cards or amuse themselves as best they could. They were undisturbed for a few hours. De Loughrey worked industriously, making the key. To do this, each afternoon he used screw the big lock off the door, put it on the table, and work at it. Shortly before the warders were due to come back, the lock was screwed on again. Seán McGarry said that how they ever got away with it, he does not know, because each time they took the screw out of the door, they enlarged the hole and, when the lock went back for the last time, it was ready to fall off. However, it escaped detection. At last the key was made, a master key which would open every main door in the prison.

In Dublin, Collins got to work in his usual thorough manner. He tried numerous means of effecting the escape and transport of the prisoner from Lincoln to Liverpool and Manchester. He described most of them as impracticable but finally decided to utilise the British taxi system. He afterwards told me that the British taxi system must undoubtedly be one of the finest in the world.

Collins and Harry Boland left, and journeyed over to Lincoln. They had made another key, similar to the one that they had in the jail, just in case anything went wrong inside. The appointed place for the men to come out was a doorway, very seldom used, off one of the courtyards of the prison. The prison was surrounded by barbed wire, and there was a sentry quite close to this small gate. Harry Boland and Michael Collins crept up close to the barbed wire

and, when the appointed hour was drawing near, they cut one strand of the barbed wire with a bolt cutter. Harry said it snapped with a din that you could hear half a mile away. They crouched down, fearing the arrival of the sentry, but Harry said the poor fellow was so much taken up with a young lady, up against the wall, that he paid no attention. They crept up to the gate. Dead silence! After a while, they heard footsteps coming towards the gate from the inside.

Collins said, "Is that you, Dev.?".

The answer came, "Yes".

Collins, being, as he always was in those days, impetuous, put his key into the lock, turned it rather sharply and, to their horror, the key snapped. Dev., McGarry and Milroy were, at this time, close up against the gate, and Collins said, in a heartbroken voice, "Good God, Dev., the key is broken in the lock!".

"Wait a minute", said Dev., and saying, in a hushed voice, "In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost", he inserted his key and pushed out the broken one. He turned the key and the door swung open. The three stepped out, as far as I can remember, in canvas slippers to deaden the sound of their footsteps, and the five made their way off.

One thing they forgot, and that was to lock the door after them. McGarry told me that the escape would have been absolutely perfect and completely mystifying, if they had only thought of locking the gate after them.

They stepped into a waiting taxi, hired by Collins, and they told the taxi man they were going to a fancy-dress

ball, or some other excuse like that. At that time, taxis in England were not allowed to travel more than twenty miles. Collins, with that wonderful genius of his for organisation, had arranged a series of taxis to bring the prisoners all across England, dividing the time up into minutes actually, i.e., allowing a matter of one or two minutes to go from one taxi to pick up another. He said that not one single taxi was late. By means of these relays, they brought the prisoners as far as Liverpool and Manchester, from Lincoln, in a matter of a few hours, and no one taximan saw the other, so that pursuit would have been absolutely impossible.

All three escapees were successfully brought to Ireland. The few of us, who were in the know, got a great amount of enjoyment when reading the statement by Mr. Shortt, Under-Secretary for Ireland, in the House of Commons, that "none of the prisoners has yet crossed to Ireland" whereas at that time the three of them were safely housed in Dublin city or county.

About the middle of the month of March, Michael Collins came down to my mother at Richmond Road and told her to expect Seán McGarry the following morning. Seán duly arrived, and everybody at home strove to make him happy. The whole atmosphere of the house changed with the arrival of Seán, although he dared not put his nose outside the door, day or night, because he was so well known in the vicinity. He was always in the very best of form - jokes, stories and laughter all the day. I had only been a short while married at this time, and Seán and my young wife became great pals. Seán sat all day at the fireside, and he appeared to suffer from a weakness common to most of us - he

could never leave the poker alone. The women at home abused him all day long over this weakness of his, but without result. One day my wife, in order to cure Seán, carefully plastered the handle of the poker with blacklead. Seán poked the fire at least ten times in a half-hour, and succeeded in transferring about half a tin of blacklead to his face. For a long time, he could not make out the cause of our laughter, until he stood up and saw his face in the mirror. He chased my wife round and round the table. She saved herself by running down the garden, and all Seán could do was stand at the kitchen door and curse.

We were very happy in those days but they had, in one way, their pathetic side for Seán. He had three kiddies, Desmond, Sadie and Emmet. Emmet and Sadie were twins, born in 1916. Mrs. McGarry, up to this, had not come to see her husband but she used tell her maid to bring the three kiddies out for a walk every afternoon, when the weather permitted, instructing her to bring them up Richmond Road. We all used to feel for Seán because he would go upstairs into the drawingroom and wait there for hours to get one glimpse of his three children from behind the curtain.

After a while, we thought it safe to let Mrs. McGarry come. Collins, of course, had to be asked for his approval. Mrs. McGarry came and saw her husband, and then one day she brought along little Emmet, aged about three-and-a-half years. Emmet, of course, did not know his daddy - he believed he was going to see the doctor - but, after a while, he crept up on to his daddy's knee, and he told us all, in

his little innocent way, that he was a was a very nice doctor. Then, suddenly, recognition came into the little kid's eyes. He threw his arms around his father's neck and cried out, "You are my daddy!". It was the most moving scene I ever remember, not only for Seán, but the whole lot of us felt the tears in our eyes. Emmet never told anybody that he had been to see his father and, later on, when Sadie was brought, she also kept quiet; and thus the days passed.

Mansion House Concert:

Coming on to the month of April, a concert was announced in the Mansion House - the Emmet Anniversary Concert it was called - and on the poster was:-

AN ADDRESS WILL BE GIVEN BY
A PROMINENT REPUBLICAN LEADER.

WHO?

Collins decided to produce Seán McGarry in public, and it was arranged to get him into the Mansion House at about six o'clock on the evening of the concert. Seán felt very nervous indeed because, for probably the first time in his life, he had to stand and deliver a carefully prepared speech. He was smuggled into the Mansion House. The first part of the programme went through, and there was a long pause. One could feel the air of expectancy in the vast audience. From the supper-room, at the rere of the round room, came the sound of a pipers' band tuning up. After a few minutes, the doors of the supper-room were thrown open and the pipers' band came in, making a most infernal noise. In the middle of the band walked Seán McGarry, in uniform. As soon as he was recognised,

pandemonium broke out. The cheering, clapping and whistling were loud enough to drown even the pipers' band.

Seán walked rather shyly up through the band and on to the platform, and he stood there, waiting for the din to subside. It was many minutes before silence was restored, and Seán rather shyly started his speech. What he said, I don't remember, and it does not much matter. The main fact was that he was produced in public at the very time the British were boasting that not one of the prisoners had crossed to Ireland.

Needless to say, precautions were taken by the Dublin Brigade. The moment Seán appeared in the hall, every exit door was closed and a few guards placed on it. No one was allowed to leave the hall until after the conclusion of the speech. The men on guard told Dick McKee afterwards that it was surprising the number of people who wanted to leave in a hurry, once they had seen Seán McGarry, but, no matter what excuse, nobody left. It was a night that few of us will ever forget. It was long after midnight before the people left the round-room. McGarry was taken out by some members of the Dublin Brigade immediately on the conclusion of his speech, got a taxi, owned and driven by Joe Lawless, and brought back to Walter House, Richmond Road, Drumcondra.

Funeral of Dick Coleman:

Early in 1919, Dick Coleman of Swords died in internment at Usk Prison, Monmouthshire. It was decided by the Dublin Brigade to give him a public funeral. Dick McKee, with his usual thoroughness, made out the route of the funeral and the positions of all the various trade bodies and others who wished to participate.

Dick and I worked very hard for a couple of days at it, and made out one complete copy, which I handed in to the "Independent" newspaper, asking them to publish it on the Saturday morning, i.e., the day before the funeral. Imagine our horror on the Saturday morning on finding that the "Independent" had only published an abridged edition of it, and we had no second copy! I tried to recover the original script from the "Independent" office but failed. Some sub-editor has consigned it to the wastepaper basket and it was swept away. We both used rather lurid language and started to make out another copy, working mostly from memory.

We then decided that the surest way would be to publish a large advertisement in the "Sunday Independent", stating that an officer would attend from 9 a.m. on the Sunday at 6 Harcourt Street, who would allocate their respective positions in the funeral to the trade bodies and organisations wishing to take part. I was selected for this job.

My first job, however, on the Sunday morning, which incidentally, was the wettest Sunday morning I ever remember, was to go out to Finglas and get some of my men from the Finglas Company to come in at the rere of the graveyard, take away the rifles from the firing party and have them removed to Finglas whence they could be brought back in safety to the city. Having done this, I came back to 6 Harcourt Street

Numerous persons came applying for the position, and I was feeling very happy that the procession would be as big as ever. At about 10.30 a.m., the door opened and in walked a Superintendent from the D.M.P., dressed in full uniform.

I was very courteous to him, of course, and asked him to sit down. He told me he came from Dublin Castle and that he was instructed to tell me that the funeral would be allowed to take place, on six conditions. I said, quite innocently, "Six conditions?", and drew over a piece of paper to write down the six conditions.

I looked at him, and he said -

"No. 1 - Direct route from the Church, Westland Row, to the cemetery.

No. 2 - Traffic arrangements to be in the hands of the D.M.P.

No. 3 - No uniforms to be worn.

No. 4 - No rifles to be carried, or firing party.

No. 5 - No volleys over the grave.

No. 6 - No march back to the city."

I wrote all these down carefully, and thanked him very much.

He said, "I want a guarantee that these six conditions will be adhered to".

I said, "I am sorry I can give no such guarantee. All I can do is to send them on to the senior officers".

He looked at my uniform and said, "You appear to be senior enough to decide them for yourself!".

I said, "I am sorry but I shall have to send them on. But I am sure they will be considered very carefully" - and I showed him out.

I did not arrive at 144 Pearse Street, our headquarters, until about 12.45 that morning. I produced the six conditions to Dick McKee and Dick Mulcahy. We had a good laugh over them and, of course, decided to carry on

as if the conditions did not exist. I may say that we had appointed Oscar Traynor in charge of the party to form the rearguard, and he was given very definite instructions to prevent, at all costs, the British from breaking up the procession from the rear. We all knew that, when Oscar was given the instructions, he would carry them out.

So we started off, with our uniforms and our firing party. We arrived without incident at Glasnevin, filed in and gave Dick Coleman a full military funeral, including the volleys over the grave.

Then we moved to the rear gate of Glasnevin around Prospect Square. The rifles had not appeared. I do not know if the Finglas men ever turned up, but, while we were waiting the assembly of the Brigade at Prospect Square, a large saloon car came up very fast to the gates, which were opened to admit it and then closed behind it, and several sacks, loaded with bulky objects, were thrown into the back. The car swung round and dashed off as speedily as it had come. I said to myself, "That disposes of the rifles". To follow the passage of the car; the driver had only arrived at his garage when the police were in on top of him, opened up the sacks and found they contained a lot of firewood. The rifles had actually been dismantled in the cemetery, by means of long screw-drivers, and carried home concealed in the bearers' topcoats.

As we were standing waiting for the men to form up for the march back, a priest came up to me, in a state of great exćitement, face flushed, and said, "Are you going to march the men back to the city?"

"That is the intention, Father."

"Oh! For God's sake, don't! There are four or five lorries of police drawn up at the Cross Guns bridge, and they won't let you go by. Oh! Don't march back!"

I remember saying to him, "If we don't march back, there will still be blood shed, because not one of those policemen will go back alive. Why don't you tell them to go, while the going is good?".

The priest stood still, looking very much perturbed. I conveyed the information to the Brigadier and Chief of Staff, Dick Mulcahy. We decided, of course, that no matter how many police were there, we would have to march back.

Dick McKee said, "I wonder where shall I march. Will I take the main body?".

I innocently said, "Of course, you will take the main body!".

"Alright", he said. "You take the advance guard."

"You are a hell of a fine pal!", I said.

He looked surprised and said, "Do you not want the job?"

"No, I don't want it, but I am going to take it."

"I'll get someone else."

"I am taking that advance party." I knew that, if I did not, I could never lift my head again. "Can you give

me any help as to what I am to do?"

"No, I can't. I do not know what's going to happen".

"The instructions are I am to prepare a way for the rest of you, at all costs?"

"Yes."

Even if we have to shoot?"

"Even if you have to shoot! But I know you will only do the shooting if everything else fails. I'll give you a hundred and forty men of the 1st Battalion, all armed and all good fellows. But, for God's sake, don't let anybody fire unless it is absolutely necessary!"

I said, "Right", and I withdrew from further conversation, to try and work out in my mind what I was going to do. I must confess I had not the remotest idea. It all depended upon the officer in charge of the police. I had a wild idea that we would move forward, first of all, and parley with the police officer; and that, in the middle of it, I would probably whip out a gun and take him as a hostage. That was as far as I could get, but the job had to be done and there was no good in worrying about it. I remember the priest was still there, trembling.

I gave the usual instructions to the men under my charge, telling them that no man was to dare to fire unless I gave him the order and that, in the event of it being unfavourable, they would form a section across the road and the front rank would go down on their knees.

I was standing there, still dubious, when quite

calmly, as if he was going out for a walk in the park, Dick Mulcahy came down and said, "Seeing that two heads are better than one, I think I will keep you company".

"Righto, Dick."

"Its your job", he said. "I am not interfering, but I might be able to put in a word where it is needed".

"I hope its words you will have to be putting in".

In the meantime, the various Battalions were being lined up. The men had been allowed off for a smoke. Dick Mulcahy turned to me and said, "Micheál, I have got a brainwave. Those policemen on the Cross Guns bridge are probably in a greater state of funk than we are. They were sent up to the Cross Guns bridge".

I snapped my fingers and said, "Dick, you have hit it!".

I called a young orderly, who had a bicycle, and said, "Get down Whitworth Road as fast as you can, and see if there are any police on Dorset Street bridge!".

I turned to Dick and said, "You are right, Dick. These fellows are taking such trouble to show themselves there that I am perfectly sure they will stay there for the next three hours at least.

We waited breathlessly. The young orderly came back and said, "No police on Dorset Street bridge".

I said, "Good!"

I reported to Dick McKee that I was going down Lindsay Road and Iona Road, and back to the city via Dorset Street. We decided to dismiss the men in Dorset Street, with the head of the column on Eccles Street, that is, if we got that far. Dick McKee agreed and off we went. We let the men march at ease down Lindsay Road and Iona Road. They certainly wakened the echoes, singing all the marching songs that we had. When we had safely crossed Dorset Street bridge, Dick Mulcahy said, "Do you know, this is a terribly dark ould street in which to dismiss men!".

I said, "I was just thinking that, and, seeing that the going has been so good, I think we will push on to Parnell Square".

"Damn it!", said he. "We will advance on O'Connell Street."

I said, "Right!".

I called the young orderly beside me, and said, "Go back to the main body and tell Commandant McKee we will dismiss in O'Connell Street, if he approves".

In a few minutes, the young orderly returned on his bicycle and said, "The Commandant agrees". We marched up Dorset Street, down North Frederick Street and in to O'Connell Street, without meeting one single policeman. We finally dismissed in O'Connell Street, with the head of the column on Eden Quay.

I had dropped out opposite what is now the Savoy Cinema and, looking back, I could see the men still filing

down along North Frederick Street and Parnell Square. We brought them up, eight abreast, i.e., the 1st and 2nd Battalions, and the 3rd and 4th drawn up alongside them, and dismissed them by Battalions. The column of eight abreast more than filled the entire length of O'Connell Street. They dismissed by Battalions and, when the last had been dismissed, I don't think I ever heard such a cheer as rang through O'Connell Street. We were feeling very happy. Dick Mulcahy's contribution to the general jubilation was, "If I were you, Micheál, I would not sleep at home for a couple of nights". Then he moved off. That was the end of a great day.

Conscription:

Early in 1918, it was made public in Ireland generally that the British intended to pass a Conscription Act for Ireland. This caught us in a very bad state of unpreparedness; the re-organisation of the army, following the 1916 Rising, had only been in operation for about a year; organisation was very imperfect; the numbers of men were small, the arms supply was negligible, and the men who had joined up after the Rising had received the very scantiest of training. There was a tremendous outcry in the press. We decided not to say anything. We intensified recruiting, and we worked night and day trying to train the men, whom we had got under our commands. The training largely consisted of teaching them how to block roads and demolish bridges, with and without explosives, cut telephone and telegraph wires, and interrupt the postal services. There was no such

thing thought of then as land mines. It looked as if the enforcement of the Conscription Act would mean the complete blotting out of the young men in Ireland.

The problem arose as to whether we would fight in the city or in the country. I was then O/C of the Fingal Area, which was the 5th Battalion, Dublin Brigade, and I naturally was very much in favour of abandoning the city. The problem confronting us was that the British Government would pass the Act and leave it in abeyance, shall we say, until it had received the King's signature; the King would probably sign it late some night, and we would wake up the following morning to find the city surrounded. If this happened, the linking up of communications between the city and the outlying districts would be impossible. We dared not not strike first, because we were wholly unready to strike, and so we felt that we had just to sit down and await events. It was decided, at all costs, to abandon the city. We felt that, if the British surrounded the city and met with vigorous resistance from inside, they would not attempt to use artillery on it until they had, first of all, cleared it of their own supporters who lived inside the city or had places of business there. It was then that the real plan emerged, and, as far as I can remember, the officer, in whose mind it first germinated, was Joe O'Connor, O/C, 3rd Battalion.

We thereupon set out to divide the whole city area, i.e., the area covered by Battalions 1 to 4, into blocks; the smaller the blocks, the better. We mapped out the entire city into small blocks, rough parallelograms or squares, bounded by certain main roads or laneways. We then compiled

a census of the Volunteers who lived in each block, and placed one man in charge of that block, instructing him to find out and let us have a return of all arms and equipment stored inside his own small area. The equipment included picks, shovels, crowbars and anything that could be used either for blocking roads or breaking down walls between houses.

The 1st and 2nd Battalions were to move northwards, from block to block, out of the city. Where two or more blocks converged into one, a superior officer was appointed to the combined blocks. They were gradually to fight their way out towards the north. The 3rd and 4th Battalions were, in like manner, to fight their way out towards the south. In this way, we felt that, in a few days, we could evacuate the city, without crossing a main road or exposing our small forces to any concentrated fire from the enemy.

The work entailed in preparing this plan was enormous. I remember we met every night in the week, our principal meeting place being Cullenswood House, Oakley Road. It was not without its humorous side, and the chief laugh we got was at our Brigade O/C, Dick Mulcahy, who, at the time of all our meetings, was laid up, on a stretcher, with lumbago. The work was finally accomplished after about two months' hard slogging, and some of us were really sorry that the necessity for putting it into operation did not arise, because we felt it would be a glorious experiment. If and when the entire four Battalions reached the perimeter of the city, the outlying Brigade or Battalion areas were to come to their assistance and, if possible, attack the British force encircling the city from the rere, thus enabling the

Volunteers to get out into open country. The strain on everyone of us was enormous, but none of us ever appeared to grow tired of it. We felt that, once our plan was ready, if the British did attack us, they would pay very dearly for every man that was obtained.

In the middle of all our deliberations and worries came one dramatic interlude. Even to this day, nearly thirty years after, I still find myself marvelling at the heroism of Cathal Brugha, undoubtedly one of the bravest men that Ireland ever produced. Cathal came to a meeting of Headquarters Staff one night, and stated he had an announcement to make. We all listened. He stated that it was obvious that this projected Conscription Act for Ireland was a determined effort on the part of the British to blot us out; it was coming at a time when they could ill afford to send large forces to Ireland; they would lose at least two men for every man they conscripted and, having conscripted the man, he would be of no use; still, they were apparently prepared to enforce it.

"It means", Cathal continued, "that we shall lose many hundreds if not thousands of valuable lives, and that, if we fail to stop the British, we shall be sending many more thousands of our men to the hell of their concentration camps and military jails. So I have decided to take the initiative against the British, and I feel convinced that, if we can strike at them where it will hit them hardest, we shall save many thousands of our boys' lives. I, therefore, propose going over to England and wiping out the entire British War Cabinet. This will take place the moment it

has been publicly announced that the Conscription Bill for Ireland is law."

I remember some member of Headquarters Staff asking who was to take charge of the expedition to England. I think it was Michael Collins. Cathal said that he would take charge of it himself; it must not fail; if it did fail, he, Cathal, would not sit back and place the blame on any man. We pointed out to Cathal that his services were more valuable to us in Ireland, and that he should at least let Headquarters Staff draw lots as to who would go over and take charge of the expedition. Cathal silenced all discussion. He said there was enough talk; he himself was going over, and nobody else; if the fighting started, the question of whose life was to go was of no importance, as probably all our lives would go; he was going to do his job, and do it thoroughly.

The instructions we got were to select men who were temperamentally suited for the job. They were to journey over to London, wait there until the time was ripe, and then shoot whatever member of the British Cabinet they were detailed to shoot. There was to be no failure.

The men were picked and sent over to London around the month of May, 1918. Cathal also went over. I do not know if he recruited any extra men in London, but I felt that the men who went over from Dublin were quite capable of doing the job. One of them, gallant little Matt Furlong, who worked under me making munitions, was Cathal's second in command. Cathal instructed him to have nothing to do with

the first attempt, but he knew the whole details of the plan. His job was to stay on in London, organising a crowd there, and to shoot up the second War Cabinet. Cathal's own job was to go into the House of Commons and shoot Lloyd George the moment he announced that the Conscription Bill for Ireland was law. The men stayed in London from approximately May to November, 1918. Some of them told me afterwards that they had the times of their lives. They got their instructions each morning and, if there was nothing doing that day, they had plenty of enjoyment.

One night there was great anxiety here in Dublin. I met Michael Collins, and it was only months afterwards that I found out what had caused him so much worry. It appears that Cathal had got information from his contacts in London that Lloyd George would make the statement that night. Cathal actually went into the House of Commons and sat in the visitors' gallery, waiting for the announcement. Collins, in the meantime, had heard that the announcement would not be made and that the King had not signed the Bill. He was apparently in dread that Cathal might become over-hasty, shoot first and do the thinking afterwards.

The Bill was not made law. The strain eased off in November, and the men came back to Dublin. I saw some of them who had gone away in May, fresh, healthy-looking boys; they came home, six months later, like old men, some of them with tinges of grey in their hair.

My first meeting with Cathal after his return was on Wellington Quay. I saw him pushing his bicycle near the corner of Eustace Street. I hailed him with a joyous

shout, went over and shook hands. He had not 'turned a hair'. He was the same iron-willed, inflexible Cathal that I had known before he went away.

During this period, there was a terrific influx in the strength of the Volunteers, but this dwindled back to its normal strength when the crisis had ended.

Burning of Rathmines Catholic Church:

In the late autumn of 1919, the Catholic Church of Our Immaculate Lady of Refuge, Rathmines, was almost completely destroyed by fire. It afterwards transpired that the fire owed its origin to a defective electric wire in the roof, but this was not known at the time.

Some nights after the fire, I was presiding at a meeting of the Dublin Brigade Council in what was then 144, Great Brunswick Street (now Pearse Street), when a messenger arrived with a note from an officer of, I think, "A" Company, 4th Battalion. The note stated that the vaults of Rathmines Church were being used as an arms dump for that particular Company of the 4th Battalion, and set out a list of the number of rifles, revolvers, grenades and ammunition, all of which were presumed destroyed when the building caved in. The officer stated that none of the bystanders at the fire appeared to have recognised the noise of some thousand rounds of .303 ammunition going off, and that he had offered the services of his men to the Rathmines Fire Brigade to assist them in doing salvage work. I replied, in writing, forbidding him to approach the Rathmines Fire Brigade, pending further instructions. I knew what a disaster it would be to our cause if the British got hold of the fact that we were using the vaults of houses of worship as dumps for arms.

I quickly went on the next day to Captain Myers of the Dublin Fire Brigade, which had assisted in fighting the fire. Captain Myers was a very fine fellow and, from the national point of view, thoroughly sound and reliable in every way. I told him the true story and asked him to see that the Rathmines people got no inkling whatever of the fact that some dozens of rifles and revolvers were lying in the debris under the floor of the church. He told me not to worry, that nobody would ever know. The incident passed unnoticed by anybody.

Some months afterwards, i.e., in the spring of 1920, Dick McKee had been released and I had reverted to my old rank of Vice Commandant of the Brigade. One night after a Brigade meeting, I arrived home at about 11.30, tired and weary. I was urged by my wife not to sleep at home, as she had a premonition that there would be a raid on the house. To ease her mind, I went out and stopped the night with Dan Kavanagh in Church Avenue, Drumcondra. On coming down to my own home, Walter House, Richmond Road, the next morning, I found that my wife's premonition had been quite correct and that there had been a very prolonged and thorough raid on the house in my absence. The house had previously been raided on a few occasions, looking for Michael Collins, and we had more or less become accustomed to visits from the police and military. I treated this latter raid as another search for Collins. I attended my office regularly and came home to my meals, but I did not sleep at home, for the simple reason that I would not be allowed by my wife. This went on for four or five days. One day when I was in my office, - Accountant's office of the Dublin Corporation - Dick

McKee came up the stairs, three at a time. He appeared to be very upset.

"What's wrong, Dick?", I asked.

He said, "You had a raid on your house the other morning?".

"We had."

"Were you there?"

"No."

"Do you know whom they were looking for?"

'I presume Michael Collins."

"No", he said, "it was not Collins this time. It was you, and they want to get you, dead or alive, within a week!"

'How did they get on to me?"

"Collins does not know. But he wants to know did you ever write a letter in which you referred to the Rathmines Fire Brigade?" I remembered the fire in the Church and my instructions to the officer, whose arms were dumped in the vaults, and I told Dick the story.

He said, "They raided the officer's house last week, looking for the brother of the man concerned, and found your note". Even now, I find it hard to forgive that particular officer for having kept a note for fully four months after the incident, to which it referred, was completely closed. However, by a stroke of great luck and probably due to

somebody's prayers, I escaped. Incidentally, all the arms and material in the vaults had been destroyed by the fire.

Purchase of Ammunition - John Keane's Oats:

Michael Collins, with his amazing ingenuity, made arrangements for the purchase of large quantities of ammunition from the Carson Volunteers, as we called them in these days, in the North. As far as I can remember, the total amount purchased was 200,000 rounds, the bulk of which was run by road to Dublin, a few thousand rounds at a time, in a small two-seater car, owned by Dr. McNab. He was escorted by Dick Stokes, who had been Assistant Quarter-master to one of the Dublin Battalions in 1916.

Dick Stokes was a great little character, in his own very nervous way. He was very efficient, most conscientious and willing to undertake any job given to him, no matter how difficult. He and Dr. McNab made several uneventful journeys, but it was found that this method was very slow, and was becoming more risky each time. Therefore, some other arrangement had to be planned for getting the bulk of the ammunition down quickly, before it was missed in the North.

The man responsible for the brainwave was Seán Byrne, an electrician by profession, and afterwards a very eminent Councillor in the Dublin Corporation. His idea was to conceal the ammunition in sacks of oats, purchase the cargo in Belfast and consign it to a Dublin factor as a quite innocent-looking cargo of oats. The factor in question was John J. Keane, proprietor of Dodd & Son, Smithfield, Dublin.

The cargo duly arrived at Mr. Keane's premises in Smithfield on the Saturday before Bodenstown Sunday, 1918. I was not, personally, aware of the transaction, but Dick Stokes came to me on the Saturday morning and asked me to bring a message to Michael Collins. The message was that "J.J. Keane said the stuff would be safe in his place until Monday morning". I guessed what was in the message but was completely ignorant as to how the ammunition had been concealed in the sacks. That Sunday was Bodenstown Sunday, the day of the really great pilgrimage to Tone's grave. I was not on the pilgrimage, as I was engaged playing the organ in High Street Church that morning and evening.

In the afternoon, a friend of mine came to me and said that the whole city was surrounded and that all the canal bridges and roads leading from the city were held by troops, conducting intensive searches. I became alarmed at this, because I knew that almost the entire Dublin Brigade was due to come along the Naas road, on its way back from Bodenstown. All the senior officers of the Brigade were on the pilgrimage, and I feared that there would be a serious clash. My surprise can be imagined when, going round on my bicycle to inspect the British posts, I found that the British were concerned in searching cars and vans leaving the city, and paid no attention to anything coming in. It still did not strike me what was afoot.

Michael Collins spent that night in my mother's house, Richmond Road. I remember him well, sleeping in a small single bed facing mine. Next morning, I dressed and shaved, prior to going to my office, and, when I came down for breakfast, my mother silently pointed to a paragraph in the

newspaper, which stated that the British had raided the premises of Dodd & Sons, Smithfield, on the Sunday, where they had found many thousand rounds of ammunition concealed in sacks of oats. My mother and I read it.

"Who's going to tell him?", I asked.

"It will break his heart!", she said.

"Leave it to me!", I said.

I went upstairs to the bedroom. Micheál was asleep. I went in, rather noisily, whistling or singing, laid the paper down on the dressing-table and pretended to fumble with my collar stud. The noise I made awakened Collins. I never knew a man who could become fully awake from sleep in as short a time as Michael Collins. When he heard the noise, he sat up on the bed, swung his legs out on to the floor, looked at me for about two seconds and said, "What's up?". Even at the moment of wakening, he knew there was something wrong.

I said, "Bad news this morning!". I silently handed him the paper, and he sat on the edge of the bed, reading it. I thought it discreet to leave the room. I came back in a few moments, and I never saw a man so dejected.

I put my hand on his shoulder and said, "Micheál, it could have been worse. If they had waited till to-day, they would have got our whole transport system as well. Come on! Cheer up!". He said nothing, and did not even lift his head. I went off to the office.

When I returned home for lunch shortly after one

o'clock, I went in on the ground floor and spoke to my mother.

"How is he taking it?", I asked.

"I don't know", she said. "He has not been down for any breakfast, and his dinner is going cold."

"Has anybody been with him?"

"Dick Stokes, Micheál Staines, Nancy O'Brien (his cousin) and a crowd of others."

I went upstairs and into the drawingroom, which was in the front of the house, our bedroom being in the back, on the same floor. Joe Reilly, his orderly, was with him. Collins was shouting his head off at Joe, and Joe was mumbling, in his mild soft voice, to justify something he had just done.

I walked in and said to Joe, "Get out! Don't start fighting here!". He went out, saying something about that man being impossible to work for.

Collins looked at me, and I thought an explosion was coming. Going over to him, I put my hand on his shoulder and said, "Micheál, there are some women downstairs and, whether you know it or not, they happen to love you very much. The chief one of those is my mother. You have had no food. To my view, you are acting the part of a sulky boy. Come on down, and have your dinner!"

"Alright, Micheál", he said, and all the heat appeared to be gone in a second.

We came down to the breakfast-room, where we all had

the habit of sitting at a round mahogany table. Generally, round tables lend for companionship, especially at meals, but this promised to be the gloomiest meal that had ever taken place. Collins toyed with his food, and we sat around, my mother, my sister, my young wife and myself, everybody afraid to say a word.

Then the door opened, and in came Tomás O'Shaughnessy, who was a Battalion Commandant from some of the Limerick Brigades. He was on the run up in Dublin and had been stopping with us for quite a long time. In some ways, Tomás was a lovable character, but he had an unhappy knack of saying something at the wrong time. He joined us at the round table, sitting just opposite Collins. The silence went on.

Then Tomás began to mutter softly, half to himself, "That was a bit of bad luck this morning. Of course, no army can fight without casualties. After all, this was only a small casualty". Still silence from everybody else, but I could see the old fire in Collins' eyes.

There was a long pause, and then suddenly O'Shaughnessy said, looking across the table at Collins, "Hey, Micheál, about what would be the weight of one of them sacks?".

Collins exploded, sprang up, knocked the chair flying and shouted one word, "J-------!". He went out, through the back door and down the garden.

My sister, Nora, went over to O'Shaughnessy and said, "What sort of a fool are you?".

O'Shaughnessy did not appear to have thought that he

had said anything wrong at all. He could not understand why a man should explode at so simple a question.

Nora said, "Have you finished your dinner?".

He said, "Just!".

"Here's your coat! Get out before he comes back, or he will kill you!" He demurred, but Nora helped him with his coat, put him out the front and closed the door.

I got up, and slowly went down the garden. The garden leads straight down to the Tolka river. At the left-hand side, at the end of the garden, there is a summerhouse, with a wooden seat. When I came almost in view of the summerhouse, I began to whistle, walking slowly and looking into the river. After a few seconds, I turned my head to the left, looked into the summerhouse and saw Collins. I roared laughing.

"Come in, and finish your dinner, you damn fool!"

He stood up and stretched himself. "Shure, he is only a harmless b------ idiot, anyway!".

"Come on, Micheál", I said. He came in with me, into the diningroom. The minute he crossed the door, we all laughed, and he joined in it no less heartily than the rest of us. The spell was broken.

As regards the oats, from what I could learn afterwards, it appears that the Tyrone Brigade wanted a small proportion of the ammunition and, instead of placing their needs on the carriers of push-bicycles, they worked the stunt of bringing the two sacks of oats to some railway station in Tyrone from Belfast. Some inquisitive R.I.C. man in Tyrone was,

apparently, giving the porter a lift with the sacks and became suspicious of their weight. A sack of oats, as far as I remember, weighs fourteen stones, and these two sacks weighed considerably more than fourteen stones each. The same little country policeman opened them, and found the ammunition in the middle of them. He 'phoned back to Belfast, traced the balance of the cargo to Dublin, and the rest easily explains itself. So poor Tom O'Shaughnessy was thinking on the right lines after all, and he never got any credit for it.

Armistice Night:

On Armistice night, 1918, or the night following, I was on duty in our Headquarters, 44 Parnell Square. Brigadier Dick McKee was at a Headquarters Staff meeting in the Typographical Society offices, 35 Lower Gardiner Street. A messenger came to me, in a state of great excitement, and said that attacks had been made on No. 6 Harcourt Street, the Mansion House, St. Teresa's Hall, Clarendon Street, and Liberty Hall by British soldiers, British ex-soldiers, in the familiar blue hospital uniform, women, young men of the tramp class and a proportion of students from Trinity College.

I knew that the Cycling Company of the 2nd Battalion were, at that time, drilling in the hall of Clonliffe Road, attached to Clonliffe College. I sent the messenger to the Brigadier, asking him would I summon the Cycling Company to go over to some of the posts attacked, in order to help to repel the attackers. Dick's message came back, "Don't worry. We know all about it. The matter is well in hands.

I shall be over in a few minutes". He came over in a few minutes, and proposed a little walk for the two of us over 6 Harcourt Street. We arrived there at about 11 p.m., and found a number of British troops, in full war kit and equipment, lined up along the road in front of the building, with their officers and the police urging the people quietly to go home. The fight was all over.

Within a few days, we got full particulars of the attack. Seán MacMahon, at that time Vice Commandant of the 3rd Battalion and afterwards, I think, Chief of Staff of the National Army, was employed in the Gas Company, D'Olier Street. One of his men came in to him in the afternoon, and told him that he was a waiter in the Vegetarian Restaurant and that, while he was attending one table occupied by some students from Trinity College, he overheard them discussing the project of making the attacks on the places already mentioned. He listened and got the whole scheme, as far as Harcourt Street was concerned. The plans were that, at the corner of Cuffe Street at 7.30 p.m., a Republican tricolour was to be burned by the mob which had been mobilised by the Trinity College students, and that the crowd were then to rush up Harcourt Street and set fire to the building at No. 6.

The waiter, who gave this message to Seán MacMahon, was finished his day's work but Seán was, unfortunately, obliged to stay on at work until six o'clock. He could not get in touch with anybody, so he sent his messenger off on a hasty mobilisation of all the members of the 3rd Battalion, whom he thought could be located. Their orders were to come, armed with sticks only - no firearms. Immediately,

when Seán got off at six o'clock, he did further mobilisation, urging his men to proceed, with all speed, to No. 6. He then went himself to Harcourt Street.

At 7.30 that night, there were about a dozen men in the building which, it will be remembered, was the headquarters of the Sinn Féin organisation. In a room in the back, on the ground floor, Harry Boland, Secretary of Sinn Féin, was busy at some correspondence. He jocularly remarked afterwards that he was writing a letter to the Pope. Sharp at 7.30, the flag was burned at the corner of Cuffe Street, and the mob rushed up Harcourt Street. In the hall were a few defenders, armed with sticks only. The leader of the defence party appears to have been Simon Donnelly.

Four of the attackers rushed towards No. 6, in a great hurry, and Simon had the good sense to open the hall-door and let them into the hall, closing the door after them. When the defenders in the hall had finished their job on them, they rolled them out on to the street, where the remainder of the mob was standing by, expecting to see the building go up in flames. I was told afterwards that Simon was marvellous. He stood on the steps and challenged the whole lot of them to come on. The defenders withdrew and locked the door. The crowd outside proceeded to fire stones and any projectiles they could lay their hands on.

All this time, the defenders were growing in numbers by men who had come in by the back entrance. Harry Boland

claimed the credit for what happened next. He had watched a huge crowd of men coming into the building, with no chance of doing anything, only looking on at the crowd outside. So he organised raiding parties, armed with short sticks, to go out in two's and three's, mingle among the crowd, watching to see who were the ringleaders, and then, in the excitement, quietly hit them with the sticks on the head. This went on for some hours. The attacks were growing. Apparently, none of the attackers had recognised where the reprisals were coming from. Harry, having finished his correspondence, grew tired of the inactivity and joined in the crowd himself. He told me afterwards that everything was going according to plan. Bricks were being fired in through the windows; the firing was being returned, the same bricks being hurled.

Harry saw two British officers standing on the steps of the Hotel Ivanhoe, which was just beside No. 6, and he quietly made his way through the crowd towards these two gentlemen. He said that one fellow was well over six feet and he was standing on the first step. When Harry got up close to them, the tall gentleman turned to his companion, and Harry heard him pass some disparaging remarks about the Sinn Féiners and, by his gestures, encouraging the mob outside.

Harry approached him, tapped him on the arm and said, "Did you say anything, chum?". The fellow turned round and was about to repeat his remarks when Harry hit him. The weapon Harry had was commonly known as a "life preserver" This is a weapon, about twelve inches long, with a large

leaden ball on one end and a small leaden ball on the other, both of them connected by a steel rod. Harry had it concealed up his sleeve, with the large leaden ball resting on the palm of his hand. In aiming the blow at the gentleman, he said he aimed at his forehead, but the so-and-so fellow was so tall that he missed him and got him in the mouth. He said afterwards he made a hell of a mess of that fellow's face. The officer sank down to the ground. Harry immediately turned to the other officer to get a swipe at him. The second officer put up his hand and said, "Hold on a minute!". He said that he was an American officer and that the fellow on the ground had got what he deserved. He went so far as to congratulate Harry.

Then, apparently, the attackers began to suspect that the relief party were coming from the rere entrance. Harry said that, when he went up to Montague Court, there was a party of about ten British soldiers, armed with bayonets, being very ably led from behind by an officer. Harry saw a cap lying on the ground and picked it up. He ran after the officer and tapped him on the back. The officer looked round.

"Say, butty, is this your cap?" The officer stopped, letting the men march on, and Harry dealt with him as with the other gentleman.

The attack, apparently, went on from 7.30 p.m. till about 11.15 p.m. when, as I stated above, the British brought down some of the regular troops who restored order. It must be said, in defence of the regular troops, that they interfered with nobody, nor did they try to arrest any of the

defenders. There was one casualty among the defenders, a man by the name of Quinn, who got his eye severely damaged by a bayonet, which was thrown at him. It flicked past his eye and inflicted a nasty wound on the bone. I think this man lost his eye. I called to the "Independent" office the next day, and gave them the complete story. The reporter there told me that the official list of casualties among the attackers gave 155 people treated in hospital.

The attack on Liberty Hall was of small duration. There was a sufficient garrison there to put the attackers to flight in five minutes. The Mansion House windows were badly smashed, as also were the windows of St. Teresa's Hall, Clarendon Street.

Capture of an Armoured Car, and Attempted Rescue of Seán MacEoin:

I was appointed Superintendent of the Corporation Abattoir in June, 1920, being, at that time, actually on the run. I felt that I had to make some effort to keep on my job, even though I could not sleep at home. I managed to avoid detection, or even suspicion, by working very amicably with the British in the abattoir and by frequently meeting them and their officers. I had many chats with some of the Auxiliary officers but, unfortunately for me, these relations were rather abruptly broken off.

Coming on towards the Whit holidays, 1921, I slipped home one night to see my wife, who lived in a small house just outside the abattoir gate. Whenever I called home at night, I had to remain in the house all the next day until

the abattoir was closed and the men all gone away. Then I could slip out unnoticed.

On this particular occasion, my wife informed me that an armoured car came into the abattoir every morning to escort the British meat supplies from the abattoir to what they called a "detail issue stores" in the Royal Barracks (now known as Collins Barracks). She said that the car could be had for the taking. On the following morning, I watched the car, very carefully, from the drawingroom window. I took a note of the times of its entry and departure. The crew were so careless and so curious that, while waiting for the meat to be loaded, they all went to watch the pigs being scalded, leaving the car empty and the door open, except for a little yale padlock on a chain, which even a child could snap.

I immediately reported this to Oscar Traynor, as it was the Dublin Brigade area and he was O/C, but nothing happened for a week.

In the course of a conversation with Michael Collins, I mentioned the question of the armoured car. Collins, as usual, blew up and called me a fool, for thinking that an armoured car could be taken as simply as I had stated. He was nothing if not practical. Before I left the room, he asked was my house at the abattoir gate safe for men to stop in. I said it was as safe for them as it was for me. I was prepared to chance it. He sent Joe Leonard and Charlie Dalton to the house; they stopped there all day, and watched the car.

When the reports duly reached Collins, he held a conference, at which I was present. He told us he wanted the armoured car for a special job, namely, to go into Mountjoy Jail and rescue Seán MacEoin, who had been captured by the Auxiliaries in Mullingar and who would, in all probability, be sentenced to death. The plan was that Emmet Dalton and Joe Leonard, disguised as British officers, were to enter the car after it had been captured, get into Mountjoy by some means or other, and force the Governor to deliver up MacEoin. I asked Collins could I have the armoured car for the Fingal area, and he said, "You can have a thousand of them if only you can get this job done!".

To avert suspicion from the men going to take part in the capture of the car, I raided an old Corporation stores and succeeded in procuring a number of official uniform caps. The squad, under Paddy Daly, were actually in the abattoir on five consecutive days before they took the car. The reason for this enforced delay was that different crews came on alternate days. One crew was in charge of a red-headed Corporal, whom we affectionately called "Ginger" and who was a perfect soldier. He allowed all the men to leave the car except two, the driver and a man seated beside him. We knew that, even if we disposed of all the others, the man beside the driver had only to slam the door, close the hasp and lock us out. The second crew all went direct to the piggery, leaving the door locked on a small brass chain.

On Whit Saturday morning, the crowd arrived as usual. Paddy Daly went in to see my wife. Both of them saw, through the drawingroom window, that the crew had not left the car. As the time was running out, Paddy decided to

postpone the job until Whit Monday, when there would be a double issue of meat, and two opportunities for capturing the car would present themselves. Paddy was just about to leave the drawingroom, when the remaining members of the crew got out of the car.

My wife ran to the door and shouted, "Look! Look, Paddy! They are out!". Paddy turned round, saw the empty car and blew a whistle. My wife said men came from nowhere, swarming in.

As I knew, from the type of men who were on the job, that they would do the shooting first and the thinking afterwards, I was very worried about the safety of my wife and children. I had impressed upon Paddy Daly that, while the men were rushing up, he was to bring my wife, my sister and one of the children (the second had been removed to my mother's house) upstairs, put them in a bedroom, lock the door and leave the key on the floor, outside the bedroom door. My wife was aware of this arrangement. Paddy did as he was told. He brought them up to the bedroom, put them in, closed the door, but forgot to lock it.

In the meantime, the men inside had all gone, with extraordinary precision, to their appointed jobs, and the taking of the car was quite simple. They took the khaki dungaree suits off the soldiers, and got into the car.

Unfortunately, some British soldiers lost their lives. One refused to put up his hands, and went for his gun. The other unfortunate fellow, who was a butcher, was completely unarmed. He had been having a meal in the basement of the office building and, on hearing the shot fired, which

dispatched the first soldier, he rushed up the stairs. When he saw the guns in the hands of our men, he pulled up with a jerk. Unfortunately, another man behind him, not realising what was on, bumped into him, pushed him forward, and he emerged from the building, with his right hand down low on his thigh, steadying his butcher's sheath. Our men told me afterwards that it looked as if he was in the act of pulling a gun, and they fired.

The armoured car was driven out of the abattoir and down the North Circular Road as far as the corner of Ellesmere Avenue. At this point on the North Circular Road, there is a very cheery little-two-storey house, known as "An Grianán". Out of this house, by arrangement, of course, with Mrs. McShane, the owner, stepped Emmet Dalton and Joe Leonard, immaculately dressed as British officers. They boarded the car, and it drove off towards Mountjoy.

At Mountjoy Jail there are three gates, one on the North Circular Road (seldom closed), one wooden gate at the head of the avenue and, immediately inside that, one iron gate, in what they call the 'diamond'. The strict rule of the prison was that the iron gate at the 'diamond' was not to be opened until the wooden gate was closed, following the admission of a car. This order was reversed when a car was leaving. This meant that the two gates were never open at the same time. Collins had foreseen the danger to his men if they were trapped in the jail, and he had arranged that shortly after the armoured car had entered, a couple of our men were to stroll up, with parcels of food, clothing, etc., for prisoners. The parcels were, of course, deliberately

incompletely addressed.

When the armoured car had entered Mountjoy Jail, three or four men, with their parcels, strolled up to the gate and knocked at the wicket. The warder on the gate opened the wicket. He was in a state bordering on collapse, probably due to the cursing for being delayed that Emmet Dalton gave him so readily, when the armoured car was entering. He told the men with the parcels to go away, and to come back some other time, as he had no time to deal with them but they persisted, their purpose being to keep the gate open. He got more and more excited, lost his head and tried to shut the gate. There was a slight struggle, our men protesting that they had to leave the parcels in and could not come back again. They made up their minds to take the key of the big gate from the warder, no matter what happened. The sentry at the iron gate, seeing the struggle, put his rifle up to his shoulder and fired. One of our men, Walsh by name, was shot through the left hand, the bullet going into the forefinger and coming out at the back of the hand. The struggle at the gate continued, and the sentry prepared to fire a second shot. Tom Keogh, one of the crew of the car, who was walking carelessly up and down in front of the jail, thought it was about time to fire and, before the sentry could fire the second shot, he shot him, with a Mauser automatic.

Immediately, pandemonium broke out, and Joe Leonard and Emmet Dalton appeared on the steps of the jail. At the same time, the entire guard of British soldiers, with

rifles and bayonets at the ready, came along, led by a Sergeant. I think we all owe a debt of gratitude to Joe Leonard for his presence of mind. Remembering that he was a British officer, he picked up the dead sentry's rifle, asked the soldiers where they were going, and ordered them back. The Sergeant of the guard withdrew his men. Our men entered the car; the wooden gate was open, and they drove off.

What happened inside the jail is as follows. Joe Leonard and Emmet Dalton walked into the jail and were proceeding direct to MacEoin's cell, when a little warder ran up after them and begged them not to go up to the cell. He said that nobody was allowed past without the Governor's permission.

Emmet said, "Very well! Where is the Governor?".

The warder said, "In his office there, gentlemen".

Joe and Emmet swung open the door into the Governor's office and walked into a crowd of Auxiliary officers, talking to the Governor and examining some papers over the table.

Emmet said, "I have come for this fellow, MacEoin, to take him to the Castle for interrogation".

The Governor said, "I presume you have some authorisation for me to give him up?"

"Oh, yes!", said Emmet, and, out of his pocket, he produced a copy of the summary of evidence against MacEoin, which he handed to him. While the Governor and the

Auxiliaries bent down to look at it, Joe and Emmet pulled their guns and called on them to put up their hands. This order was obeyed. The Auxiliaries were disarmed and tied up as hastily as possible. The Governor was taken out of the room and across the hall into the Deputy Governor's office, where they sat him down at a table.

Emmet said, "Now, send for MacEoin! And be quick about it!"

The Governor complied without demur, and sent for a warder telling him to bring down MacEoin. MacEoin had actually left his cell and was walking along the corridor, when the shots outside went off. The whole venture ended at that point. Our men retreated from the jail.

In the meantime, I was very worried, especially about the womenfolk who were in my house. I went down to the North Circular Road, near O'Connell Schools, where I observed a big Minerva taxi stationary at the kerb, its engine ticking over, and Joe Hyland at the wheel. Some of our fellows were scattered around, in two's and three's. I spoke to Tom Ennis, and we both agreed that, as the time was pushing up to 10 a.m., the car must have been captured or the men would have been told to dismiss. I asked Tom to walk up with me towards Mountjoy. As we crossed the intersection of Dorset Street and the North Circular Road, I saw Paddy Daly coming down on a push-bike. There was a man on the backstep, lying across Paddy's shoulders, with his left hand streaming blood. I roared at Paddy. He turned and said, "We have got the car. They are scrapping in Mountjoy!". He flew on towards where the taxi was waiting.

I said to Tom, "Perhaps we could be of some help!". We proceeded along towards the jail. We had only gone fifty yards when the armoured car swung out of the jail and came roaring down the drive. We turned and rushed back towards the taxi. We arrived there first, because portion of the road was under repair and the surface covered with a lot of loose shingle. The car slid past, and finally pulled up while we were waiting.

What struck me most of all was the difference in the demeanour of Joe Leonard and Emmet Dalton. Joe was sitting inside the car, beside the driver's seat; he saw me and shook out his two closed fists, with the thumbs out; after the car had come to a halt, he jumped out. In the meantime, Emmet Dalton was sitting on the platform at the back of the car, lying back as an immaculate British officer, with his knees crossed, and smoking a cigarette.

I bandaged the wounded man's hand. They told me how they failed to get MacEoin. A huge crowd, mostly composed of youngsters, had gathered and were trying to size up the situation. One member of this crowd, a little chap, came over and said, "Eh, sir! Give me the wounded man. I live by here and we'll look after him".

I put the wounded man in the taxi, which had been reserved for General MacEoin, and told Joe Hyland to drop him at Dr. Ryan's house at 69 Lower Gardiner Street.

I asked Emmet Dalton was he going to stay there all day, and he said, "No. I might as well get off and get out of these duds". Joe and Emmet left in the taxi.

Putting my head in the open car, I saw McCrae, and I got a view of the funniest figure I ever saw. He had

grabbed a khaki suit from a British soldier, which was about ten sizes too small. The sleeves only came halfway down, and the cap covered about a quarter of his head.

"What the hell are you waiting here for?", I asked.

"Where the hell am I to go!", said Pat.

I had arranged with Collins to supply a second driver, a young man named Paddy Macken, from the Fingal area. He had turned up regularly every morning but, on this particular day, he was absent.

Tom Keogh, from the body of the car, said, "Where's that b------ driver of yours?"

"Is Macken not here?", I asked.

"He is not. He did not turn up."

In vindication of Paddy Macken, it is only fair to state that his house had been raided by Auxiliaries on the previous night, and he only just managed to escape in his night-clothing. He ran across a field and into a hay haggard, where he passed the remainder of the night. Until he got the signal that all was clear, he obviously could not go home to get his clothes. The signal, however, came too late to enable him to turn up for the job at the abattoir, some six miles away.

I turned to Paddy Daly and said, "Look after my push-bike". I said to one of the crew, "Get out, and let me get in". He got out, and I jumped in beside Paddy McCrae. I wanted to keep that armoured car at all costs. I knew where it was going and the preparations I had made in Fingal

to receive it.

I said to Paddy, "Drive off, down Ballybough". My intention was to get to the Malahide road, through Coolock, cut across through Belcamp, then cross the main Swords road and out to Oldtown.

We drove off, and passed through Ballybough. We could all see the look of terror on the women's faces, as this big monstrous car came rumbling along the tram lines. Women grabbed children, pulled them into the houses and shut the doors, as we came along. The crew inside were in great form, and suggested we should put a Republican flag on top of it, and so on. Paddy said that the old car would never take us out, that it was boiling, that he had driven it too hard and that it would never last. I suggested that we should slow down to a walking pace and chance intercepting another car. We turned up the Malahide road, without having met any British cars, and had just got as far as the rise at Donnycarney, opposite the spot where the Clontarf Golf Club is now, when the old car stopped dead, and then began to slide backwards down the hill.

Paddy shut off the engine, put on the brake, and said, "We are stuck!".

I got out and walked around to the front of the car. Then I saw the cause of our mishap. The flap in the front of the radiator had not been opened, and no air had entered to cool the engine. This happened because Macken had not turned up. His duties had been clearly defined. When the

rush was made towards the armoured car, McCrae was to get in, seat himself at the wheel and become familiar with the gears. Macken was to take the starting-handle, start the engine running and open the flap in the front of the radiator. As Macken had not turned up, McCrae had to do both tasks himself. He jumped into the car, seated himself at the wheel and forced a British soldier, at the point of a gun, to swing the engine. The British soldier did as he was bid, but did not open the flap.

We then, on the advice of Paddy McCrae, who said it would take some hours before the car could go, decided to abandon the car and take out the machine guns, the rifle of the dead sentry and the revolvers of every man. There was a spare petrol tin in the car. Having taken out the extra ammunition, we sprinkled the two gallons of petrol over the bodywork of the car and set it on fire.

We set off up Puckstown lane - this area is now all built up - and we walked across the fields until we came out to one of the fields belonging to the Artane School. Paddy and one of the members, whose name I don't remember, went eastwards, McCrae going home, and four of us went in a westerly direction.

We were at a loss to know where to dump the machine guns and other equipment. In coming to a little ditch, I saw, on the far side, a young boy with his hands on a plough, which had been drawn by two horses. The man was gone away, and the horses were resting. I called the boy. He came in fear and trembling.

Tom Keogh said, "Come on, sonny! We are not Black and Tans!". The young fellow's eyes lit up, and he ran over to us.

Gough, one of the machine-gunners, said, "Here! Catch!", and he threw a hotchkiss machine gun to him. The poor boy caught it, nearly fell under its weight and looked piteously at Gough.

I crossed the ditch and put my hand on his shoulder saying, "Listen, boy! Can you keep your mouth shut?".

He said, "Yes, sir".

"Tell us a safe place to hide these things!"

"I will, sir. Come on!"

A short distance away, there was a dry ditch, which had been drained by a sewer pipe. Some of the men suggested hiding the guns there, and the youngster said, "No, sir. Don't put them there. All the young boys in the district will be out looking for rabbits and, if you put them in there, they will be found. I'll show you a safe place". And so he did.

The men took off their khaki dungarees and, wrapping up in them two hotchkiss machine guns, a rifle and six revolvers, pushed them down into the hiding place pointed out by the boy. I had a bit of a job persuading Tom Keogh to part with his 'Peter-the painter', a long-barrelled Mauser No. 1 automatic. Tom insisted that he wanted to bring it back with him to the city.

I said, "Don't be a fool, Tom! If you are caught now, searched and a gun found on you, it is the finish. Your only chance now is to be unarmed and bluff it out".

Tom agreed, and dumped his Mauser with the other stuff.

Gough, the machine-gunner was very anxious to get back to the city. He started to brush all the dirt off his own clothes, after the removal of the dungarees, and he said, "Come on, lads! Let's hurry back. I want to see the Stop Press!".

Tom Keogh said, "Perhaps you want to see your photograph in it!".

Tom Keogh and his companions started off for the city. Gough and I walked across the fields. By some extraordinary chance, we found ourselves in the yard at the rear of Belfield House, a fine country house, occupied by Patrick Belton. I knocked at the back door. Mrs. Belton opened it. I asked for Paddy.

She said, "He's not in. Come on in!". Making signs to us to say nothing in the hearing of her maids, she brought us into the breakfastroom. I told her we had been on a job that morning and wanted a wash-up and some brushes to take the mud off our boots. She very gladly brought us up to the bathroom and, while we were making ourselves presentable, prepared us a very hearty breakfast. I borrowed her husband's bicycle, as I had left my own at the North Circular Road, and Gough and I walked back towards the city without further incident.

The men on the job were very depressed at their failure. I got home, and located Collins that evening. I told him I had been in the car and gave him, as far as I

could, the whole story.

He said, "They are a great bunch of fellows!".

I said, "They are, Micheál. Well, send for them and tell them that. And buck them up."

He said, "I will".

Then I said, quite casually and half to myself, "I suppose they will bump off MacEoin now".

"Not a b----- bit of it!"

The situation at the abattoir was not without its humorous side. My wife and sister were in the bedroom, in which Paddy Daly was supposed to have locked them. When all the excitement had died down, my sister put her head out the window and called on some of the men of the abattoir to come over and open the door, saying, "We are locked in". One of the men ran upstairs, turned the handle and pushed the door open. Paddy Daly had forgotten to lock the door!

Paddy McCrae, the driver of the armoured car, who lived in Clontarf, near the Bull Wall, had left us while we had journeyed westwards across the fields to dump the machine-guns, rifles and ammunition. He stated that, when he was going across the fields, via the Clontarf Golf Club, to his home to have his breakfast, he realised with horror that he had left his collar, with the laundry mark on it, in the armoured car. He secured a new collar, tidied himself up, and went into work.

Paddy was a motor driver for Murphy's, Provision

Merchants, in South Great George's Street. He was, in fact, a relation of Mr. Murphy. He sauntered in coolly to his work, about two hours late, and found Mr. Murphy in a state of great excitement. Some other firm, who bought the bacon wholesale from Murphy's, had a contract to supply Portobello Barracks. Portobello had rung up for a couple of sides of bacon, but the driver of this firm's van was out sick. The moment Paddy walked into Murphy's shop, he was sent off to drive the other van and deliver the bacon to Portobello. He drove up and was allowed into the Barracks. He halted outside the stores, while the bacon was being unloaded, and he heard the whole story of the seizure of the armoured car from the jail. Paddy said he never had such difficulty in his life to keep from laughing, because the story was so distorted.

Collins got going on the matter of the mark on Paddy's collar, by sending two men to visit the laundry where the collar had been washed. He heard no more of the collar.

G.H.Q. Re-organisation:

When the war was becoming intense in 1920, the composition of G.H.Q. Staff, as far as I can remember, was as follows:-

Minister for Defence	-	Cathal Brugha.
Chief of Staff	-	Dick Mulcahy.
Adjutant General	-	Gearóid O'Sullivan
Director of Training and O/C Dublin Brigade	-	Dick McKee
Director of Intelligence	-	Michael Collins.
Director of Engineering	-	Rory O'Connor

Director of Organisation - Diarmuid O'Hegarty.
Director of Munitions - Myself.
Quartermaster General - Sean MacMahon

Michael Collins had been Adjutant General but, at one important meeting held in Appian Way, Dublin, in the house of Mr. O'Connor, a journalist, Collins announced that the intelligence question was getting so big and we had fallen so far behind that he would have to give up the post of Adjutant General and devote all his energies towards reconstructing the Intelligence Service. Gearóid O'Sullivan was then unanimously picked as Adjutant General. He brought to his post an extraordinary degree of efficiency.

Military Situation Approaching The Truce:

After the burning of Balbriggan, which took place on the night of the 20th or 21st September, 1920, I was taken from the ~~Ministry~~ Directorate of Munitions by Dick Mulcahy and sent out to Fingal. The post of ~~Minister~~ Director of Munitions was one that I felt I could not hold. I was then Superintendent of the Abattoir in the Corporation; I was married; I had certain responsibilities; the only terms, upon which I could have held my post at G.H.Q., were by surrendering my years of service in the Corporation and going whole-time on to I.R.A. work; this, I was not prepared to do. Although I was not able to put in an appearance at my job in the later stages of the war, I still was on leave with pay, which meant a very considerable amount for my family, and so I was sent back to

Fingal in October, 1920.

On the 15th May, 1921, I was summoned to a conference in a house in Upper Dominick Street. I think the lady who lived there was a Miss O'Brien. Michael Collins, Dick Mulcahy and Seán Boylan, O/C 1st Eastern Division, were present. Collins told us that the military situation was very critical, that our supply of arms was run out and that, unless something very drastic was done soon, we could no longer carry on the fight. He told me, inter alia, that there were hardly two rifles left in the Dublin Brigade, as they had all been sent down to arm the fellows in Cork, who were putting up such a wonderful fight.

The trouble with the men in Cork appears to have been that, after waiting three or perhaps four days to ambush a company of Auxiliaries or regular troops, their land mines were so powerful that, as well as blowing up the lorries, they put all the enemy rifles out of commission. The force of the explosion seems to have twisted the barrels and broken some of the essential mechanism, and they got practically no revolvers or rifles out of even the biggest ambush.

Collins then told us that he had made arrangements for the landing of two cargoes of arms from Germany. One was to be landed somewhere on the coast of north County Dublin, between Dublin and Balbriggan, and the arms so landed were to be brought to Trim for distribution, mainly amongst the 1st and 2nd Eastern Divisions. The other cargo, in which I was not directly interested, was to be landed around the Kerry coast - I think in Tralee Bay.

I was instructed to make a survey of the whole coast of North Dublin and report back to Collins at what point or points it would be possible for a submarine to come close in to the shore and land approximately twenty tons of arms and ammunition into small rowing boats, if possible. The rowing boats were to be pulled into shore and the guns transferred from them to carts - horse-drawn for preference. Collins objected to high speed motor cars, with their blinding headlights, which he said would advertise the job to the enemy. He wanted the arms brought slowly, during the night, by road over to Trim.

I did as I was instructed, and realised, for the first time, that not even one small boat could be landed anywhere on the North Dublin coast, because there were some eight coastguard stations and each coastguard station could see two others. I went to him and told him that a landing of arms was impossible on the North Dublin coast, unless we destroyed all the coastguard stations.

He said, "Destroy them all!".

I asked, "How long could you give me?"

"How long do you want?"

"Give me four nights, and I'll burn the lot!"

"Off you go, and get it done!", he said.

Within four days of that meeting, i.e., around the 20th May, we destroyed seven coastguard stations. I reported back to him, and he said, "Good!". I pointed out Loughshinney Harbour as being the most favourable spot along

the coast; one drawback only it had; there was only one road up to it - the main road leading from Skerries to Rush - but, once past that, we had our choice of the bye-roads to cut across into County Meath. I heard no more of the project for about a month.

Towards the end of June, some of my officers came to me and reminded me that, at Lusk, there was still a remount depot, i.e., a depot for a supply of horses for breaking in and training for the Army. There were about eighty horses in it, and accommodation for several hundreds more, including a large number of small houses for the wives and families of the grooms. Realising that the British might possibly decide to put in a force of military (I still cannot understand why they did not), I made arrangements for the destruction of the remount depot, and carried this out during the first week in July, 1921.

I remember well when, on our way to the taking over of the remount depot, I halted the men for some refreshments at a farm, owned by the Dempsey brothers, at Grace Dieu, half way between Lusk and Oldtown. One of the officers called me over, and we sat down on a wooden bench, drinking a cup of tea. He told me that it had been rumoured at Bellewstown races that day that there was to be a truce on 11th July, at noon. The information was alleged to have come from two higher officers of the Black and Tans, stationed at Gormanston.

<u>The Fingal Brigade</u>:

In September, 1917, I had moved my residence from

Grantham Street to Richmond Road and, of course, resigned my post as Captain of "B" Company, 4th Battalion. Immediately after my removal, a request was made to Headquarters for an officer to go out and organise a Company in Finglas. This request came from Phil Ryan, a huge man of about 6' 4", who had given all his life to the revival of things Irish in North County Dublin. There was a very fine Sinn Féin Club in Finglas. I was given the job of moulding this material into a good Company. They were a grand lot of men. I worked all September, October and November, and had a very well-trained Company of about seventy-five men. We had not much in the way of arms and equipment, but the men certainly had enthusiasm and I never handled a crowd of men who were better workers, or more enthusiastic, than this Finglas Company, which was attached to the 1st Battalion, Dublin Brigade.

About November of the same year, Dick Mulcahy, who was O/C Dublin Brigade, told me that the time had come to reorganise the whole Fingal area into one separate Battalion, and he appointed me as the Commandant of that Battalion. We went out on bicycles one afternoon as far as Turvey where, at Mrs. Weston's house, we met some of the survivors of the 1916 period who were anxious to get something done. I worked in this area all through the spring of 1918, up to the time of what I call the conscription crisis. I was Battalion Commandant, and Archie Heron, now prominent in the Labour movement, was my Vice Commandant. The late Frank Lawless was Captain of Swords Company; Eamon Rooney was Captain of Lusk Company; Michael Rock was Captain of Naul

Company; there was a Company in Ring Commons, led by Willie Rooney. That, as far as I remember, constituted the 5th Battalion, Dublin Brigade.

Up to the time when plans were being made to resist conscription, I attended the Dublin Brigade meetings, and found that it was mostly a waste of time, because they were engaged in considering plans for defending and evacuating the city. I usually sat there doing nothing. As it looked certain that a fight was about to be forced on us, I suggested to Dick Mulcahy that my time could be more profitably spent if Fingal were turned into a separate Brigade unit, free to act on its own and as a covering force to enable the Dublin Battalions to leave the city, in the event of a fight. This was agreed to but, before the Brigade was definitely established, I was taken away from it and appointed as Vice Commandant of the Dublin Brigade. Dan Brophy was appointed O/C of the Brigade during some of the time I was absent. That the organisation was bad was proved by the fact that the Black and Tans burned Balbriggan and romped about the town for a few hours, committing all sorts of excesses with impunity, including the murder of two of our men, Gibbons and Lawless.

The burning of Balbriggan was caused in the following way. Michael Rock, who is still alive, was a really first-class officer. He lived near The Naul, and came in, this particular night, to Balbriggan. He was met with the story that, in one of the publichouses in the town there were two Black and Tan officers, in a very truculent mood. They were

brandishing revolvers, terrorising everybody in the publichouse, and making the men go down on their knees and sing, 'God Save The King!', etc. Rock asked for a gun. Having received one, he went into the publichouse and shot the two of them. He came coolly out, returned the gun and, as he was known to every R.I.C. man in the town, cleared out. No preparations were made against possible reprisals, and the tragedy was made worse by the fact that the Quartermaster, who had control of our rather scanty supply of weapons, was away in Drogheda and did not arrive back until the town had been destroyed. No opposition was offered.

When I went back there, my first job was to divide it up into three Battalion areas. There was a skeleton organisation there, but the greatest difficulty I found was to procure men with any type of training whatever. We had only two motor drivers in the whole area, nobody with a knowledge of engineering, and nobody with any idea of training in musketry instruction or any of the special services. Things looked pretty hopeless, although the men were as fine a bunch as were to be found anywhere in Ireland.

I asked to have Leo Henderson appointed as Brigade Vice Commandant. He was a very capable officer and was the ideal man for training. He was appointed with me, but he did not hold the appointment for long, as he was arrested around October 12th or 14th, 1920 (about the period of Seán Treacy's death), and was kept in jail until after the Truce.

My first job, when I went there, was to get some active opposition to the British. I felt very proud when I went to Dick Mulcahy and reported that we had carried out four or five successful attacks on them during the previous fortnight. Mulcahy smirked and told me that our approach was all wrong and that I was working on completely wrong lines. He said that he had sent me out there to build up an organisation of highly-trained men that would endure for many years, if necessary, that this sporadic shooting of the enemy, before the men were properly trained, was just a waste of time, and that there were to be no more attacks until I was satisfied that the men were fit to go through with them and would not make a mess of them, through blundering.

An important point to be noted is that, at that time, it was a general rule from Headquarters Staff that senior officers were not to take part in active operations against the British. Headquarters Staff could not run the risk of having, say, a Brigade Commandant killed, as men of training, ability and experience were too scarce, and jobs like these should be given over to men or officers of junior rank until the Brigade was in such a state of preparedness that the senior officer's place could be readily filled.

BRIGADE STAFF

Commandant - Myself
Vice-Commandant - Michael Rock.

1st Battalion - Commandant - Tom Markey, Finglas.
Finglas took in Swords, Kinsealy, Malahide, Portmarnock, Santry.

2nd Battalion - Commandant - Jack Shields.
Oldtown, Garristown, Bellewstown, Ardcarth, Duleek, Ballyboughal.

3rd Battalion - Commandant -

The Naul, Balbriggan, Ring Commons, Julianstown, Gormanston, Stamullen.

Director of Intelligence - Thomas Peppard
Brigade Quartermaster - Vincent Purfield
Brigade Adjutant - Jim Crinigan.

Terence MacSwiney:

Terence MacSwiney will ever be remembered as one of the real heroes of the struggle who gave his life slowly for an ideal. He died in Brixton Jail after about ninety days' hunger strike.

At the time of his arrest, I was Director of Munitions. The manufacture of hand-grenades and other explosives was well under way in Dublin, and I decided that the only way to progress was to spread the manufacture to other cities. I, therefore, wrote a letter to the O/C Cork No. 3 Brigade, who was Terence MacSwiney, Lord Mayor of Cork. Gearóid O'Sullivan had it typed and dispatched. In that note I told him briefly what had been done in Dublin and asked him to fix an appointment to meet either myself or some of our technical staff, who would go down to Cork and confer with him as to the possibility of starting a munitions factory in Cork city. When Terry was arrested in Cork City Hall, in his office, the desk was opened and searched. In it was found the letter which I had sent to him. It had, of course, no signature.

This letter was subsequently published as vindicating the British Government's action in arresting Terence MacSwiney.

As far as I can remember, it was published in the "Weekly Summary", which was issued by Dublin Castle and purported to give, each week, a list of outrages committed by the I.R.A. against the servants of the crown. My letter appeared in full, without the alteration of a single comma. A lot of wild statements had been made that the letter was a forgery. Unfortunately, it was not.

Paddy McGrath:

During the autumn of 1919, when I was Acting O/C of the Dublin Brigade, the 2nd Battalion reported that the gunboat, the ss. "Helga", which had shelled Liberty Hall during 1916, was in the Dublin dockyard for repairs and painting, and that there was a 16 pounder gun on it which could be taken quite easily. I made all the necessary arrangements for the taking of the gun from the deck. It was to be removed by means of an oxy-acetylene flare, a few tubes of which were actually lying on the boat. The job looked too easy. The night before it was to come off, however, the old "Helga" sailed out. When Dick McKee was released, I told him of the disappointment, and he made a note of it, to go on with the job when next the "Helga" came in.

Some months later, Dick McKee undertook a big job at the Dublin dockyard. I have reason to believe that it was an operation against the "Helga", but, for some reason or other, it did not come off. I had nothing to do with this job, and so cannot give any details of it. This much, however, is true. Paddy McGrath, who was the proprietor of

an establishment in Aungier Street, for making window blinds, and who was really a wonderful character, was coming home from this job at about two o'clock in the morning, with his brother, Gabriel. When they had reached, roughly, the "Irish Times" office in Westmoreland Street, they were called upon to halt by a crowd of detectives on the opposite side of the street, at Fleet Street corner. Paddy and Gabriel decided to fight it out and, after an exchange of shots, Paddy was very seriously wounded above the heart, the bullet lodging between the heart and the aortic artery. He staggered across to the portico of the Bank of Ireland, facing down College Street. Gabriel went down on his knees, loaded the two guns over the unconscious form of his brother, and decided to shoot it out. The detectives made off. Paddy regained consciousness, and he told Gabriel to clear off home, as he, Paddy, was done for and there was nothing to be gained by having their mother lose two sons on the one night.

Paddy described to me afterwards his mental reactions as he slowly sank into unconsciousness, expecting to awaken in the next world; he felt completely disinterested and was moved by only one sense, curiosity; he felt so sure that death was on him, that he had no other worry only wondering what eternity would be like.

Gabriel left him and, with his own gun in his pocket, proceeded up Grafton Street. In the meantime, the sound of the shooting had put all the policemen in Grafton Street into

a state of jitters. There was one Constable on duty at Yeates' Corner and he was joined by a Sergeant, both of them in a state of panic. They suddenly espied Gabriel coming up at Piggott's music shop, in the middle of the road, and they both emptied their guns at him. He zig-zagged across the middle of the road, reserving his fire until he got close up to them, and then he let the two of them have it. The Sergeant, whose name was Walsh, was shot dead and the Constable wounded. Gabriel walked along towards his home in Belgrave Square, Rathmines. He dumped the gun in the canal. When he arrived at the house, he let himself in, with his key, and crept into bed. There were five brothers in the McGrath family, but only Gabriel and Paddy knew what was on that night. The other three believed both of them to be in bed, asleep.

Next morning, Gabriel got up, heartbroken at what he believed was the death of Paddy. He came along and opened the shop. After half-an-hour or so, he was arrested and charged with the murder of the policeman. He had a perfect alibi in the testimony of hiw three brothers who swore, believing it to be true, that he went to bed with them the previous night and that he was still in bed the next morning when they awoke. Gabriel was released.

In the meantime, Paddy was taken by the British as a prisoner, still alive but unconscious, and brought to Mercer's Hospital, where there was a guard placed around his bed. An X-ray was taken, and it was found that there was a serious aneurism of the aortic artery. He was so bad and his death appeared so certain, that he was released and the guard

withdrawn.

We shifted Paddy immediately to Jervis Street hospital, where he was placed under the care of Surgeon Paddy Hayden and Dr. John Ryan. I had real love for Paddy McGrath and visited him every day in the ward, which was full of eczema cases. Paddy's cure was brought about by the process of reducing his heart action. He said it was just sufficient to keep the life in him; at each pump of the heart there was an ooze in the hole of the aortic artery, and this gradually formed into a clot, just like a solutioned patch on a bicycle tube. He was there for months. Every time I went to see him, he used triumphantly show me the latest X-ray and how the patch was growing bigger. Finally, when the patch looked big enough, he was released.

British Propaganda:

Throughout the entire struggle with the British, enemy propaganda made, at least, two very serious charges against us. One was that we murdered policemen, and the other was that we robbed banks and post offices.

As regards the first charge, there were two sets of police in Ireland, the D.M.P., operating in Dublin city, and the R.I.C., operating throughout the rest of Ireland. The D.M.P. existed ostensibly for the suppression and detection of crime, of which there was very little in Ireland, but one portion of it was definitely given over to political work and nothing else - the G-Division. The members of the G-Division were spies, and nothing else. We were fully

justified in shooting every one of these spies on sight, but this we did not do.

In the Dublin Brigade, our first definite action against the G-Division was in the nature of a final warning. Dick McKee and myself picked squads of men out of the Dublin Brigade, and ordered them to wait outside the private houses of about ten members of the G.-Division. When these members came home late at night, or in the early morning, they were met by the men of our squad, tied up to the railings of their houses, and given a solemn warning that, if they did not resign at once and cease their active hostility against their fellow countrymen, the next warning would come in the shape of a bullet. We could not have gone further than this. When they refused to resign, we wiped out the G-Division.

As regards the R.I.C., it was never intended to be a police force, as such. They were men trained, at the Depot in Dublin, in the use of arms and espionage. They were then sent out and posted in small block-houses all over the country, where they were instructed to know, by sight, every person, male and female, old and young, residing in the district.

To illustrate how little British policy changes, I refer the reader to a paragraph in one of John Mitchel's books (his "Jail Journal", I think), written a hundred years ago, in which he states that, in the handbook of instruction to the R.I.C., it was clearly laid down that no R.I.C. man would be considered proficient in his duty unless he was able to go to any house in his district and point out any

person in it, at any hour of the day or night.

These were the instructions prevailing in the R.I.C. up to its extinction by us. When we had almost wiped them out, through attacks and resignations, the British supplemented them by bringing over the lowest type of criminal they could obtain in British jails or in the slums of British cities.

As regards the charge against the I.R.A. of being bank robbers, this was equally untrue, and perhaps I can best prove it by narrating the following incident.

During my period in Fingal, the Manager of the Northern Bank, Skerries, Lynn Doyle (this was his pen-name, of course, his real name being Leslie Montgomery), one of our most brilliant story-writers, while on his way to open the branch of the bank in Rush, was held up at the top of a long hill by two masked men, who robbed him of £340, in the name of the I.R.A. My Intelligence officer, Thomas Peppard of Corduff, Lusk, told me he had an idea who the two robbers were. I told him to get after them immediately, arrest the two men and recover the money, if possible. He did so, and arrested one of them who seemed to be the ring-leader, J---- M----. He was imprisoned in Hunstown House, on the Finglas-Ashbourne road. I interviewed him and, after a little persuasion, he admitted that he had taken the money and informed me where the balance of it was hidden. I recovered all the money, except £55, which the robber admitted he had spent in ten days.

I wrote to the Manager of the Northern Bank, asking him for a statement of the amount he had lost. When I

received this, I made him a statement of how much I had recovered. I mentioned in the note that, as there was a boycott on all Northern banks, I could not give him the money at the moment, but would have to seek further instructions. I gave him an undertaking that the money would not be spent.

A few nights later, I met Collins. Before I had time to say anything, he said, "What the hell are you doing in that area, robbing bank managers?" I then told him what I had done, and he seemed delighted.

"What is to be done with the money", I asked.

He said, "One thing must not be done - you must not spend it!".

"I have no intention of spending it."

"Bring the money in to me", said Collins, "and I will put it into the suspense account until the boycott is lifted.

I said, "No b----- fear! That money is made up of one hundred pound note, two fifty pound notes, and the balance in singles. The numbers of the hundred pound and the fifty pound notes are known, and, if I get searched on the road, I will go to jail, convicted of being a bank robber, because I must refuse to recognise the court. I don't mind going to jail for Ireland, but I am not going to jail as a bank robber."

"Alright," he said, "but keep it".

So, Vincent Purfield, my Quartermaster, Rev. Fr.

Kivlehan, C.C., in Oldtown, and myself counted the money, wrapped the notes in oiled silk paper and left the coins losse in a metal box. The whole lot, together with a certificate of the amount in the box, we hid in a dry-well near Oldtown. The agreement made was that, if either Vincent or myself was shot, the other two would be responsible for its safe keeping and, if both of us were put out of action, Fr. Kivlehan was to seek further instructions from Collins as to the disposal of the money.

Then we got on with the war, and I forgot all about the money; so too, I think, did Vincent. Coming near the Truce, our prisoner, J------- M------- (by the way, prisoners were a shocking nuisance) complained of violent pains in his stomach and told his guard that, if only he got a drop of brandy, he would be cured. He gave his parole to the two guards and suggested that they would all adjourn to Flood's of Finglas for a drink. The guards went with him and they were just in the middle of their glass of brandy, paid for by the prisoner, when the Auxiliaries swooped down and arrested the three of them. Confidentially, I breathed a sigh of relief when the prisoner was taken off our hands. The Auxiliaries were not long in finding out who the prisoner was, and why he was a prisoner. They transferred him to the custody of the R.I.C., and he was brought up for trial, on the charge of having robbed the bank manager.

Up to this, I had not communicated with Lynn Doyle, but I received from him a brief note, with a newspaper clipping pasted on. The clipping announced the impending trial of the bank robber, and, underneath it, the bank manager has written, "Am I to identify him?". I wrote back, "Certainly", and the bank manager identified him.

On the morning of the trial, the full amount of money was handed back to the manager of the Northern Bank. How this happened was that, the morning before the trial, Cathal Brugha sent me a message that he wanted to see me urgently at his business address at Lalor's, Candle Manufacturers, etc., Lower Ormond Quay. This, of course, was after the Truce. When I arrived, Cathal flew at me and demanded, in an angry voice, "What did you do with the money?".

I told him how hurt I was, as the suggestion in his voice was that I had used it improperly.

He cooled off at once and said, "I knew there was an explanation!".

I told him I had it quite safe and that I would produce it in the morning. I did so, having first seen Fr. Kivlehan and Vincent Purfield. After the money was handed in, the episode closed.

I also remember, while I was attached to Headquarters Staff, news reaching Dublin of an armed raid on a Post Office in Ennis, County Clare. The officer in charge of the area was a really brilliant officer, and he took this money, believing it to be British Government money, for the sole purpose of buying arms for his Brigade. There was not one penny of it used for any other purpose, but I remember the consternation in G.H.Q. when this was announced. The officer was suspended and threatened with very severe penalties for this breach of regulations. As far as I am aware, the money was returned in full.

Raiding For Mails:

It was part of the policy laid down by Michael Collins,

as Director of Intelligence, to ascertain the home addresses of the Black and Tans and Auxiliaries who were burning our homes and looting the shops in every village and town, before burning them. This information was required, so that counter reprisals could be taken against the homes of those men, in England, Scotland or wherever they came from. The most fruitful source for obtaining this information was the raiding of the mails and seizing the letters addressed by these gentlemen to their homes, and so forth.

When I was in Fingal, during my absence from Dublin, some of the officers staged a very daring raid on the mails, which were hanging suspended along the railway line prior to being snatched up by the passing mails train. It was a particularly daring operation but, unfortunately, the fellows lost the mail bag. Collins flew at me when he heard this, and called them all the fools he could think of for having lost it. He told me that, when next we raided the mails, we were to do a thorough job and to make out a list for him of the English addresses, the relations of the addresses to the addressors, the ranks the writers held and where they were stationed. He repeated to me then what he often told his Intelligence Squad, that our shooting up of all armed lorries of Auxiliaries or Black and Tans was only a waste of time and that the British were probably as much pleased to have these fellows shot as we were to shoot them. The important point, in his mind, was to deprive these Auxiliary officers of any means or opportunity of amusement, their tennis parties, their musical evenings and their ladies, and, if he could make all these things impossible for them, they probably get sick of us. His aim was to make

life in Ireland so impossible for them that they would be prisoners all the time. He asked me could we get those mails again.

I said, "I think so!". So I went back to Fingal and asked them to arrange for a raid, in such a manner that the mails could be kept and examined; and they did it.

The mail from Gormanston Camp came on a Post Office car, escorted by a Crossley tender full of Black and Tans, to the Post Office in Balbriggan. The mails were then sorted, transferred to a handcart and pushed along by an ordinary postman up to the railway station. The Crossley tender remained in Balbriggan while this was being done.

On this particular day, two of my officers, having dolled themselves up, clean collars, etc., appeared into Balbriggan in a very swell limousine. They drove up to the station, backed around, facing due west, and appeared to be meeting a passenger coming off the train. When the poor postman appeared, with his handcart full of mail bags, one of them stepped out and told him to put them in the back of the car. He was persuaded to do this by a gun. He did so, and the car started off. It flew past the stationary Crossley tender and up the Naul road, and the postman staggered back. The Crossley set off and pursued the car. What I particularly admired about the organisation of the whole raid was that, at certain bends in the road, one of the passengers in the car threw out a sack of mails to one of our men, who was waiting to receive it. In this way, we got away with about five or six mail bags. The lad driving our

car, which, as far as I remember, was a Pullman, the property of William Fagan, solicitor, of Dubber, near Finglas, led the Crossley by that very dense area around County Dublin and Meath, but we got away with the car and we had the mails.

The mails were brought up to Hollywood, just beside the Nag's Head, on a hill overlooking a huge sweep of the plains of Dublin, Meath and Kildare. There I sat with the whole Staff all day, for the next three days, going through letters from these gentlemen in Gormanston home to their relatives in England. We compiled an enormous list, containing some hundreds of home addresses. We also got quite a big pile of money - a couple of hundred pounds - all in money orders, which were of no use to us, and we consigned them to the flames. One Tan had written, "I hope the Sinn Féiners don't get this letter".

This possibly marked the beginning of the carrying of the war into enemy territory because Collins, with his usual thoroughness, organised the burning of enemy houses in England as a retaliation of any burnings that took place here.

One place in our area, Whitestown House, half-way between The Naul and Balbriggan, occupied by a Colonel Woods, was the chief entertainment depot for all the Auxiliary officers from Gormanston Camp. We served notice personally on Colonel Woods and told him that, if the tennis parties, dances, etc., with the officers did not cease, he would pay pretty dearly for it. We did not tell him what form the retaliation would take, but we told him to regard this as a

final and very definite warning. The tennis parties ceased. It was our intention, of course, to burn Whitestown House to the ground.

Escape from Mountjoy:

In the autumn of 1920, I was summoned to a conference in Gardiner Place, Headquarters of the Dublin Brigade. I had no idea what the conference was about but, immediately on my arrival, Rory O'Connor, Director of Engineering, Headquarters Staff, asked me what supply of "Gun Cotton" I had under my control and how soon could I have it made available. I stated that the total amount in the country was around two hundredweight. I asked how much was wanted and for what was it wanted. Rory informed me that the idea underlying his request was the blowing down of the boundary wall of Mountjoy Prison, in order to effect the release of some of our men, whose presence was vital to us in our organisation scheme and who had been sentenced to long terms of imprisonment in Mountjoy.

Rory mentioned some enormous amount of gun cotton which he required, and I said, "My God, man! If you use that, you kill every prisoner in Mountjoy and you'll break every pane of glass on the north side of Dublin city; added to which, you won't blow a hole in the wall; you'll blow the wall down and, if any prisoners are alive, they'll never climb out of the rubble!".

I then gave Rory the formula for blowing a hole, four feet in diameter, in a wall the height of Mountjoy boundary wall. I forget at the moment what this formula was, but I knew that it was accurate, because I had memorised it from an

article in the "American Scientific Supplement", a paper which I read each week and then handed on to the chemists working under me. The amount of gun cotton required to blow the hole in the wall was about five to ten pounds. I had a long argument with Rory and, finally, I refused absolutely to supply him with the amount of gun cotton which he maintained was necessary. It transpired that the prisoner, whom we felt bound to release, was Robert Barton from Annamoe, Co. Wicklow, afterwards one of the signatories of the Treaty.

The idea of the explosive was dropped, and we had to concentrate our energies on devising some other means. Somebody at the conference had a real brainwave. We had obtained information that Barton was to be shifted from Mountjoy to the Castle for interrogation, and we decided upon the rather desperate plan of holding up the lorry, on which he would be travelling. When somebody humorously said that the surest way of all to stop a lorry was to push, or place a ladder on a handcart across the street, we jumped at the suggestion. Dick Stokes was summoned to provide the handcart, which was his own property, and to obtain a fairly long ladder.

Dick did both these jobs. We placed the ladder, about forty feet long, midway across the handcart and, sticking a piece of red flag on the front of it, we waited at Nelson Street, or somewhere in the vicinity. When the van had been signalled as leaving Mountjoy and the men on look-out had waved that it was speeding down Berkeley Road, they commenced pushing the ladder and handcart across the

street, as if proceeding from Nelson Street to Mountjoy Jail. The van, of course, pulled up and we rushed it, but Barton was not in it. We indulged in a fair amount of bad language at our ill luck. We could not try the ladder stunt again.

A few days later, I met Rory O'Connor, and he said, "This fellow, Barton, has made up his mind to come out of Mountjoy. Look at the letter I got this morning!". He showed me a letter, which had evidently been smuggled out of Mountjoy by a friendly warder and in which Barton stated that he was definitely coming out of Mountjoy on a certain night, at 11.30 p.m., within three days of the date of receipt of the letter. He had the bars of his cell window filed through, and it was up to us to get him over the wall.

Rory said, "Of all nights in the year, this is a night of a full moon, and I bet there will not be a single cloud in the sky!. Barton stated in the letter that he would throw a brick, wrapped up in a handkerchief, over the wall to indicate to the rescuers where he was, and it was up to them to get him out.

It was thereupon decided to fall back on the very simple expedient of throwing a rope over the wall. The job was to find a man who could throw a rope. Finally, we located a lassoo expert in Peadar Clancy's Company in the 1st Battalion. His name was Downes. He had been at sea and he was an absolute genius with a rope. He gave us a guarantee that he would not miss.

The usual precautions were taken against interference

by an inquisitive policeman along the canal bank, and the crowd of rescuers slowly took up their positions outside the wall. Sharp at the appointed time, the lump of brick was picked up, wrapped in a white handkerchief. It hit an ass that was grazing on the bank of the canal. The ass went wild and stampeded. Over went the rope and, after a few moments, Robert Barton appeared on the top of the wall. Six men outside held out a very large rug, or blanket. Barton jumped and landed safely. He was taken away in a waiting car.

The newspapers featured the escape in headed type, and we all felt tremendously bucked up, because we had proved that the British could not hold our men in jail. There was great confusion amongst the authorities. The sawn-through bars of the cell were discovered, but they had not the faintest idea of how Barton got out over the wall. They appointed a date, a week or so later, for a sworn investigation into the escape, to be held in the Governor's office in Mountjoy.

The inquiry, we were informed, was proceeding very slowly and ponderously, when a warder dashed in and, rather abruptly interrupted it by saying, "There are some twenty odd men after getting out over the wall!". That was the last anybody heard of the inquiry. It was true. Another twenty odd men had been rescued, in the following manner.

In Mountjoy Jail, at the time, were J.J. Walsh, afterwards Minister for Posts and Telegraphs, and Piaras Beaslaí, both serving a sentence of two years' imprisonment

for sedition, or some similar charge. Dick McKee was entrusted with the job of getting them out. We decided to effect the rescue while the men were at exercise in the prison yard. We improved on the rope idea by having a rope ladder constructed, and our marksman was outside. It was broad daylight - about two or three o'clock in the afternoon - and the men were walking around the ring at exercise, Paddy Daly, a prisoner, being in charge.

Men had been picked from the various Companies and detailed to surround the wall, to hold up any interfering policemen and, generally, to act as scouts. Two men from the 1st Battalion, who were detailed to go up along the canal, crossed the stile at Binn's Bridge and were slowly walking up along the canal, when three or four tough-looking Dublin youngsters came running around.

One kid said, "Eh, mister! Any more Shinners coming out to-day?". They were told where to go, and to go there quickly.

The men went on, and the kids ran away, shouting, "Come on! Come on! There are more Shinners coming out!"

The rope ladder was successfully thrown over the wall. Immediately, a number of prisoners inside in the yard put their hands in the pockets of their coats, where they had large spoons concealed, and held up the warders, putting them up against the wall. All the warders very quickly obeyed and stood motionless, each of them covered by a man with a spoon in his pocket. The rope ladder dangled down, and Piaras Beaslaí made a dive for it. J.J. Walsh told me

afterwards how humorous this episode really was.

It is quite easy to say climb up a rope ladder; it is another thing to do it, against a thirty-foot wall. I never tried this interesting feat myself but I understand that you must put one foot, say, the left, in next the wall, and the right foot out from it. In this way, the ladder is kept clear of the wall, and no difficulty is experienced until the climber reaches the top, when he swings himself up over it. The ladder must be climbed sideways.

Poor Piaras experienced no little difficulty in clambering up. When he got to the top, he looked down and hesitated for a few minutes before the jump into the blanket. He was immediately catapulted into it, having been bumped on the seat by J.J. Walsh's head.

"Get down to hell out of that!", said J.J. Piaras landed on the flat of his stomach into the blanket, and he had barely time to extricate himself when J.J. was in it too.

We had no car waiting for them but, at the end of the avenue leading to the North Circular Road, Dick McKee was standing, awaiting the outcome, and with him were about six members of the Dublin Brigade. The idea was that, as each escapee appeared, he got a bicycle, together with a slip of paper, on which was written the name and address of a house where he was to go for safety.

Piaras and J.J. came down the street at a great pace. They were handed a slip of paper and given a bicycle each.

Now, J.J. was close on six feet and rather ungainly, while Piaras was very many inches shorter. Of course, they took the wrong bicycles. Piaras had one several inches too big, and J.J. had one several inches too small for him. J.J. got up on the bicycle, hit the handlebars with his knees and swerved around the road. He bumped up on the path at a publichouse, almost rolled around a policeman, who stood with his mouth wide open, bumped on the road and then sauntered on like a duck. Both of them made their way up Drumcondra. The poor D.M.P. man looked at them, with stupid surprise on his face, and still stood there.

In the meantime, the rope ladder was dangling down the wall, inside the jail. As each prisoner looked at it longingly, he decided to climb up it. One after another, they clambered up. The fellows outside were still holding the rope for any more that might appear.

Paddy Daly said that it was the funniest experience he ever had. "They would have all gone out, only there would be nobody left to hold up the warders", he said.

When I arrived on the scene, I saw the tail-end of the prisoners. The bicycle supply was, of course, exhausted, the houses, to which the men were to go, were exhausted, and the whole thing had turned into a tremendous farce. The road was lined on each side by a cheering mob of kids, and a few adults came to wish the men "God speed and good luck". I saw all manners and forms of men. There were fellows from the country, from Galway and Kerry,

who had not the slightest idea of trying to escape until they were tempted by the sight of the rope ladder to climb up the wall. They came down the street at break-neck speed, all showing big beards, some wearing slippers, no collars and all sorts of dress. The kids gave them a rousing cheer. One fellow was immaculately dressed and sauntered down as if he was going to meet his best girl. The kids looked at him and did not know whether to cheer him or not. Liam Tannam, looking as cool as a cucumber, came along and took a tram into the city.

One of the last men to climb the wall was, I think, Seán Forde, who worked for Peadar Clancy in his Outfitters' shop in Talbot Street. Seán came down the street quite casually and, seeing Dick McKee at the bottom of the road, said "Hello, Dick".

"Hello, Seán! How are you feeling?"

"Great! This is a great stunt!"

"Do you think so?"

"Yes".

"How many more are left inside?"

"Only a couple".

"Are you going to stay here all night?"

"No".

"Have you anywhere to go?"

"Oh! I'll be alright".

"Don't you think you'd better be getting away?"

"Alright. So long!" - and Forde went off on a passing tram to the city.

By this time, the policeman, who had been standing under the clock down at Binn's Bridge, suddenly awoke to the fact that something unusual was happening. Dick McKee afterwards said, laughingly, that he could see the intelligence slowly dawning on the man's face and the idea suddenly striking him that he should go and report it. He turned and ran as hard as his legs could carry him to Fitzgibbon Street Station.

Dublin rocked with laughter at this exploit, and the beauty of it all was that not one man was recaptured. We certainly held the British jail system up to ridicule that day.

Michael Collins:

So much has been written about Michael Collins that it seems presumptuous for me to try to add anything to it. Collins has been known, and will always be known for his amazing energy, his physical and moral courage and his almost superhuman memory, but I, perhaps, knew more of him, through personal contact, than any others of his associates.

In those days, it was very difficult to make a friend, as we understand the word, 'friend'. We had so much on our minds and the responsibility was so terrific for men in their early twenties, that we never had the chance to ask ourselves the question, "Is such-and-such a man a friend of mine, a chum to whom one could confide one's intimate family secrets?". I knew Dick McKee, but I never asked myself was

he a friend of mine. We were so busy trying to reorganise the Dublin Brigade that we had no time for anything else. But, with Collins, it was somehow different.

It started this way. After the round-up following the faked German plot in 1918, Dick Mulcahy spoke to us at a Dublin Brigade Council meeting. He told us that things were very critical for the members of Headquarters Staff and that any houses, where men could stay, would be very acceptable. I immediately told him that I knew my mother would be more than anxious to take the men who were on the run, and that we had a large house, standing on its own grounds, on Richmond Rd.; I said I knew she would be hurt if somebody was not sent along to take up his quarters there for as long as the house was safe. A couple of days later, Dick Mulcahy told me to tell my folk at home to expect Michael Collins for the week-end.

When I told them at home, the first reaction was, "Tell him not to send that big, ignorant brute here!". Both my sisters said they could not stand the sight of "that big bounder, Collins".

I said, "You cannot pick and choose. You have offered the house to anybody that Headquarters wish to send, and you have got to put up with him". I must confess I did not like him either.

Collins came along to the house and, inside three days, all the women folk in my household would have given their lives a hundred time for him. He had a big heart, as big as his whole body. He was brimful of kindness and human feeling, cloaked - and very strictly cloaked - by a

very gruff exterior manner and a magnificent command of bad language. The real Mick Collins was a big, soft-hearted boy, who knew his own power and ability but never allowed them to obtrude on his ordinary conversations with casual acquaintances. He could always be polite and give all his attention to some chance acquaintance, who would waste Michael's time talking about mere trivialities. He was very courteous to women, except when some woman might make a particularly glaring blunder and then she got it, just as if she had been a man. He had a knack of being able to switch his mind, in a flash, from one subject to another, quite opposed to the original, and could always give the second subject his undivided attention. Above all, there was about him a magnetism that none of us could ever even attempt to explain.

When my first child, Peggy, was born, in 1919, Collins was still stopping in the house and, even after the raids had taken place on it, he would drop in to see my mother. Peggy was a child who, for the first few months of her life, never stopped crying. Big Mick would walk in, the baby squealing her head off, and say, "Give me that baby!". He would take the child and walk up and down the diningroom, getting her to sleep.

Of course, we would laugh at him, and he would say, "You think I never nursed a baby! But I have five or six nephews of my own, and this has been my job for a long time".

When the Black 'Flu broke out - and those of us who lived through that period will never forget it - Mick had not been near the house for three or four weeks. My sister, Nora, was in the top bedroom, delirious for about six days. The doctor came twice every day and, going away, had the same report: "I can give very little hope". I was in the bedroom underneath, very nearly as bad, though luckily not

delirious.

One day, Michael Collins swept through the garden and into the kitchen, where my mother was cooking. He said, "Mrs. Lynch, I'll never forgive you! You never told me Nora was dying. Why didn't you tell me?".

My mother said, "Listen, Micheál! Don't go near her! We could not spare you. You are too important to us at the moment to risk your life going into that bedroom full of contagion". He said nothing but brushed past her, and sprinted up to the top bedroom.

In the bedroom, nursing my sister, was our old nurse, Mrs. Doody, who had looked after us when we were kids. When he ran into the room, Mrs. Doody threw up her hands in horror and said, "Oh, Mr. Collins! Go out! Go out! Don't come in!".

"You look all in a state", said Michael.

"Oh, Mr. Collin! My life does not mean anything. I'm an old woman. Don't risk yours! Please go out!

Catching her by the elbows, he lifted her out of the room and said, "Get off downstairs. I'm stopping here for a little while". She shook her head sadly and went downstairs.

"Don't disturb me here until I call you", he said.

A few hours later, some of us crept up to the bedroom and saw Collins sitting motionless beside the bed, with Nora's hand clasped in his. She was in a perfectly sound, beautiful sleep. Collins crept out softly, on tiptoe, and came downstairs. That evening, when the docter came, he said she was over the worst and would live. I am glad to say she is still alive.

When Collins was appointed Minister for Finance to the Dáil, one of his first jobs was the handling of the Dáil Loan of some hundreds of thousands of dollars. He went to Henry Mangan for instruction in municipal finance and the more advanced studies of financial matters. Henry Mangan was, for very many years, Accountant to the Dublin Corporation and was probably the most brilliant accountant we ever had. I stopped in his house for many months, when I was on the run, and, on one occasion, he told me that he was giving instructions in finance to Michael Collins. He told me he never came across such a brilliant brain.

"In fact", said Mr. Mangan, "after about three lectures, he knew a good deal more about it than I did!"

SIGNED: _____

DATE: 24th April 51.

WITNESS: _____

attach to WS 511 (at end)

Leatán mionuairisce.

m.s.b.

Cásaire.....

Note by Investigating Officer.

On the instructions of the Director of the Bureau I interviewed Mr. Lynch and asked him to elaborate on that portion of his statement referring to courtsmartial held on members of the Irish Volunteers who failed to mobilise for the Rising in 1916. Mr. Lynch supplied me with the information shown on the attached sheet, which is now added as a supplementary statement by him.

Michael Barry COMMANDANT.

M. BARRY.

28 Meitheamh, 1951.

G6769.Wt.3267.6891/S.O.750,000.1/49.Ed.Co.Ltd.(Sch.131).G37

SUPPLEMENTARY STATEMENT BY MICHAEL LYNCH

Greenfields, Coolock, Co.Dublin.

Early in January 1917, after the release from Frongoch, I contacted Cathal Brugha. He instructed me to start immediately on the reorganisation of my own company - B/Company 4th Battalion, Dublin Brigade. I succeeded in getting together about 40 of the old members of B/Company. When this was done, a series of courtsmartial were held on the men who did not turn out for the Rebellion. The courtsmartial were held in the Weavers Hall in Donore Avenue. I was president of one of these courts, the other members being Lieut. Liam O'Brien and Liam Flaherty. Flaherty was not an officer, but was selected especially because of his knowledge of the individuals concerned and of their circumstances.

About 4 or 5 men of B/Company were affected. Each individual was brought before the court. There was no ceremonial procedure followed. Each man was asked to account for his failure to mobilise for the Rebellion and, in all cases, the excuse given was the same - the confusion resulting from MacNeill's countermanding order, which, looking back on it now, was a reasonable one. The sentence imposed generally was that the men were dismissed from the Volunteers and were never to be taken back again.

The whole thing fizzled out in a few weeks time and, in many cases, the men were taken back into the Volunteers. Personally, I went out of my way to get some of the men back.

I always understood that similar courtsmartial were held in the other battalions of the Brigade.

These courts were Volunteer courts as distinct from I.R.B. courts.

Signed: Michael J Lynch

Date: 20 June 1951

Witness: [illegible]