

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21

No. **W.S. 521**

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. **W.S.** 521

Witness.

Jerry Golden,
49 Croydon Park Avenue,
Fairview,
Dublin.

Identity.

Member of 'B' Company, 1st Battalion Dublin Brigade,
1913-1916;

Orderly to Commandant Ned Daly, 1st Battalion, 1914-'16.

Subject.

- (a) National activities 1913-1916;
- (b) North Circular Road and North Co. Dublin,
Easter Week 1916.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil

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Form B.S.M. 2

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Statement by Mr. Jerry Golden, ⁴⁹ 34 Croydon Park Ave.,
Fairview, Dublin.

I was living in Chapelizod in 1913, and on Friday 26th November of that year I, with about eight other members of the Wolfe Tone Hurling Club, went into the meeting in the Rotunda Rink called for the purpose of forming the Irish Volunteers.

When we arrived at the Rink we were handed forms for enrollment, and we saw that as well as our names, addresses, ages and occupations, we had to fill in the Municipal Ward of the city of Dublin in which we were living. This latter information was, we were informed, required so that the organising Committee could group the city into areas, comprising so many wards in each area. As Chapelizod was in New Kilmainham Ward it was easy for us to fill in the ward.

About the middle of December a message was left at each of our homes to attend the following Friday, 17th December, at Camden Row for further information and orders. On our attending we were addressed by two men, one of whom was Eamonn Ceannt, and he told us that it had been decided by the Organising Committee to divide the city into four Battalion areas. The first and second Battalions were on the north side, the third and fourth on the south side. We were also told that we who were present, about 120 men, and were residing on the west side of Clanbrassil St., would be members of the fourth Battalion. We were then told that the next meeting would be held about the 2nd week in January 1914.

When we attended this meeting we were informed that as the 1st Battalion were meeting in 5, Blackhall Street it would be nearer for us, so we left Camden Row, and in February we attended the parade of the 1st Battalion in 5, Blackhall Street. We were addressed by Bob Monteith. We were given our first lessons in military drill in groups of about twelve men each. Between February and mid April I attended twice weekly, and towards the end of April I lost my job as a Solicitor's Clerk in Dublin and took up a similar job in Edenderry, working for T.O.K. White & Son, Solicitors. As soon as I got to know the members of The Edenderry H.C. I suggested that we should form a Volunteer Company in the town and they agreed to interview the P.P., Fr. Paul Murphy. When we went to Fr. Murphy he agreed that a Company should be formed, and he told us that we could learn to march and drill with our hurleys until such time as we could beg, borrow or steal guns, while he would interview the principal traders in the town about forming the Company. I was deputed to call at the Volunteer Rooms in Dublin on my week-end visit home on the following Saturday. On the following Saturday I called to the Volunteer offices, which were then situate in Pearse St. (then Brunswick Street) near Harrison's, Sculptors, and saw Laurence Kettle who gave me some literature and also specimen posters so that we could arrange to hold a meeting at which a Company would be formed. I was directed to let him know the day and hour on which the meeting would be held so that some person from the Central Committee would attend and explain the aims and reasons for the formation of the Volunteers.

The meeting was held on my birthday, 19th May, in the Town Hall, Edenderry, and all the shopkeepers and business men of the town, including my boss T.O.K. White and his son Willie, who was also a qualified solicitor, attended. After the meeting had been addressed by the man from the

city a Committee was formed consisting of Rev. Fr. Paul Murphy, President, T.O.K. White and Timothy O'Toole, Vice Presidents, Patrick O'Brien, Treasurer, James Moore, Solicitor, Secretary, and a Committee of five ordinary members, some of whom were ex-British Tommies. About 280 men, mostly Army reserve men and militia men, with about 80 men of the Hurling and Football Clubs, gave in their names for enrollment, and a subscription of 6d per week was collected from them.

The following day the Committee met, and my boss offered his yard and grounds for the place at which all men could mobilize. His son was elected by the Committee as its first Captain. We met four evenings every week in the yard and grounds. We used form up in column of four and march out on the Market Square with our Captain in front and about twelve ex-British Army Sergeants to drill us. This went on until the 29th July when all the Reserve men and Militia men were called up, as they thought, for a month's training. When they had all gone the Company was about 100 strong, and we met four times every week until Friday the 22nd August when we were ordered to attend a meeting in the Town Hall at 8.30 p.m. The meeting was addressed by all the Officer Board, and we could see from their speeches that a crisis had arrived. After listening to a lot of talk from them all we were about to leave the meeting and go home when Rev. Father Paul Murphy, who up to then had not spoken, stood up and in a few words explained the matter to the men. He stated that some of the Committee were anxious that every man in the Company should offer to enlist in the British Army, but a small minority would not agree to the suggestion, and in order to help the Committee to make up their minds he asked in the following words:- "All who wish to follow ~~See~~ MacNeill, who formed the Volunteers, go to one side of the room; those who wish to follow

John Redmond, who wanted to smash the Volunteers, go to the other side of the room". About sixteen of us went to the side of the room reserved for Eoin MacNeill, and the remainder to the other side, with the result that on the following morning my boss gave me a week's notice terminating my employment with him. I told Fr. Paul Murphy on that Saturday evening what my boss had done and he said, "I am not surprised, as he was the man who first made the suggestion, that as soon as the men of the Company had been given some training, he proposed getting some of the Officers from the Curragh to attend a parade of the Company and let them address the men and get as many as possible to enlist". I left Edenderry the following Saturday - 29th August 1914, and so ended my connection with the Edenderry Company of the Irish Volunteers

On my return to the city, I tried for several jobs, but in each one I was told that as I was a single man my place was in the trenches with the Army fighting for small nations like Belgium. My reply in each case was "the only Army I would fight in would be our own Volunteer Army for Ireland".

About the middle of November 1914 I got a job in a Solicitor's office by reason of a vacancy having occurred by the Boss's son having joined and got a Commission in The Pals Battalion of the Dublin Fusiliers. About the end of November I was talking to the late Paddy Whelan about rejoining and, as my family had left Chapelizod and were living in Drumcondra, I did not know anybody in the district except Paddy, having met him in 5 Blackhall St. earlier in the year. He told me that he was an officer in "B" Company 1st Battalion and that the Company met every Monday and Thursday nights at 8 p.m. in 41 Parnell Square. He told me that if I cared to come down the following night, Thursday, he would have me enrolled. On my

attending the next night I met some old friends of mine who had been in the same Hurling Club with me about nine years previously, and I was accepted without any question. The Capt. of the Company then was Ned Daly, afterwards Batt. Commdt., Tom Byrne, Paddy Whelan and Louis Carrigg, officers, but what rank the latter three men held I do not know as I never saw Tom Byrne in uniform, but the other two were dressed in officers' tunics and breeches and leggings with Sam Brown belts. Early in January 1915 Ned Daly asked Paddy Whelan to get some one with a knowledge of the districts in the adjoining counties of Kildare and Meath and also the north Co. Dublin and Co. Wicklow. Paddy spoke to me about it and, as I was well acquainted with the districts mentioned, having been born in the ^{North} ~~New~~ Co. Wicklow, and had cycled over nearly the whole of north Kildare and South Meath, I asked him if I would be suitable. He replied that he would mention the matter to Ned Daly. At the next parade of "B" Co., Paddy Whelan told me to wait over, and when the Co. was dismissed he brought me to Ned Daly, who told me that although he was still Captain of the Co. he had been appointed Commandant of the 1st Battalion, and as he would be forwarding from Headquarters, despatches for other other portions of the country, he wanted some one who knew the districts very well to act in carrying the messages to the persons to whom they would be addressed. He questioned me about my knowledge of the various parts of the counties, and checked my answers with a map which he had with him. Apparently he thought my answers satisfactory as he asked me to let him know where I was living and also where I was working. When I gave him the information he asked me to call over to his place of business, May Roberts, Chemists in Aston's Place, on the next afternoon or early evening at about 4.30 p.m. On my attending there next day he handed me two envelopes, one addressed to Eddie Boylan of

Dunboyne and the other addressed to Donal Buckley of Maynooth. He told me to be very careful of them and to deliver them personally that evening before 9 p.m. I immediately went back to my work in Middle Abbey St., and at 5 o'clock I left and rushed home on my bike to Drumcondra, had a hurried tea, and started off by cycle to Dunboyne and Maynooth. I delivered my letters on time and returned home, which I reached about 10.15 p.m.

At the next parade of the "B" Co. I was complimented by Commandant Daly for carrying out his orders so expeditiously and he asked me if I would act as his Orderly in collecting any messages he might want and delivering any of his dispatches. I replied that I would be only too delighted to do anything he wanted, and he then appointed me his Orderly, a position I held until Easter Monday 1916 when I spoke to him for the last time.

At the time he appointed me his orderly I told him I had an ordinary gun Licence, and if sporting cartridges were of any use I could get plenty of them at about 5/- per 100. He told me to buy as many as I could and he handed me £3 to purchase them. I bought them in both Garnetts and Keegans, and when making my purchase in Keegans, Larry Keegan showed me some Brass Cartridges for rifles which he had. He was inquiring if I knew anyone who wanted them as he had about 800 or 1,000 and would sell them at 25/- per 100. When I gave this information to Comdt. Daly he gave me the money to purchase 100 and to bring them to his place of business the next afternoon. I made the purchase next morning, and that evening about 4.30 I delivered the parcel to Comdt. Daly. At the next Co. parade the Comdt. handed me £10 and gave me orders to see Keegan, find out the quantity of ammunition he had, and if it did not exceed 1,000 to offer to purchase them at £1 per 100. When I saw Keegan he told me he had about

1,200 and he was prepared to sell the lot for £10. I asked him would he have them made up in parcels in about two hours time and he agreed. I went to a friend of mine in Drumcondra and asked him to come with me to collect the parcels, of course not telling him what the parcels contained. We removed them to my home in Botanic Avenue, Drumcondra, after three trips on our bikes. I then returned to my work, and at the same time I reported to the Comdt. what I had done. He ordered me to have them counted and brought down in parcels of 50 to 41 Parnell Square that night about 8.30. When I made up the parcels I found there were 1,180 cartridges, and when made up in parcels of 50 I found I would have to make two journeys on my bike with them packed in a suitcase as I did not want anyone to know who I delivered them to, and as Keegan did not know my address he could not tell who he sold them to if he was ever asked about them.

All during the Spring and early Summer of 1915 I made two or sometimes three trips to Dunboyne and Maynooth every week, and on my vacation in August 1915, which I spent in Co. Longford, I brought messages to Tom Victory of Longford from Comdt. Daly.

Meanwhile the Volunteer Headquarters had removed to No. 2 Dawson Street and I had to attend there nearly every night. It was there I saw the other men, whom I afterwards knew were the Commandants of the other City Battalions and also the Officers of the Fingal Battalion, and what with delivering messages to the other Commandants, and to Dunboyne and Maynooth, I had very little time to get any military training in the Company. When I spoke to Comdt. Daly about it he replied that I was doing very good work for the Volunteers in Dublin and throughout the country, as I had apparently found out the shortest

routes to go from one part of the city to another with messages, also my knowledge of the adjoining counties was invaluable, and that some day I would be given a job in which such knowledge would be of the greatest assistance to the Volunteers and that up to the present I had carried out any orders given to me with the greatest ease and not to worry about forming fours or marching.

About the middle of September the entire 1st Battalion were ordered out for manoeuvres on a Saturday afternoon. The area covered was from Phibsboro to Blanchardstown and back down to Upper Finglas and Glasnevin. The village of Upper Finglas was supposed to be held by two companies and the other four companies were to attempt to capture it. I had a busy time of it bringing messages from the Comdt. to the attacking Companies and bringing reports from them back to him, while at the same time avoiding capture by the scouts of the defending Companies. However, my knowledge of the country over which the engagement took part enabled me to get through with all my messages safe. This experience of manoeuvres with the then entire Battalion stood them well, for shortly afterwards the entire Dublin Brigade carried out a similar engagement, and the 1st Battalion came out of the engagement very well on account of their previous experience. Shortly after the Brigade manoeuvre the entire 1st Battalion was ordered out for a route march and field tactics in the north Co. Dublin, the mobilisation point being Upper Finglas and the route taken was through St. Margaret's, Killaallaghan, The Ward, and back to Finglas. On the return journey, just as we had passed through St. Margaret's, nearly all the men were singing as they were marching, and the song was "The Watch on the Rhine". The Comdt. stepped to the side of the Road and suddenly gave the order for the Battalion to halt. When they did so he then gave the order "Stand easy" and addressed the men. He told them

how pleased he was with the work they had done that day, and also how glad he was to hear them singing and see them so cheerful after the day's work, but he would prefer to hear them sing "The Watch on the Liffey" instead of "The Watch on the Rhine", as the Liffey instead of the Rhine would be their battle ground, he hoped, before another twelve months. He also hoped that when the time came every man would be as much in earnest as they now were. He then gave the order for the Battalion to resume their march, and we eventually reached home about 8 p.m. having been out all day.

From about November 1915 matters seemed to be getting very active, as I noticed on my trips to both Dunboyne and Maynooth. On my previous visits earlier in the year I used to deliver the messages to Eddie Boylan and Donal Buckley respectively, but now I noticed that when I arrived two or three men would be there waiting. As soon as I arrived and handed over the message it would be opened and messages taken out and distributed to the men waiting. These men would immediately start off on bikes, motor bikes, or in one or two cases, motor cars.

About the middle of February 1916 I heard of a batch of Service rifles and ammunition that might be for sale, and as I was told by the Comdt. to report to him any information of this sort, I immediately got in touch with him and he told me to make discreet enquiries as to where the stuff was, what it consisted of and what price might be expected and report back to him. I eventually ascertained that the rifles and ammunition had been purchased from Tommies in Dublin by a man who had lived in Glasnevin village and had since died. It was only after his death that his people found the stuff buried under one of the rooms in the house, and as his people did not know any Volunteers they told our milkman, who

told me about it. I asked if I could see the stuff and he said he would make enquiries and let me know the result. Eventually an appointment was made for me to visit the house with the milkman and examine the stuff. On my arrival I found 6 Service Rifles (two marked D.R.), 2 large Service Revolvers and 6 parcels of .303 and 4 packages of .45 ammunition. The weapons were in good order, oiled and greased, and the ammunition was packed in greased paper. I was told they would sell the lot for £10. I was to make all arrangements for their removal and tell no one else or let any other person know anything about the transaction with them. When I reported to the Comdt. what I had found out he told me he would leave it to myself to make the arrangements, but in the case of a trap he would arrange for a party to be at hand, in case it was a trap. As it was now approaching St. Patrick's Day I asked our milkman to arrange an evening on which I could remove the stuff, as I had the money and all I wanted was his pony and van to remove the stuff. It was not until St. Patrick's Eve that the date was arranged. After my tea I collected the pony and van and called up to the house, having previously informed the Comdt. of the final arrangements. I had a sack with me to put the stuff into, and I was wondering if it would be noticed by the neighbours when I saw in a small shed in the yard a roll of lino which when opened out was about 4 yards long and about 6 feet wide. I placed the sack with the rifles, revolvers and ammunition in the roll, tied it up, and handed over £10 5 0. The 5/- extra was for the roll of lino as I did not want to return it or let them know where they could get it back, so I bought it from them for 5/-. On my return home I stored the roll of lino with stuff in my own dump, returned the pony and van, and reported the transaction to the Comdt., who I knew would be in 41 Parnell Square. He informed me he had already received a report from the men who had been sent

out as a covering party, and he congratulated me on the success I had made of it. He then told me that it would be impossible to remove the stuff that night, and that under the circumstances it would be safer for me not to attend the Mass Parade the next day. In fact, he thought it better for me not to be seen down town at all that day, until evening, when he would send a party of men to my house for the stuff which I was to leave in the roll of lino. And so I missed the Historic St. Patrick's Day Mass and Massed Parade of the Dublin Brigade!

About a week after this event the Comdt. asked me if I would be prepared to go down to some of the adjoining counties to work with the men there. When I asked him did he mean fight with them, or what did he mean, he replied that, of course, he meant fight with them, and asked me how I knew there was a fight expected. I replied that from what I had read in the paper, and the hints I had heard dropped at the meeting of my Circle of the I.R.B., that anyone could see that a fight was coming. He then told me that he expected orders would be issued to all the Volunteers throughout the country for a general Rising. He expected the day chosen would be Easter Sunday and he hoped everyone would be ready when the critical day arrived.

After this talk the Comdt. was more confidential with me and told me he was looking forward to the Day. He also told me that any further messages I would have to deliver would be very important ones and great care should be taken by me in delivering them. On the Tuesday of Holy Week, on my attending at H.Q., I was handed a large envelope addressed to the Comdt. When I delivered it he asked me to get him an Ordnance Sheet of North Kildare by 12 noon next day and bring it to him. I got it in Hodge & Figgis, and when I brought it to him he asked me to point out the

good roads in the county other than the main ones. He marked them off and told me that this was the area I might be engaged in the following week if everything went as planned. He expected, and hoped, that the men of Kildare and adjoining counties would be as prepared as the men of Dublin. I did not like to ask him for any details as to what my duties might be, but he told me that if I was engaged in any area outside the 1st Battalion area he was sure I would do my duty as a soldier of The Republic. This was the first mention I had heard from anyone about a Republic, and when I asked him what he meant by it he replied that when the day and hour had been settled on which to strike the blow for Irish freedom, the Irish Republic would be proclaimed by the Provisional Government of the Republic. Every Volunteer in arms would be expected to defend the Republic with his life if necessary and some of the leaders would fall in the fight, but the others would carry on even in face of overwhelming odds. While he was speaking to me I noticed his eyes. They appeared to shine, and I saw he was dead in earnest in every word he spoke. When he finished speaking he told me that whatever might come of it he was sure the men of the 1st Battalion, and particularly the men of his old Company, "B" Company, would not disgrace him. I then asked him would I call on the next day, Thursday, as usual, and he told me I might do so if not too busy getting ready for Sunday. I replied that I had everything in the way of arms, ammunition and equipment ready, and he told me when I was mobilised I was to bring everything of that description with me as any spare arms etc. that could be got were to be brought to the place of mobilisation.

When I called on the Comdt. on Thursday he told me he had no further orders for me and asked me who was at home. I replied, " My mother, aged about 70, and my sister

aged about 26". He told me it would be better if I could get my mother away to the country before Sunday, and he inquired if I had any relatives in the country. I replied that my mother's brother with his wife and family resided in the Co. Longford, near Tanesborough, but it might look queer if my mother was to go down there on Easter Saturday morning without any previous talk of her visit. However, things turned out all right in the end, as it will afterwards appear.

The Comdt. then informed me that when I received the mobilisation order I was to bring all the arms, ammo. and equipment, including my bike, with me to the mobilisation point.

I spent Good Friday cleaning and oiling my service rifle, my .22 rifle and my two fowling pieces, and collecting all the ammunition and putting it into parcels, cleaning, oiling and overhauling my bike, and had everything ready awaiting the order of mobilisation.

About 1.30 on Easter Saturday a telegram arrived for my mother from her brother in Longford saying his wife was sick and asking could my mother come down by the midday 2.30 train. As my mother had gone down to Drumcondra I tried to get in touch with her. It was just gone 2 o'clock when I located her. When she read the telegram she asked me to send a reply saying she would go on the 9 o'clock train on Monday morning from the Broadstone. I did not like to say anything to her, although she knew I had arms and ammunition in the house. I then tried to get in touch with Comdt. Daly, but failed. I was very worried for the rest of the afternoon and evening. However, on Sunday morning the Countermanding Order issued by Eoin MacNeill appeared, and at about 10.15 a.m. my group mobilizer called to the house and told me I was to

remain at home and await further orders. I asked him where I might find the Comdt., and he told me either 41 Parnell Square or 5 Blackhall St., probably the latter. I started off on my bike, and just as I arrived at the corner of Frederick and Dorset Streets, I saw the Comdt. speaking to Eamon Duggan, Batt. Adj. I told both of them about the wire that had arrived at home the previous day and the reply that had been sent. The Comdt. said that my mother would be well out of the city by the time any step was taken by the Volunteers unless the British took action. I was relieved, and immediately returned home and spent the day at home. The next morning, Easter Monday, after 7 o'clock Mass and breakfast, both my mother and I started off for the Broadstone. On arrival there I found two Volunteers, one 1st Battalion and the other 2nd Battalion, on the platform with the wife and two children of the 1st Batt. man. Thinking he was getting his wife and children away to the country I spoke to him about the matter. He replied that a friend of his, G.A. Lyons, had told him everything was off and he was going down to spend three or four days in the country. I replied that as soon as the train left I was returning home to await any orders. When the train pulled out I immediately started for home, and about 11 o'clock my group mobilizer arrived with orders to report at No. 5 Blackhall Street as soon as possible, bringing with me all arms, ammunition and equipment in my possession. I collected everything, got out my bike, loaded all on it and bid my sister good-bye. She replied that she would have a good feed ready for me when I returned that night after manoeuvres, as she expected I would be hungry.

On my arrival in 5 Blackhall Street I found about 250 men gathered in the hall and rooms on the ground floor, while upstairs a Battalion Council Meeting was being held.

I went over to my Co. "B" Group of men and found that the three men whom I thought were officers, Paddy Whelan, Louis Carrigg and Tom Byrne were absent, as were also about 40 other men of the Co. It afterwards transpired that Tom Byrne had been sent down to Co. Kildare some time previous, Paddy Whelan was sick, and Louis Carrigg had gone away.

When the B.C. Meeting was over I saw Comdt. and other other officers come down, and on my speaking to the Comdt. I asked him if I would be sent down the country. He replied "No", as the Countermanding Order of Sunday had upset all the plans. He then enquired about my mother and I informed him that she had left for Longford on the 9 a.m. train. He said he was glad she had got out of town in time and then asked me what arms I had brought with me. I replied, "Everything I had in the house". I also told him I was keeping the Service Rifle, but that all the others could be given to anyone who had no arms or ammunition only small arms. He then told me to take my place with "B" Co. men, as he was about to make a very important announcement. On my taking my place in the ranks of "B" Co. in the Hall, I saw the Comdt. come out to the back room and he called all the men to take their places in their Cos. When all had got into the ranks he called the men to attention, and spoke to them about the training they had gone through for the past 16 months, and that he was glad to see such a muster of the Batt. While he was speaking he was handed a written message. When he read it he looked earnestly at the men, and then told them that "The Irish Republic" had been proclaimed at 12 noon by Comdt. Gen. Patrick Pearse who had, with some of the Kimmage Garrison and Head Quarters staff, and Comdt. James Connolly with the Irish Citizen Army, taken over the G.P.O and were preparing to defend the Republic with their

lives. The Comdt. then said that if any man present did not agree with the opinions of the Supreme Council of the Irish Republic he was at liberty to return home, but if anyone did so, he would ask him to leave his arms, ammo., and equipment behind as some of the men present were not fully armed. No man left the ranks, and the Comdt. said he was glad he had the men 100 per cent behind him and the officers of the Supreme Command.

The Commandant then issued his orders to the various Companies, and as "B" Co. ^{had} only their Capt., Jimmy O'Sullivan, but no other officer, present, he appointed Paddy Scollan 1st Lieut. of the Co. He ordered the Co. to proceed at once to the Nth. Circular and Cabra Roads and take up positions of defence at the bridges, and if possible, demolish them. The Company started off about 65 strong via Queen St., Nth. King St., Upr. Church St., Constitution Hill and Phibsboro Road to the places we were ordered to. On our marching up Constitution Hill, opposite the King's Inns, we were subjected to a fusillade of rotten cabbages, oranges, apples etc. by a lot of women who were apparently wives of British soldiers. Our Capt. ordered us not to take any notice of them but to carry on. When we came to Doyle's Corner, at Phibsboro, we wheeled left towards the Park, and at St. Peter's Church, Phibsboro, Capt. Sullivan halted the Co. He sent about half of the men, under Lieut. Scollan, with orders to occupy the houses on Cabra Road beside the Railway bridge, while he took the remainder of the Co. up the Nth. Circular Road. We were just at the Park end of Phibsboro Church when we saw a body of mounted troops approaching around the bend of the road at the Medical Officer's residence of Grangegorman distant about 300 yards away. Capt. Sullivan ordered us to take cover in the garden of the Presbytery of St. Peter's and not to let ourselves be seen by the approaching military.

We waited under cover of the wall until they had passed. They were about 200 strong, with 2 or 3 officers in charge, and as well as the Lances they were carrying they were armed with rifles in the boot of their saddles. These were the troop of Lancers who were afterwards attacked in O'Connell St. from the G.P.O., but they did not, as Desmond Ryan states in his book "The Rising", return to their barracks (Marlborough) (now McKee), at least not until after Tuesday evening at 4 p.m. What they did was to picket their horses in the roadway into Mountjoy, and they themselves took over some houses in the avenue or street leading to the Female portion of Mountjoy.

When we arrived at the Railway Bridge Capt. O'Sullivan ordered us to take over the two houses on the city side of the bridge and erect a barricade on the roadway on the Park side of the bridge. The people in the two houses were accommodated in the Vincentian Presbytery and we proceeded to barricade the houses and strengthen the barricades on the roadway.

Capt. O'Sullivan ordered some of the men to prepare food for a meal as some of them had gone foraging for food and were successful, while some more food arrived from the G.P.O. At about 3 o'clock the first batch of men had their dinner while the remainder were on duty on the barricades. One of them had taken up a position under cover at the N.C.Rd. end of the railway which ran down to the Broadstone Station.

From about 5.30 people who were returning from Fairyhouse Races began to come to the barricades and we had to send them around by Fassaugh Lane and Connaught St. to get them to their homes as we did not wish anybody to know we were so few; we had only half the Company on the N.C.Rd. bridge and the remainder on the Cabra Road bridge.

About 7 p.m. I was posted as sentry out in the back garden, given the pass-word "Desire" and ordered to challenge anyone who approached and could not give the password and send for Capt. O'Sullivan. I was on this duty without incident until 10 p.m. with an I.C.A. man, Jack Bent, when we were relieved and told to get some sleep. We went into the house and found a small room upstairs with none of our men in it. We slept on the bed until we were again called for sentry duty at about 3.a.m. on Tuesday morning. When I was coming off this duty, about 5 a.m., I saw Sean Howard, the youngest Volunteer in Dublin, out on the middle of the bridge trying to get up some of the tram sets so that a hole could be made to blow up the bridge. Capt. O'Sullivan was just coming in from the bridge having given Sean the only tools available, a cobbler's hammer and a coal chisel. I told the Capt. that a crowbar and pickaxe would be required so he ordered me to get some breakfast and then see if such tools were to be got on the Cabra Rd. bridge; if not he would try and get them somewhere else. After a hasty breakfast I went into a small shed in the garden and found a sledge hammer, pickaxe, and a large coal chisel about 2 feet long. I brought them out to the bridge and Sean and myself started to take up the sets, with the result that by about 9 o'clock we had taken up about 2 square yards of sets. We then got a couple of garden shovels and with the pickaxe we started to make the hole in the bridge. We had gone down about 18 inches when one of the men on the barricade roared out for all to take cover as we were about to be attacked. I looked towards the Park and saw an ambulance, called "The Canadian Women's Motor Ambulance", and which at that time was to be seen around Dublin, turning as if to return towards the Park. At the top of Rathdown Road, distant about 70 yards from the barricades when it was completely turned round I noticed soldiers, 3 or 4 of them, sitting on the floor of the

ambulance, and the next instant a machine gun in it had started to fire and sprayed the barricade with a shower of bullets. Fortunately, none of us were hit, but not so the soldiers in the ambulance. The man who had given the warning was in the front garden of the cottage on the Park side of the bridge and had seen the machine gun while the driver was trying to turn the motor. He opened fire with his rifle and before the ambulance reached Upr. Grangegorman we saw the soldier who was working the gun slump over it and it ceased to fire. The ambulance continued on its way towards the Park.

Seán and myself then continued with the making of the hole and about 11.30 we were told it was deep enough. We were then handed two boxes of sticks of gelignite and dynamite in 4 oz. and 2 oz. sticks of a total weight of 102 ozs and with about 5 feet of fuse. We were told to pack the sticks tightly into the hole with the fuse in the middle and then cover up the lot with big stones and other weighted objects until the hole was filled up. When filled we were to warn the other men on the bridge, light the fuse, and then take cover in the front garden. When we lighted the fuse Seán and myself took cover behind the front wall of the garden and waited for the explosion - but nothing happened. After waiting about 10 minutes one of the men on the barricade said the detonators must have slipped off the fuse. I asked him what the detonators were, and when he told me I said we had no such things on the fuse. He told us to remove all the covering from the gelignite while he went into Capt. O'Sullivan for some detonators. He brought them out to us with 2 lengths of fuse about 5 feet each. We were told to attach the detonators to the end of the fuse, and place the 2 lengths of fuse with detonators attached in the middle of the sticks of dynamite and gelignite, and to make sure that the

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detonators were firmly attached. On putting on the detonators I found they were too wide for the fuse so Sean suggested that we put them on and then bite them with our teeth into the fuse. We did this, placed the fuses, and filled up the hole again with stones etc. We then lit the fuses and ran for cover behind the garden wall. In less than a minute there was a double explosion which lifted up about 20 of the sets and a length of tram rail about 2 feet long which was hurled into the air for about 60 or 70 feet and came down lengthways on the roof of the small cottage on the Park side of the bridge and buried itself in the sitting-room floor for about 12 inches. When Sean and I looked at the hole we found that it consisted ^{of} only about 1 foot of the roof of the bridge, but around it for a distance of about 3 feet was all cracked and split. We both started to make the hole bigger until we had a hole about 4 feet square made. We were then told to go into the house and have something to eat and drink as the information Capt. O'Sullivan had received was that the place was likely to be attacked as the military were getting machine guns into position to fire on us. It was then about 3 p.m. and after a hurried meal and a cup of tea we went out to our places on the barricade where we waited for about twenty minutes. Then the military opened fire on us with machine guns from the following points: Great Western Square, Broadstone Stn., Upr. Grangegorman, and with shrapnel from artillery at the entrance to Connolly Norman's house, Grangegorman M.O., on the N.C.Rd. After about 10 minutes the men in the upper windows of the house succeeded in silencing the two machine guns which were firing from Great Western Square, while the ones at Upr. Grangegorman had to retreat down Grangegorman as we on the barricades had concentrated on this point. The Broadstone ones were going over our heads, but the Artillery piece was spraying the barricades with shrapnel and we were ordered to get into the house.

in the hedge and saw that they were all members of "B" Co. who were on either of the bridges, namely, Paddy Holohan, P.J. Corless, Jack Price, Vincent and Dick Gogan, Peter and Tom Blanchfield, Arthur O'Reilly and one of the Liverpool Irish named Willie Walsh. When they arrived up I told Pat Holohan, whom I knew to be a Section Commander of "B" Co., that both myself and Eamonn Murphy were going to join Comdt. Ashe at Finglas Golf Links. He took charge, but would not let us go out through the cemetery and up the road as he thought the military might have outposts on the road. I replied that we were well outside any military and would be with Comdt. Ashe in about 15 minutes. He ordered us to keep under cover of all the hedges and not to cross any open field. When we arrived at the Tolka river we found it in flood, and as it had taken us over 45 minutes to reach the river I immediately entered the river with the water nearly up to my waist. When I got over the river I told the others to do likewise with the result that they were all washed out but otherwise uninjured. When all had crossed Pat Holohan ordered us not to cross the field into the Finglas Wood without using the cover of the hedges. Consequently it took us nearly twenty minutes to arrive at the woods, whereas, if we had gone straight across the field and the next one we would have been in the woods in about 4 or 5 minutes. After passing through the woods we arrived at the Main Road and enquired at a cottage as to Comdt. Ashe's whereabouts. We were told that he and his men had left the Golf Links about 20 minutes previously and had gone round the Ben Eavin Road which would bring them into Glasnevin village. I asked if it was correct that he had gone by the Ben Eavin Road and not the Jamestown Road by which he could take to St. Margaret's or Ballymun where he could then proceed to Swords or, through St. Margaret's to Oldtown and on to the Naul and

Balbriggan; but we were definitely told it was the Ben Eavin Road. As it was then getting dusk P. Holohan started us to march around the Ben Eavin road and when we arrived at Ben Eavin Convalescent Home for Cork St. Fever Hospital he ordered one of the men to cut the telephone wires into the Home so that the officials could not phone the police or military. We continued on our way, and about 8.30 arrived at the farmyard of Smith's of Ben Eavin House. We were ordered into some of the sheds, and after some outposts were put out the rest of us lay down to try and get some sleep. We were still in our own wet clothes. One of the farm workers told us to stuff the legs of our trousers and breeches with chopped hay to prevent us getting colds. I found that when I had stuffed both legs of my breeches with the chopped hay and lay down to sleep on a bundle of hay I felt quite warm and slept until 12 o'clock when I was called for outpost duty. I was told I would have to remain there on duty until 2 o'clock, but instead of that it was 6 o'clock next morning when I was called in. It was found then that Jack Price, P.J. Corless, Vincent and Dick Gogan had all left us during the night and that Pat Holohan had been into the G.P.O. where he had seen Tom Clarke and James Connolly. He was ordered to get in touch with Comdt. Ashe, who would be found operating somewhere around Swords and Lusk, and report to Comdt. Ashe how things were in the G.P.O. and surrounding posts. He asked if anyone of us knew where Saucerstown or Knocksedan were situate. I informed him that the quickest way to get to either place was across the fields to Ballymun Chapel and continue on the road for about 3 miles when we would arrive at Knocksedan Cross. As Ballymun Chapel was only about 700 yards across the fields I expected he would give us the order to get there as quick as possible, but we had to go through the same work as before when crossing fields, e.g., marching in single file up one side of a

field, using the hedges as cover, and then taking another field the same way. In this way it took us nearly 2½ hrs. to cover a distance of less than 1,000 yards as the crow flies. On arrival at Ballymun Chapel, the C.C., Fr. O'Doherty, told us that Comdt. Ashe was at Knocksedan so we started out along the Naul Road from Ballymun, marching in single file on each side of the road. Just as we started off a large 2 seater motor car with dickey seat came around from Silloge direction driven by one of the Craigie Bros. We stopped him and told him we wanted the car in the name of the Irish Republic. He replied that he was short of petrol but was on his way to his residence at Glasnevin to get a couple of tins. He would be back in about 20 minutes, and if we liked one of our men could go with him and he would drive him back to us. Pat Holohan was inclined to agree to his suggestion, but I told him that Craigie's house was just beside Glasnevin R.I.C. barracks and that probably he would drive up to the barracks and inform the R.I.C. and perhaps bring them out after us. We decided to take the car and chance it taking us to Knocksedan, so the 7 of us piled into and around the car and drove it out towards Knocksedan. We had just passed the Forest Tavern when the car started to splutter and eventually stopped. Willie Walsh, Liverpool Irish, who, together with his other knowledge, knew a lot about motors informed us that the petrol tank was empty, and since we could find no spare tin of petrol in the car we were forced to abandon it and commandeer a farm cart and horse, the property of old Mick Maher - a dairyman from Botanic Avenue, Glasnevin. We drove it out to Knocksedan Cross where we joined up with Comdt. Ashe. He was then just returning from Donabate and Swords where they had attacked and disarmed the R.I.C. in both barracks. On arrival at the camp the Comdt. handed over to us Paddy Grant and Tom Maxwell, members of the Baldoyle Company of the I.V.

Dublin Brigade, and told P. Holohan that he was appointed Section Leader of No. 4 Section which then comprised 11 men all told as Ned Stafford of Swords was also put into No. 4 Section. After a good dinner, and for me a well earned rest, the order was given to break camp and prepare for a trek and journey of about 7 miles with all arms, ammunition and equipment. About 7 p.m. we started off, the majority on bikes, the Comdt. and Dr. Hayes in his 2 seater motor, and Capt. Jim Lawless and myself and 3 others on the farm cart. The farm cart also carried the Battalion's spare arms, ammunition, explosives and equipment. After a circuitous route through Oldtown, Killsallaghan and other small villages in the north county we arrived outside Garristown about 11.30 p.m. The Column was halted, and bicycles, motor and farm cart put into an open shed in a field. About half the Column were told off to remain in the field and guard the vehicles and their contents, the remainder were told off for duty under the Comdt. We advanced up the road towards Garristown and on arrival outside the R.I.C. barracks the Comdt. called on the occupants to surrender their arms to him in the name of the Irish Republic. Meanwhile, Dick Mulcahy was sent by the Comdt. along with four other men to take over the P.O. and cut the telephonic and telegraphic communications. As the R.I.C. Sergeant had refused to obey the Comdt's order to hand over their arms the Comdt. ordered us to fire a volley into the building. As we did so the police shouted that they would surrender if we spared their lives. The Comdt. replied that if they came out unarmed none of them would be injured. After a few minutes delay the Sergeant and three men opened the front door and came out unarmed. The Comdt. ordered six or eight of us to enter the Barracks and take possession of all arms and equipment and to ascertain that there was no other member of the

force in the building. The Sergeant informed him that the other two constables were married and were living in other houses in the village. On entering the barracks we found only six carbines and 4 revolvers with their ammunition pouches filled with ammunition. The Sergeant told the Comdt. that 2 of his men had been sent to him from Balbriggan on Tuesday afternoon. During this time Dick Mulcahy and his men had entered the Post Office and severed the telephonic and telegraphic lines, smashed the instruments and taken away all the stamps, and Postal Orders and Money Order books, together with all the cash in the office, giving a receipt for same in the name of the Irish Republic. When the Comdt. had ascertained that all arms and equipment had been removed from the barracks he ordered some of the men to remove the Imperial Coat of Arms plaque from the front of the building. While the men were doing this one of them hoisted the Tricolour on a brush handle to one of the high chimney pots. Both parties then returned to the field where the rest of the column were having a little relaxation, the Comdt. having first detailed 4 or 5 outposts to warn him of the approach of any military or police. Nothing occurred until about 5.30 when a Constable was seen approaching from one of the houses opposite the barracks. He certainly rubbed the sleep out of his eyes when he saw one of our men on guard a few yards from the barracks and the Tricolour floating in the breeze from one of the chimney pots. He entered the barracks without any interference from any of us and we supposed he got a different story from the Sergt. and three men inside, but what explanation he gave the Sergt. for not coming to their assistance when we fired on the barracks we never heard.

About 6.30 a.m. on Thursday a relief from the Column arrived and we who had been left on duty in the village returned to the column where we had a good breakfast. After a rest of about 2 hours two or three of us took to oil and overhaul all the bikes so that none would break down on the road when the Column moved off.

About 2.30 the Comdt. sent for me and gave me certain duties to carry out and report back to him as soon as possible. (In my account of the Battle of Ashbourne I have given a detailed account of what these duties were and I refer to same in the Account of the Ashbourne fight).

After the fight at Rath Cross the entire Column returned to their camp in Baldwinstown. After a good dinner I got the chance of giving my feet a wash and bathe in hot water with plenty of washing soda in it which I got from the yardman's wife. I felt thoroughly refreshed, and if I could have got a few hours sleep I would have been alright, but unfortunately, I was detailed for outpost duty with Tom Maxwell at the same outpost as we were on duty on the previous night. We were left there until 6 a.m. on Saturday morning when we were called in, as the Column would be moving off between 7 and 8 o'clock. After a good, but hasty, breakfast of bread and butter and tea, with a couple of cutlets of mutton, I got my bike ready and when all was ready the Comdt. ordered the Column to move off in sections, two sections in front who would supply advance guards, then the ammunition cart and commissariat van which had been loaded up with the spare carbines that had been captured in the previous day's fight, and the remaining two sections to supply rear guards. Unfortunately, the motor bread van in which the spare rifles, ammunition and equipment were packed could not move as the load was too heavy and there was a danger of the springs of the van breaking or, perhaps, some part of

the engine might break, so the Comdt. ordered every man to take at least one rifle or carbine along with the one each man already had. When all the men had taken one rifle or carbine it was found that the weight was still bending down the springs so some of us took a second carbine or rifle which made the springs regain nearly their normal shape. The driver of the van started the motor and the van moved down the yard and up the car way to the public road. When it arrived on the road the Comdt. ordered the Column to mount their cycles and proceed towards Oldtown but not to go through Garristown. Originally my section was one of the leading ones, but when we finally moved off it was the rear section and four of us were detailed to act as rear guard to the Column. As we were going up the hill from Baldwinstown we looked up at the men in front and at the cart and motor van. I am sure if any person could have taken a photo of the Column on the march it would have been an unique one, as most of the cyclists had three rifles or carbines slung across their shoulders or strapped to their bikes, and nearly all had not shaved since the previous Monday. We certainly looked some of the brigands or pirates you would read about in some adventure story.

After passing through Oldtown we turned south-west and eventually arrived at a deserted farm house and large stable and farm-yard at Newbarns. Here we made a halt and again had something to eat after which I slept in the straw in one of the sheds until 1 o'clock. I gave my bike another overhauling and oiling, and also my rifle, checking my ammunition for it and for my service revolver which I took from Sergt. Brady the day before and which the Comdt. allowed me to hold. About 5.30 p.m. the Comdt. arranged the sentries for the next 12 hours and I found I was detailed with Paddy Grant for duty at a cross-

road about half a mile from the Camp. The sentries left the camp about 7.30 and Paddy and I arrived at our post at just 8 o'clock and relieved the two men who had been on duty from 4 p.m. We were told we would be relieved at 12 midnight and were given the password "Rath Cross". We were ordered to be very careful and watch the road from Balbriggan and The Naul, and also the road from Swords, and if we heard a body of men approaching we were to challenge them to halt. If they refused, one of us was to get back as quick as possible to the Camp and to inform the other two sentry posts between us and the Camp on our way back. Meanwhile, the other was to halt and engage any body of men who could not give the pass-word. After Paddy and myself had taken up our positions we discussed the orders which had been given to us, and we both decided that if any body of men, six or more in number, advanced up the road to us we would both retreat to the camp, warning the other two posts of the fact on our way back. We hoped nothing would happen until we had been relieved at 12 midnight. Midnight arrived without anything happening, but unfortunately our relief did not turn up and about 2 a.m. on Sunday morning Paddy Holohan, accompanied by Frank Daly, came round on a visit to the sentries and informed us that the relief men were not available until about 4 o'clock as several of the men in the camp had taken ill. This was afterwards found to be untrue. What actually happened was that both P. Holohan and F. Daly had themselves overslept until nearly 1.30 a.m., and when they found out what time it was they went out to visit the sentries by the Ward entrance to the camp with the result that we were left there until after 6 a.m. when all sentries were called in by the Comdt's orders. On our return to the camp we learned that about 6 o'clock an R.I.C. Sergt. from Swords arrived with a G man from Dublin with the order for surrender signed by Comdt. Gen.

Padraig Pearse. Our Comdt. informed both the G man and the Sergt. that before he would surrender he would have to have the order for surrender confirmed personally by Comdt. Gen. Padraig Pearse. For this purpose he detailed Dick Mulcahy to go with the G man and the Sergt. to see Pearse and get confirmation of the order from him in person. All this had happened before we got back to the camp from our post and the foregoing is what some of the men in the camp told us. Some of the men told the Comdt. that they would not surrender but would take some small arms, and plenty of ammunition for the arms, and take to the hills where they would continue the fight by harassing the enemy by cutting telephonic and telegraphic lines and other lines of communication. The Comdt. then informed them that on their first visit to their homes they would be arrested as they were all known to the R.I.C. in north Co. Dublin, and that the only ones who had any chance of escaping were the men from the city. On hearing this I spoke to the Comdt. and he told me I could go if I liked, but before I either went or stayed he would like to dump some of the arms and ammunition. He had decided on a thick shrubbery at one corner of the large walled garden so we took all the Howth ammunition and the six Howth rifles, four or five shotguns and their ammunition, three or four Lee Enfield Rifles and about 200 rounds of .303, six Webley & Scott revolvers and about 60 rounds of .45 ammunition, together with about six stone of gelignite and dynamite with about one hundred detonators both electrical and ordinary. These were all packed into three large wooden boxes we found in one of the lofts of the sheds. All the stuff was soaked in rangoon, and three in ^{one} oil, and wrapped round with sacking which had been soaked in three or four tins of cart grease which we found in the cart sheds. We carried them out to the shrubbery, and near the east and north walls a trench of about three feet deep and nine or ten feet long was opened and the

three boxes placed in the bottom which we had covered with dry straw and hay. The boxes were then similarly covered and the clay thrown in on top until no sign of the boxes or their covering could be seen. As the trench was hidden by several large shrubs we hoped it would not be found by any R.I.C. This job took us until 9 o'clock, and as Dick Mulcahy had not returned I decided to leave the camp and take my chance in the city. As I was about to leave Peter Blanchfield asked me if I would try and get his brother Tom into town. Another brother of theirs who was not in the Volunteers was working in the Clontarf Pumping Station, and as this place was outside the city proper I said I would leave Tom down there if there was no military cordon to pass through. Another man, Arthur O'Reilly, who lived in Millmount Place, just off Millmount Avenue, Drumcondra, also decided to go with us and take his chance so we left the camp after a good wash and a hearty breakfast. We started for Dublin about 9.45. We came up the road from the camp which brought us on to the main Finglas - Ashbourne Road just at The Ward R.I.C. barracks. When we were turning for Dublin we saw 3 or 4 R.I.C. men standing outside the barracks but they took no notice of us so we continued on our way until we came to the left hand turn which brought us out on to the St. Margaret's - Finglas Road. We called on a friend of mine in Silloge who gave us the necessary materials to have a shave after a week's growth of beard. She also gave us clean collars and ties and then told us to sit down and take some dinner, although we were not hungry, but she insisted. When we had finished we left her, thanking her for her kindness. We then mounted our bikes and rode on to the Ballymun Road at Ballymun Chapel. We continued on our way without incident but we could see the pall of smoke which hung over the centre of the city.

On arriving at the Glasnevin end of Botanic Avenue we went into the Church to say a few prayers for the safety of our comrades we had left behind that morning and also for the repose of the souls of our two comrades who had been killed, Tommy Rafferty and John Crinigan.

When we came out of the church we saw an armoured car and four lorry loads of troops, all fully armed, going out to Ballymun Road. These were the troops who went out to take the Comdt. and his men, in all about 36 prisoners.

We cycled down Botanic Avenue and when I called at my own house my sister was relieved to see I was alive. She told me that the military cordon had that morning been moved from the Tolka Bridge to Binn's Bridge (Canal) so we went on our way and left Arthur O'Reilly at his home in Millmount Pl. Tom Blanchfield and I cycled down Richmond Road to Fairview, leaving the military cordon on the Ballybough Tolka Bridge on our right, and on out by Fairview Strand to the Pumping Station between Malahide and Howth Roads where I left him. On my return I did not want to pass by the military cordon at Ballybough so I cycled up Philipsburgh Avenue, around by Goosegreen, Grace Park Road and on to Upr. Drumcondra Road, up Botanic Avenue and home to No. 60 where I promised myself a good sleep.

So ended one glorious week without any serious injury to me.

Signed:

Jerry Golden

Date:

26th May 1951

Witness:

W. F. Ryan Comdt.

Note:

Although the foregoing has been written out by me 55 years after the events mentioned I can still see in my mind's eye everything that happened during the period covered.

W. F. Ryan Comdt.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21
No. W.S. 521.

Signed:

Jerry Golden