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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913–21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 597

Witness

Edmond O'Brien,
Galbally,
Co. Limerick.

Identity.

Member of Galbally Company
Galtee Battalion Irish Volunteers, 1916;
Officer of same Company, later;
I.R.B. Center, Galbally.

Subject.

(a) National activities 1914-1921;

(b) Smuggling of arms and ammunition from U.S.A. to Ireland, 1920;

(c) Dail Eireann Loan Office, New York, 1920.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil

File No. S.1578

Form B.S.M. 2

STATEMENT OF EDMUND O'BRIEN,

GALBALLY, CO. LIMERICK.

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STATEMENT BY EDMOND O'BRIEN,

Galbally, County Limerick.

I am one of three brothers, all born in Mitchelstown. My father was William O'Brien, a native of Mitchelstown, County Cork. I was born in the year 1890, and about the year 1896 or 1897 my father sold out and bought premises in Galbally County Limerick, where we all resided afterwards.

From my earliest years I was always a very keen student of Irish history, and the struggles through the ages to shake off the rule of the foreigner made a very deep impression on me. The National ballads of all kinds, and the writings of such men as Thomas Davis, Charles Kickham, Michael Doheny ("The Felon's Track") and several others had their effect on a very receptive mind for this type of literature.

My first memory of personal interest in National affairs was when the Irish Parliamentary Party, led by Mr. John Redmond, looked like being successful in obtaining a limited measure of freedom and Home Rule.

Amongst the first areas in the country to embrace the Irish Volunteer movement was our own. Early in 1914 the Galtee Battalion was formed, comprising Companies from Mitchelstown, County Cork, Ballylanders, Galbally, Dungrud and Ardpatrick, all in the County Limerick. I cannot remember any other Company areas at the moment, but these, at any rate, became active Companies in this Battalion.

When the split in the Irish Volunteer movement between the Irish Volunteers and the Redmondite section, called the National Volunteers, took place, the Galbally Company voted practically 100% loyalty to the Irish Volunteers. A number of the other Companies in the Battalion, like Mitchelstown,

Ballylanders, etc., were divided more or less.

I can remember the night well that the vote was taken in our own Company as to whether we stay loyal to the Irish Volunteers or follow the lead of John Redmond and be members of the National Volunteers. We were marched up the road headed by our Company Captain, William Quirke, and our training officer, Captain Tom Byrne of Dublin. This latter officer had a very oustanding record, starting with the Boer War where he fought with the Irish Brigade under Major John MacBride. Subsequently, during Easter Week 1916, he was a senior officer of the Four Courts garrison under Commandant Ned Daly.

When I stated here that my own Company in Galbally stood 100 per cent on the Irish Volunteer side, and that the majority in the other Companies of the Battalion were also on the same side, I do not wish to give the impression that the great majority of the young men of the country were in our favour. Unfortunately, such was not the case, as the vast majority of our people followed the Redmondite lead at the time. Various causes, however, were instrumental in swelling the ranks of the Irish Volunteers. Number one was the action of John Redmond in breaking with tradition by asking the young men of the country to aid the British in world war No. 1. Another very important factor was that while the Irish Volunteers kept up a vigorous recruiting and propaganda campaign, the National (Redmondite) Volunteers were allowed to fall into decline, which was brought to a climax when they were supplied with old Italian rifles for which there was no ammunition. Still it must be mentioned that, with the exception of the chief cities and isolated rural areas such as our own, the Irish Volunteers were a much depleted organisation in 1915.

Soon after the division in the ranks of the Volunteers

had taken place, the Galtee Battalion started to reorganise and recruit, so that there was a gradual improvement in the strength of the Battalion.

About this period a proclamation was issued by the British forbidding the importation or purchase of arms, ammunition and military equipment. This order had a very detrimental effect on the job of arming our men, and called for every known device and skill on the part of those responsible for the work of gun-running and smuggling arms, etc.

I think it was in 1915 also that the Volunteer Headquarters decided to hold a number of training camps, and, in view of the position and strength of the Galtee area, one of the groups under canvas was located there, with Galbally as a starting off point.

A few days before the camp was due to start, the Q.M. of the camp, J.J. Burke of Dublin, arrived in the area, and, with the help of the local Volunteers, erected the tents and made all necessary preparations for the reception of the Volunteers reporting to the camp for training. These Volunteers were drawn from various Battalion areas, some from Dublin, some from Limerick, Kerry, Cork, etc. Amongst their numbers were many men who were also prominent in the years that followed, including Captain J.J. O'Connell, (who was subsequently Colonel O'Connell), and Mr. Frank Fahy, afterwards T.D. and Ceann Comhairle of An Dáil. Captain O'Connell was in charge of the party. The trainees visited a number of other centres in the area, including Ballylanders, Kilfinane, etc., before completing their course. One interesting remembrance strikes my memory regarding the occasion of this camp. Before leaving the camp at Moore Abbey, Galbally, the local Cumann na mBan made a presentation to our visiting comrades.

At the reception a member of the latter group, I think a young Dublin Volunteer, sang the "Soldier's Song". This composition had only been written by Peadar Kearney a short time previously It was only a popular patriotic song then and did not become famous as the National Anthem of the Irish Nation until some time later.

The holding of the Galtee Camp had a very good effect in our area, and was the cause of a number of young men getting enrolled in the Volunteers. The latter were a very welcome addition, as our ranks were sadly depleted after the Redmondite split.

From this onwards the British Government's watchfulness and proclamations made the arming of the Volunteers quite a big problem. Nevertheless it went on, although the vast bulk of the arms consisted of shotguns with buckshot ammunition, pikeheads, etc. Pike heads were manufactured at the Shannon Foundry, Limerick, a number of them reaching our area. M.P. Colivet was manager of this Foundry and also O/C of Limerick City Volunteers.

Some time about this period a large motor driven by a Limerick man, Dr. Dundon, who was practising in the Midlands, brought a large consignment of shotguns and shotgun ammunition from Dublin to the Galtee Battalion area - to Anglesboro at the foot of the Galtee mountains. As the arms proclamation was in force, the driver had an adverturous journey from the Metropolis until he landed his load at Anglesboro at about four a.m. on a very bad winter's morning. A number of Galtee Battalion Volunteers from each Company area were instructed to meet the car, and, as far as I can recollect, our Company Captain William Quirke, Bob Walsh and myself were those presen from our area.

Captain Bob Monteith, who had been prominent in training the Dublin Volunteers, was ordered by the British Government to leave that city and stay in a defined area, which was

Limerick City and County. In addition to giving the Limerick City Brigade the benefit of his Army training, he also carried out the same work with the Galtee Battalion weekly.

On Whit Sunday, 1915, a parade of Volunteers was ordered for Limerick city, and a number of Companies of the Dublin City Battalions, with the Limerick and the Galtee Battalions, marched through the streets of Limerick. Our reception from the citizens was anything but favourable, and in many parts open hostility was displayed. While this latter attitude did not assert itself beyond some isolated incidents, the silent contempt of the remainder of the citizens was almost as bad to look at. A number of National leaders and men who made their mark on Irish history soon afterwards were present that day. The parade was led by Captain Robert Monteith, who was later associated with Roger Casement in their historic landing on the Kerry coast from a German submarine in 1916.

Included on the parade were P.H. Pearse, Thomas Clarke, Commandant Ned Daly and Seán McDermott, all of whom were executed for the part played by them the following year in the Easter Week Rebellion. Also present were Eamon de Valera and many other men who made their mark subsequently.

Our men showed fairly good training and discipline on this occasion, and kept their ranks intact despite their assailants' repeated assaults with stones and bottles. However, we had a number of minor casualties caused by the latter missiles, but none of them were fatal.

One of my recollections of this period is meeting three of the Easter Week leaders, Tom Clarke, Seán McDermott and Major John MacBride, when I was on a visit to Dublin.

During the initial organising of the Volunteers in our

area, Ernest Blythe was very much in our district and I had very close contact with him in his work as organiser.

The first Commandant of our Battalion was D. Walsh of Mitchelstown, and on his departure from the area Liam Manahan of Ballylanders, creamery manager, became O.C., Galtee Battalion.

I think it was early in 1916 that Volunteer Headquarters set about opening up communications to the various Volunteer units. This was very necessary in order to avoid sending any important matter through the enemy postal service. Eamon Ceannt was the Director of that particular branch at G.H.Q., and I can recollect the first effort to open up communications between Dublin and Cork. A Volunteer named E. Keating of Bansha delivered a dispatch from Dublin to me in Galbally, and I immediately forwarded it, per cycle, to the Mitchelstown Company. In addition to the dispatch, a time sheet was handed to me by Keating stating the time of departure and arrival of the message at Bansha, Galbally, and the various other places it passed through. On the document was a covering address in Dublin, to which I was instructed to mail the time sheet in a plain envelope immediately I had dealt with the matter.

I omitted to state earlier in this story that, in addition to the Irish Volunteers, there was also a women's organisation locally. Branches of Cumann na mBan were attached as auxiliaries to the various Volunteer Companies.

In 1915, either Summer or Autumn, I cannot remember which, Volunteer manoeuvres were carried out by our Battalion at Ballybrien, Anglesboro, at which the Cumann na mBan were mobilised and prepared food in the open for the Volunteers on duty. On this occasion a number of R.I.C. - I would say

about nine or ten - were present on the roadway on the main Cork-Limerick via Fermoy road, watching the tactical exercises, but they did not attempt to enter the field occupied by our men. In the meantime a number of Volunteers from the Mitchelstown Company had been detailed to remove the police should they make any effort to approach the field where the main body of Volunteers were exercising. As matters turned out, the occasion did not call for action, as the R.I.C. did not leave the road.

I should, perhaps, have mentioned that in the beginning of the Volunteer movement, units were drilled by ex-British Army men or Reservists. Practically the only type of drill we got was of the barrack square variety. Later, however, we got plenty of tactical training and field exercises from Captain Tom Byrne, who had a wide experience of guerilla tactics from the Boer War. Afterwards Captain Bob Monteith also gave us plenty field work, including special courses for officers.

Although the Irish Volunteers were numerically smaller than the Redmondite portion of the Volunteers, still the energy with which they went about their work re-organising and arming was the cause of bringing many recruits into their ranks.

On St. Patrick's Day, 1916, Church parades of Irish Volunteers took place in many areas. The Dublin Brigade attended Mass in the city churches and marched to College Green, where they were addressed by Pádraig Pearse. Cork and Limerick city also had their parades. My most vivid recollection, however, is of our little Company's parade, wit arms, at the local Catholic church. We lined up outside the Volunteer hall, which was next door to the local R.I.C.

barracks. We were headed by our Company Captain, William Quirke, and fully armed, with shotguns and about five or six rifles, we marched into first Mass in Galbally. Immediately after Mass we formed up outside the church. Our strength I would say was between fifty and sixty, roughly about fifty-five. We went for a route march and then came back to the hall, after which each man took his rifle or shotgun, as the case may be, with him to put it in safe keeping.

There were no incidents, although the R.I.C., as was their usual habit, walked after us but kept at a respectful distance all the time.

Approaching Easter 1916, the strength of the Galtee Battalion, in my estimation, would have been roughly 300 or thereabouts. Our local Company in Galbally was about 50 strong.

My recollection of the approach of Easter Week, 1916, is that arrangements were made for the holding of parades on Easter Sunday, at all points where Volunteer units existed.

In conjunction with other Irish Volunteer units throughout the country, the Galtee Battalion prepared for mobilisation and field exercises on that Sunday. The first impression I got that affairs in connection with this mobilisation had a far more serious aspect than I had thought, was when, some time about Holy Thursday, Tadhg Crowley called on me. After explaining that from the Volunteer point of view the situation was becoming critical, and that reliable men were specially required in each area, he asked me to become a member of the Irish Republican Brotherhood. I consented and was immediately sworn into that organisation by Tadhg Crowley. I believed at the time that the British Government were about to take action against the Volunteers,

hence the idea of Volunteer Headquarters having men of a reliable type sworn into the Irish Republican Brotherhood, with a view to having them ready for any kind of dangerous work that might be needed. At least that was my impression at the time, from the remarks of Tadhg Crowley.

As already stated, arrangements were made throughout the area for tactical exercises in the Galtee area, and also for a final mobilisation in the square in Galbally on Easter Sunday, 1916. It was arranged that Galbally, Ballylanders and Anglesboro Companies, with about a dozen men from Tipperary town, would defend the village in the tactical exercise that took place, and we were attacked by Mitchelstown, Dungrud and Ardpatrick. The few men from Tipperary town were not belonging to our Battalion, but came along as interested individual Volunteers.

There was some very interesting work carried out in the effort of the attacking force to gain entrance into the village and pass our defences. Some very amusing episodes took place, and everybody enjoyed the ruses that people adopted. Eventually I think the Mitchelstown Company got through on a ruse and took the village from the Galbally creamery side.

For some days before this, as I have mentioned, I had realised that something serious was on foot. At about five o'clock in the afternoon all the different units were on parade in the square in Galbally under Liam Manahan's command, and, as far as I remember, he addressed the parade before he dismissed it. Some time on Easter Sunday I had heard of the cancellation of the general mobilisation on orders by Eoin MacNeill, Dublin, and when Liam Manahan spoke to the Volunteers that afternoon he told them to hold themselves in

readiness for further action. I forget the exact words, but I know that many of us got the impression that further action was possible in the very near future.

To the best of my recollection I think the first rumours we had of anything being amiss or that something had happened in Dublin was on Tuesday. It may have been Monday evening, I am not definite, but on Tuesday we had news that something out of the ordinary had occurred, and immediately Volunteers got in touch with one another, but still nothing definite was coming from outside our area. All kinds of rumours were flying, strangers coming in were watched and questioned. Anybody from outside the district was immediately approached on arrival. We heard rumours that the Volunteers had taken Dublin, that they had beaten the British down to Kingsbridge. We heard various rumours, all of which were to the effect that the Volunteers were winning, but that there was a split, and that the Citizen Army had broken away from the Volunteers and were out on their own, which was again contradicted. It was all one mass of contradictions. We were up all night on the alert, and if we had not sentries out officially, every man was a sentry himself, watching developments and wondering what was going to happen. We expected that somebody would send us word from outside the area.

The first real concrete thing I can point to is that on Wednesday evening of Easter Week a cyclist was seen coming up the Tipperary road towards Galbally. He was cycling very hard, and immediately a number of Volunteers who were up in that part of the village confronted him. He jumped off his bicycle, asked them were they Volunteers and they said they were. I was down near my own house at the opposite end of the village at the time, and seeing the little commotion I

knew that something had happened. On enquiring, I was told that this man had come from Tipperary, and wanted to speak to some of the Company officers. I questioned him, and he told me his name was Seán Treacy. I had not known Seán before that. He told me he carried very important instructions, and wanted to know could he be put in touch immediately with the Battalion Commandant and the Company Captain. At that time, although a very active Volunteer myself in many ways, I was not an officer. I acted as Treasurer in the local Volunteer Company and was a member of the governing committee, but I marched in the ranks as a Volunteer. The first thing I suggested was that he should come with me to the Company Captain, William Quirke, Moore Abbey, Galbally. Quirke's place was roughly three-quarters of a mile from the village, so Treacy and I went out there as fast as we could. It was getting dusk at this time. We called at Bill Quirke's, and Seán said in my presence that he had very important instructions for the Volunteers, that all Ireland was to rise that night, and that he wished to get in touch immediately with the Commandant in the area so that mobilisation could start with the least possible delay.

Commandant Liam Manahan's house was in Ballylanders, and Quirke, who had been about to retire to bed when we arrived, immediately dressed himself, and wrote a dispatch telling Manahan that this man, Treacy, had called, that he believed he was genuine, and that his messages were authentic. I forget the exact words he used, but Quirke told me afterwards what he had said. Seán Treacy and some dispatch riders, whose names I forget now, went then to Commandant Liam Manahan at Ballylanders. In the meantime we started to send word to as many members of our Company as we could; our Company was farflung, extending all through the parish, so that it was not easy to reach every man in a hurry.

The next thing I remember is that a number of dispatches passed from Commandant Manahan and Seán Treacy, who were in Ballylanders, to Captain Quirke in our area. I think it was Eamon Tobin was brought a number of these dispatches, and I think another Volunteer who brought more of them was John Joe Crawford of Ballylanders. One final dispatch was an instruction to mobilise the Galbally Company and march to Ballylanders at once. Some men of the Company had already reported to Galbally with their guns, and we had our outposts thrown out around the village. The R.I.C. some time before that had retired to the barracks, and had the steel shutters closed on the windows. The local post office was open, at least there was light in it, and there was telegraphic communication to the barracks up to a certain time the following morning when we cut the wires. I forget the exact time the wires were cut, but it was very early on Thursday morning.

The Company Captain William Quirke, with Seán Lynch, Jim Scanlon, myself, Michael Quirke and a number of others - I cannot at the moment remember them all - did our best to mobilise every man available. Those who had already reported were sent off to Ballylanders. I was with the Company Captain, Jim Scanlon, Seán Lynch and a few more of the lads, and just as we were about to start Quirke gave instructions that some of us were to go to the local hardware store, which was also the post office. This shop had an agency for sporting ammunition, and they always kept a stock of it. Our instructions were that we were to commandeer or purchase it and so we did. Jim Scanlon and myself went there and after a little discussion with the proprietor we got the stuff, gave the man a receipt for it, and put it into bags which we gave to some Volunteers to carry on their shoulders. It was then we cut the telegraph wires. We

marched down the back road to Ballylanders, up the hill towards Upper Spittle, and down towards Liam Manahan's house. Just as we were practically in view of the house we met Seán Treacy coming towards us. Seán was returning from Liam Manahan's house when we met him on the road, and our Captain, William Quirke, Seán Treacy, Jim Scanlon, Seán Lynch, myself and a few more got chatting immediately. I cannot remember his exact words, but, as far as I can remember now, Seán Treacy told us that there was nothing definite doing at the moment, but that dispatch riders had been sent to Limerick and to Cork asking for instructions, or asking for advice from the Commanding Officers in those areas. All I definitely remember is that after consultation with our Company Captain and on his instructions we retired towards Galbally. We did not go home because the feeling was that we would probably be required again. We stayed in houses outside the village and arranged to have word out from the village if any developments were taking place. From that until the end of the week there was a state of tension, without anything further happening. As far as I can remember Seán Treacy left the area that evening and went on further.

I cannot remember the exact day or date, but some days after Easter Week a dispatch arrived in the area from the O.C. of the Volunteers in Limerick City, ordering the surrender to the British authorities of all arms and equipment in the possession of the Volunteers. There were consultations amongst the various Volunteers in the area, and discussions as to the rights or wrongs of handing up the arms, and the procedure to be adopted in such surrender of arms. Anyway, practically all the rifles and shotguns were handed over. I believe that it was in consequence of the surrender of the arms, and the quiet atmosphere in the area after the surrender, that no arrests at that particular

period took place in the area.

Although matters fizzled out in our own area, in the adjoining town of Tipperary there was action by an individual Volunteer named Michael O'Callaghan, who was at the time, I believe, creamery manager in an auxiliary creamery near that town. Michael had been in Galbally on Easter Sunday and had returned home some time during the week - I forget the exact day. He was returning to his father's home in Tipperary from another part of the town when a number of people - common in most garrison towns, "separation allowance" people we called them - hostile to the Irish Volunteer movement started calling him names, following him and throwing missiles at him. To the best of my belief, I think he drew his revolver for protection, but without firing any shot. This action seemingly had the effect of keeping the mob at a respectful distance, and Michael went on unmolested towards his father's shop in O'Brien Street at the top of the town, where he went in and retired for the night.

Early in the morning he was awakened by some commotion and when he peered out of the window he saw a number of police around the door. His father called out to him, I think, that the police wanted him, but Mick had no intention of surrendering himself to them. As far as I know he fired a shot through the door, or else he opened the door and fired out, I am not really certain which way it was, but the police ran. I think also that one of them was wounded slightly in the back of the leg.

When the police had cleared off, Michael set out immediately for the Galbally district, where he had a number of relations. One of the first places he went to was Peter Hennessy's of Monour, Galbally, who is a near cousin of his. In the meantime, when he had left that town, the Tipperary

police sent a message concerning him to the various barracks including Lisvernane barracks in the Glen of Aherlow, about three miles from Galbally. The area covered by the police in this barracks included Monour, where Michael O'Callaghan had gone. The police were told that O'Callaghan had headed in that direction and to be on the watch-out for him. On receiving the communication, the Sergeant, I think O'Rourke was his name, and Constable Hurley - I am not definite about the names - proceeded to Peter Hennessy's, Monour, and when they reached it they walked right in. In the kitchen, seated near the fire, were Michael O'Callaghan and the proprietor, his cousin Peter Hennessy. I am not sure whether any other member of the family was there, I think Mrs. Hennessy was but I cannot say definitely. As they came in I believe Michael rose from his seat and the Sergeant said, "You are Michael O'Callaghan", whereupon some words took place as to Michael's identity. Michael drew his gun before the Sergeant could, and shot him dead on the spot. The Constable, who was standing behind the Sergeant, turned on his heel and ran from the house. Michael followed him quickly, and as the Constable was rounding the corner Michael fired once at the fleeing Constable, who also fell dead with a bullet in the back of his head.

Having shot the two policemen, Michael had to go on the run immediately. At that particular period the Volunteer organisation and everything in the area was at a very low ebb, due to the aftermath of Easter Week. Consequently Michael had a very trying time of it getting about from one friend to another and being helped from one Volunteer to another. The R.I.C. being constantly on his trail, and their Intelligence system aware of all his relations, they were raiding every likely house from time to time. After a very difficult time and some very narrow escapes, he was eventuall

got away to America - I suppose it would be the best part of nine or ten months afterwards - where he remained until 1921 or 1922. I had personal contact with M. O'Callaghan during one of his closest escapes from the enemy round up and was instrumental in bringing him a message to his hide out at Croke's,Rathkea, Tipperary, which got him outside a dangerous area. Subsequently when Jim Scanlon and I escaped to U.S.A. we were comrades of M. O'Callaghan in sending guns etc. to Ireland.

For some time after Easter 1916 matters were dormant in the area. It took a little time until our spirits recovered from the dejection which followed Easter Week, and I cannot exactly pinpoint the exact date that we started off in our area to get the Volunteers re-organised. I think, however, that the first of it would have been I.R.B. activity. As I mentioned, I had been a member of the I.R.B. since a short time before Easter Week, and I was appointed Head Centre for Galbally, but I never took in more than five members at the most, with myself, as members of the I.R.B. in our circle.

The Volunteer units throughout the country were re-formed some time about the end of 1916, and I think it was about the begginning of 1917 - I forget the exact date - our Company Captain attended a meeting in Croke Park, Dublin, on the night of the day of a big match, when the re-organisation of the Volunteers was the whole issue of the discussions that took place.

I was not at the Volunteer Convention in Croke Park, but the Company Captain, Wm. Quirke, said that Eamon de Valera, Michael Collins and many other of the leaders at the time were there. The re-formation of the Volunteers in our area followed from the proceedings of this Convention, and plans went ahead for the getting of arms and ammunition.

Some time about the beginning of 1917 or thereabouts the Commandant of the Galtee Battalion, Liam Manahan, was arrested and deported to England in company with a number of Volunteers from other districts. Following Manahan's arrest the

Limerick prison. A few days afterwards they were tried at the local Petty Sessions Court in Galbally. Prior to the sitting of the Court, huge crowds came in from the surrounding districts, and the Volunteers from the area were very much in evidence in the village. Donnchadh O'Hannigan was present, and subsequently Liam Manahan was there, but at a meeting of the Volunteer officers held early in the morning before the Court started, a discussion took place about what was the best thing to be done, and if the prisoners could be rescued what was the plan to be adopted. Eventually, as far as my memory goes, it was decided that the Volunteers would line the street from the court-house downwards and prevent any disturbance, in case that the crowd, who were definitely very hostile to the R.I.C. should get out of hand. We were lined all along the street, and as the prisoners, hand-cuffed, were being led from the court-house down the street, showers of bottles and stones - mostly stones because there were plenty of loose stones on the street, which was about to be steam-rolled - came over our heads, and the police stampeded. In doing so, however, the three prisoners, who were in the front rank, were hurried on very fast, while the other police formed a solid mass behind them to prevent the crowd getting nearer. A lot of helmets were knocked off the police, and some of them were injured. The rioting was started, I must remark, by the police, who turned round and batoned those nearest to them, who happened to be the Volunteers, and then everybody got into it. The police formation was broken up, and they were knocked down and helmets were taken off them. However, they eventually got away with the prisoners to the barracks. When they had got there, a number of them came out with their rifles and lined the road. The situation was very threatening for a period. At that time the campaign of non-recognition of British courts had not come into being, and Mr. O'Brien Moran, County Registrar, Limerick, who was

defending the prisoners, got on the fountain stone and appealed to the people; also Commandant Liam Manahan. Both men pointed out that the police were ready for bloodshed, that the advantage was on their side, and that the people were only playing into their hands by continuing to attack with stones and other missiles. The words of both these men had the effect of calming things down.

Most of the police remained in Galbally barracks that night. All the transport that had brought them there had been made unserviceable by the local Volunteers. Horses, traps, sidecars, wagonettes and all the vehicles that had brought them to the court were either smashed up, the harness torn or the horses ordered home during the day. The result was that it was only during the night that the police silently made their get-away from the barracks.

At this time, a tense situation had been created by the local split in the movement, rival Volunteers taking sides with Liam Manahan or Donnchach O'Hannigan, and reports on the matter, apparently, were sent to G.H.Q., following which the latter decided to send down a representative in the person of Mr. M.W. O'Reilly, a Dublin Volunteer who had seen service in Easter Week, to examine the situation. Mr. O'Reilly came and held an Inquiry in Mr. Daniel Maloney's racing stables at Knocklong, which lasted all through one night, and where different witnesses were examined. My personal knowledge of that Inquiry was that we who were sympathetic to the Manahan side of the unfortunate split thought that this man, O'Reilly, was an I.R.B. man and had come with his instructions from that organisation, and as the taking of evidence proceeded the sort of questions he put to the witnesses firmly convinced us that he had one object in mind - that is to say that the I.R.B. standpoint would be upheld by him.

The recollection I have of the Inquiry, which was the first I had ever attended, was a large barn, and a crowd of Volunteers seated in the centre. At the head, sitting at a table, was M.W. O'Reilly, who was acting the part, so to speak, of a Judge, and sitting near him, as far as I remember, was Seán Wall. In what capacity Seán Wall was there I do not know, except that I think Mr. O'Reilly came to the Inquiry with him on his motor-cycle and side-car.

As each witness went on the stand, Donnchadh O'Hannigan was at one side and Liam Manahan was at the other - like two Counsel at an ordinary court - and they put questions to each witness regarding the various matters arising out of what they were speaking about. When our Coy Capt., Quirke, was being examined by Comdt. Hannigan he interjected: "Am I to answer questions from a man who was not in this district at all during Easter Week."

Some time afterwards the results of the Inquiry were made known, and, as anticipated by many of us, the verdict was against Manahan, so a state of unrest still prevailed in the area. We decided that we would continue to carry on the work as Volunteers and to keep on organising, and Liam Manahan, with the assistance of a number of Volunteers of the various Companies in the Galtee area, began to get all the Companies on an organised basis. Votes were taken by the Companies, and a big majority of the Volunteers decided to support Liam Manahan as O.C., Galtee Battalion. While this was going on we who were supporting Manahan were suspended by headquarters, and, notwithstanding our activity, we were thenceforth denied official recognition as Volunteers.

In the meantime many of us, including myself, who hated to see the split in the district, had made various moves with a view to trying to end it in some way. One of the moves I made was to speak to Seán Treacy, who visited Galbally on one occasion, and on my suggestion he brought word up to

Dublin with a view to having the state of chaos in our area brought to an end, but was given no hope there of anything being done.

One of my strong recollections of the time, is when I gave Seán Treacy my personal view of the whole split, of what was behind it and all, and he remarked that he thought the I.R.B. had "outlived its usefulness since Easter Week". That view was held also very strongly by those of us in the area who resented the tactics of the I.R.B. organiser from G.H.Q. and his associates.

I also spoke to Captain Tom Byrne, who was down visiting the area, and he promised to bring the whole question before the people in authority at headquarters. I heard from him later, and he told me in his communication that he had mentioned it, and, as far as my memory goes, that Manahan was not acceptable to headquarters, and that they could not change their attitude. This, and other incidents, proved to me that the Brotherhood meant to completely control the Volunteers and their actions showed that they were out to break any one who opposed their tactics.

Although informed by headquarters that we had no official standing, the Volunteers in Galbally, Anglesboro, Ballylanders, and a number of other units around, who were sympathetic towards the Manahan side of the controversy, still carried on drilling and arming, and we found that a number of Volunteers in the Tipperary area, who were officially recognised, were very sympathetic towards us and, in fact, kept in touch with us all the time.

The conscription crisis soon afterwards began to come on the horizon; there was a tense situation all over the country, as the time came when the British Cabinet seemed determined upon putting conscription into force for this country.

The South Tipperary Brigade at that time was in close touch with us, so much so that some of us from the outlawed Battalion, as it was called, were present at the meetings in

their area. I remember one particular example of being present myself at a meeting in Barlows in Shrough, when plans were discussed for the demolition of certain railway points at Limerick Junction, to be carried out if the situation grew any more critical.

At that time official Volunteer dispatches were daily coming from Dublin to Cork and various other parts, and we of this area, although outlawed as I say, being on the direct line, were recognised by the Tipperary Volunteers and given the dispatches, which we took and delivered to the adjoining area, according to the destination of the message, such as Mitchelstown for messages to Cork.

When the conscription crisis died away, raids for arms by the British became more common throughout the country. In Shruck, County Tipperary - I think it was on Messrs. Barlow's land - was situated the main dump for a large portion of the arms of the South Tipperary Brigade. Military engineers from Tipperary town came out there daily in the course of these raids and went round the farms in the district examining and testing the ground in their search for a dump. For a time they were working a bit away from the dump, but after a while they began to approach near where the arms were located. The result was that I got a very important dispatch one evening from the Tipperary Volunteers saying that they were anxious to have the arms removed. I should mention that the soldiers, after the completion of their search each day went back to the barracks at night and came out early in the morning again. During one of these nights, in conjunction with local Volunteers in the Tipperary area, we removed a large number of arms, rifles, shotguns, home-made bombs and ammunition of various kinds, and with the assistance of about, I suppose, up to thirty men, we brought these arms, which we carried in sacks on our backs in

the middle of the night, into Galbally. We arrived with our load at the back of the R.I.C. barracks in Galbally, which is close to the Catholic church. Jim Scanlon, Seán Lynch and myself were amongst those present on this occasion, and when the main body of the Volunteers had been dismissed, we had a consultation regarding the disposal of the arms in a place of safety. We decided that the best thing to do would be to put the arms into the church, to hide them there. Seán Lynch and his sister happened to be the caretakers of the church at the time, and it was Seán, I think, who made the suggestion. Anyway, he was all out to see that it was successfully accomplished, and in the dark we hauled the bags, one by one, over the church wall, and hid them in various parts of the church, such as the organ loft. These arms remained in the church until the attacks on Ballylanders and Kilmallock barracks in 1920, for which operations they were taken out and not again returned to the church.

The removal of the arms from the church was a very difficult operation at which I was not present because in the meantime my father's business premises and my own, which were between the local R.I.C. barracks and the church, together with the bank premises, were commandeered by the British military forces and were occupied as a military post. This made matters very difficult for the Volunteers who were responsible for the removal of the arms in question, as there was a military sentry beat along the boundary wall of the church grounds.

At that time Sinn Féin Clubs were being formed in every parish in Ireland, and, in common with the other places, we had a Sinn Féin Club in our area called, I think, the Edward Daly Club, which was comprised of Volunteers and members of the countryside around, who were not Volunteers but who helped

to further the national cause in every way.

When the conscription crisis ended, any little recognition we had got from Volunteer Headquarters during that time was ended, and we were again treated as an outlaw Battalion.

The 1918 election was one of the most important events in the history of the new movement. In December, 1918, Volunteers all over Ireland gave every possible help to see that the will of the people was expressed at the polls, and, in common with others, we of the outlawed crowd manned the polling booths, took over the duties that police normally carry out, regulated traffic, and saw that all voters were conveyed to the polls.

About 21st January, 1919, the South Tipperary Volunteers held up an escort of R.I.C. men who were conveying a supply of gelignite to a quarry outside Tipperary town (Soloheadbeg) and in the ensuing fight two R.I.C. men lost their lives. I did not know anything of the arrangements for this hold-up by the Volunteers, but some days afterwards I got word that Seán Treacy, Dan Breen, Séamus Robinson and Seán Hogan were coming to Galbally to stay with me, as they had been on the run since the fight at Soloheadbeg. I met them one evening outside Ballylanders as they were being conducted in the Galbally direction by Paddy Maguire of Ballylanders. This Volunteer had brought them on from the Mitchelstown area, where they had stayed for a short time after the fight at Solohead. I was living at the time in a place called Ardrahan, a townland in the parish of Galbally, and for a few weeks the boys stayed with me in that house.

About a month later I moved from the house in Ardrahan to the village of Galbally, where I occupied a house

adjoining my father's, and which was owned by him. He had handed over this house to me for business purposes. In the meantime the four Tipperary Volunteers, Seán Treacy and his friends, had not known of my change of residence, and my first intimation that they had again arrived in the area, was when a girl, who was employed in the drapery premises of my father, handed me an envelope which she found under the door when she came down to open the shop in the morning. My name was on the envelope, and on reading it I saw it was from Seán Treacy. He said he had arrived "here" at 2.30 a.m. and was surprised to find me gone. He did not know that I was living next door to my father's place, and it was into my father's place he put the envelope. I immediately came to the conclusion that he had gone to Ardrahan, to the old spot where I had been about a month previously. Putting some foodstuff into a satchel I cycled up there, and as I anticipated the four boys, Seán, Dan, Seán Hogan and Séamus Robinson were at the house. I may mention that there were no beds in the house, but the boys had gone to the hay-barn and brought in all the hay they could find and had made the best job they could of providing themselves with beds. They had expected me earlier, but I had not got the letter until very late in the day, the shop assistant having forgotten all about finding it under the door in the morning.

We had a consultation, and in view of the serious position that the boys were in, and the hue and cry that was out for them since the Soloheadbeg fight, I was in a quandary to decide where was the safest place for them to go. We decided eventually that, although it was very adjacent to the local R.I.C. barracks, they should come down to my house, so we cycled down and got in to my house unobtrusively without being seen by any of the R.I.C. They

stayed about a fortnight with me on this occasion in these premises, remaining indoors except at night, when we would slip out, two of us at a time, for a walk. As on the previous occasion when they left Galbally, I think it was David Burke of Emly, who with Seán Lynch, Jim Scanlon, my brother John Joe and myself acted as escort to the four men on their way to Dan Maloney's of Lackelly. Danny's was always a great house for men on the run. He was himself always a very active member of the East Limerick Flying Column.

During the time that the South Tipperary men were staying with me, South Tipperary was a military area, and fairs, markets and all kinds of commercial traffic of every description were banned in the district, and raids were intensified all over South Tipperary in the search for the four men.

On 10th May, 1919, Seán Hogan was captured at Annfield, County Tipperary, and was removed by the R.I.C. into Thurles barracks. At that time the procedure in civil and military cases was that all prisoners in any part of Munster were conveyed to the capital of the province, Cork, and arrangements were, therefore, made by the British authorities to convey Seán Hogan to Cork prison. Apparently on learning of Seán Hogan's arrest, Seán Treacy and his remaining comrades had decided to attempt a rescue. I did not know anything of the arrangements, or of the decision that had been made. The first word of this I got was about mid-day on 13th May, when I got a dispatch from Seán Treacy stating the position, and that he had decided to operate that evening at Knocklong on the seven o'clock train.

A dispatch which was addressed to "Ned O'Brien or James Scanlon" was brought by May Maloney, a sister to Danny

Maloney. She was an outstanding girl in the Cumann na MBan all during the Anglo-Irish war. Miss Maloney, on her way to Galbally, met Jim Scanlon who was going to Emly station for goods for his father's shop. Going into Emly he was bringing butter from the creamery to Emly station, and he told Miss Maloney to continue her journey and to give the dispatch to me, and also to say that he was going to bring no load from Emly on his return trip, as he normally would have done. He said he could come back empty so that he could travel as fast as possible.

When I got the dispatch I got in touch with my brother, John Joe, who was in the drapery department of my father's shop next door, and also Seán Lynch, and we had a consultation on the matter. In the meantime Jim Scanlon had arrived back from Emly station. When I called for my brother John Joe, it was with a view to having him keep an eye to my premises in my absence. I was married at the time, and my idea was that he should take care of my wife and the business should I not be able to return. I had to tell him the story of what was about to take place. He insisted on accompanying us, so there was no alternative but to let him do so.

Mounted on bicycles, either our own or borrowed for the occasion, we started for Knocklong, and on the way, I think, both John Joe and Seán Lynch contacted Ned Foley of Duntreleague who also came along, and was subsequently executed in Mountjoy for his part in the fight. We all arrived at Maloneys in Lackelly some time about three-thirty in the afternoon, where we met Seán Treacy, Dan Breen and Seamus Robinson. After a consultation there it was decided that we should divide the party, and that Seán Lynch, Jim Scanlon, my brother John Joe and Ned Foley would proceed to Emly station, and, as quietly as possible

board the train there with a view to discovering in what compartment the prisoner and his escort were travelling. As transpired subsequently, these men did their work very effectively. They boarded the train without having to buy the tickets at the station, they bought them from the guard as the train was about to start, and they got in without being seen by any of the enemy forces who happened to be on the train.

In the meantime, Seán Treacy, Dan Breen, Seamus Robinson and myself proceeded on bikes by road from Maloneys, via Knockarron and on to the "Cross of the Tree". Before coming to the "Cross of the Tree" we got off our bikes on a quiet part of the road to consider the situation and some one of the group suggested that four of us cycling together direct to Knocklong might look a bit suspicious if we happened to be observed by the enemy, especially on account of the fact that Seán Treacy, Robinson and Breen were badly wanted for the Soloheadbeg affair, so we decided to divide. At the "Cross of the Tree" Seán Treacy and myself cycled to the left up by the Catholic church, around by the cemetery in Knocklong and down into the railway station. Seamus Robinson and Dan Breen proceeded by the main road straight on to Knocklong, and about 200 yards from the station, at a quiet bend of the road, the four of us united again.

After a short time Seán Treacy asked me did I know the manager of one of the coal stores there, whose name was Tom Shanahan. I did not know Tom personally, but I knew his brother Michael very well. I was asked by Seán to proceed down to the coal store and ask the manager if he had got any message - telegram I think Seán said - for him. I cycled down over the bridge in Knocklong. There was a market of some sort on in the village, and there were a number of cars down by

the coal store and around by Harty's shop. I went into the coal store and looked in the office where the manager usually is, but there was nobody there. I asked one of the men in the coal-yard if Mr. Shanahan was around, and he said no, that he had gone across to Mr. Harty's shop opposite and that he was probably there at the moment, so I went right across. I did not know him very well, and I looked around the shop and did not see anybody who I thought might be Shanahan. I asked the man inside the counter had Shanahan been in the shop, and he said, "He just passed you at the door going out". I turned around and saw a man crossing the road towards the coal-store, and I assumed he was the man I wanted. I told Shanahan who I was and asked him had he any message for Seán Treacy. He immediately became all attentive, took out his pocket-book and gave me a telegram. When I got the message I jumped on my bicycle and cycled over the hill again to the other side of the railway to where I had left the others, and around the bend to where the three boys were waiting in the shadows for me. Seán opened the telegram immediately, and, as far as I remember, the wording of the telegram was, "Greyhound still in Thurles". I did not know what code was arranged, but the wording of it seemed to me to indicate that the operation was off for that evening anyway, and Seán immediately confirmed that impression.

After a short discussion on the matter, Seán Treacy said that Dan Breen and Séamus Robinson were to go back the road so as not to have too many of us seen around the station together, and that he and I would wait for the arrival of the four lads who had gone to Emly station, and who were to come on by train to Knocklong.

About this time every evening the up-train and the down-train both met at Knocklong, sometimes there might be

a few minutes interval, one pulling out before the other got in That particular evening, Seán and I were close in by the waiting-room, opposite the station-house buildings on the other platform, and were keeping well in the shadows, when the train to Dublin from Cork was signalled. This was about seven o'clock in the evening and it was just getting duskish. Amongst the passengers were some R.I.C. men of the Galbally station who had been conveying some prisoners to Cork jail that morning from Galbally. These prisoners had been sentenced to imprisonment for, I think, a Gaelic League collection. The police were returning and they got out at Knocklong station, I do not know why, because Emly was usually the station for. Galbally, but they got out at Knocklong and we watched them as they proceeded on foot down the road for a short distance.

In the meantime the Dublin train pulled out of the station and as it did so we could see, a few hundred yards back the line, the Cork-bound train approaching. My feelings at the time were, that it was only a matter of form to wait until the train had pulled in to collect our comrades. Whatever else was to happen afterwards I did not know. The train stopped at the station, and on looking at the carriages I saw at once the four Galbally lads at the window of a carriage. I moved quickly towards where they were, and the first one I spoke to, as he happened to be nearest to me at the time, was my brother. I knew by his attitude that the situation was not as I had thought it was, and that something very exceptional was on his mind. Then he whispered quickly to me, "They are in the next carriage". I moved rapidly towards where Seán Treacy was, and said to him, "Here they are in the next carriage". He did not hesitate for a moment, but gave the order to come. I do not know exactly what he said, whether it was "come on", or "I'll go", but he moved up the steps of the carriage and I followed, drawing our guns as we mounted the train. I

was immediately followed by the other lads, in what order I do not remember. The corridor was on the left side of the train, the side next to us, and we moved swiftly down along the corridor to where, as had been indicated to us, the prisoner and his guard were located, down about three or four compartments from where we entered. I saw Seán's left hand dropping, as he passed, to the handle of the compartment door, which was of the sliding type - it slid along on a track - and simultaneously out of my right eye I saw the police and the prisoner inside. Seán having slid the door clear, the two of us wheeled in and ordered "hands up". We had the police covered with our guns, and for a moment I thought it was going to be a bloodless victory. Then I noticed that one of the R.I.C., the only one wearing a revolver, had it drawn and was pointing it at the prisoner, whereupon I instinctively and immediately blazed at him, shooting him dead. What happened then is rather vague to my memory, but I remember seeing Seán Treacy in handigrips with a powerful sergeant, and I remember being on the floor for a period. I remember Seán Lynch, Jim Scanlon and Foley coming into the compartment. One of the R.I.C. men at this stage jumped on the seat, and, as I was just rising to my feet at this time, I got the idea he was going to jump on me. This man, whose name I learned afterwards was Ring, sprang from the carriage seat and jumped head foremost right through the window, landing on the platform apparently unhurt. The struggle then was hand to hand. I remember my gun was knocked out of my hand after a couple of shots, and I could not reach it. It was picked up in the general melee by Jim Scanlon and handed to me that night.

Treacy and the sergeant - Wallace I think was his name - were in deadly grips, swaying to and fro in their efforts to overcome each other. In the midst of the

pandemonium we asked the prisoner to move out, and, handcuffed as he was, he fought his way out from the escort, striking at them with his manacled hands. The carriage was very crowded all this time, and I remember seeing Jim Scanlon and Seán Lynch wresting the rifle from Constable O'Reilly, and bouncing it off his head until he covered down, seemingly unconscious, on the floor of the carriage.

While the fight in the carriage was in progress, Dan Breen and Séamus Robinson, who it will be remembered had been sent back the road, hastened towards the station when they heard the sound of the shooting.

In the meantime Constable O'Reilly, who had been knocked out by Seán Lynch and Jim Scanlon, had crawled out along the floor of the carriage on to the platform, and opened fire with his rifle on those of us who were still within the carriage. Dan Breen seemingly was coming into the station at this point, and they opened fire on one another at long range. O'Reilly's bullet, I heard afterwards, hit Dan in a part of the body that disabled his right arm and knocked the gun out of his hand, but Dan picked up the gun with his good arm, and, though he failed to hit him, forced O'Reilly, by his furious fire, to retreat and leave the platform. O'Reilly, before firing at Breen, had wounded Treacy, Jim Scanlon and myself in the carriage. The fight was a very close melee for, as there was such a number in the small compartment, most of it was necessarily hand to hand. I remember that at one point of the struggle, my brother John Joe, who had a small .32 automatic, fired pointblank at the sergeant, who was in handigrips with, I think, Seán Treacy at the time. The gun misfired, whereupon he used the point of it to strike the sergeant on the forehead, which opened a large wound that bled profusely.

As far as I can remember, the end of the fight came when Seán Treacy and the sergeant were still struggling in the narrow corridor. The sergeant was a much heavier man and had the advantage in the confined space, while Seán's main effort was to prevent him from using his gun. They were struggling fiercely when I came to Seán's assistance by putting my arms around the sergeant from behind and pulling him backwards until he reached the ground. At this time the carriage was practically empty. The prisoner and the other boys had gone.

Apparently the sergeant had been dangerously wounded, and at this stage he collapsed. I went out the left-hand side, and I think Seán went out by the right. Seán had received a severe wound through the throat, it was near the windpipe, I believe I was told afterwards.

As I came from the station I found Seán Lynch, Jim Scanlon, my brother John Joe and Ned Foley coming from a butcher's store, Mr. Byrne's store, with Seán Hogan, who held the handcuffs in his hands. One of the boys had Constable O'Reilly's rifle. The handcuffs had been broken, I believe, on the butcher's block by using the back of the butcher's axe.

In the meantime, Treacy, who was losing a lot of blood, had gone across into a nearby field. He found after a while that he was weakening, and he lay down for a while and tried to staunch the blood. The passengers from the train, who had got out of the train in Knocklong when the shooting started, had fled in all directions. Outside the railway station there was a car, I think it was a Ford car, and Seán Hogan said, "Can anybody drive it?" but we found that none of us could. We climbed an iron gate into a field, as

we wanted to try and put as much ground between us and the station-house as we could as quickly as possible, when we might then try and collect our thoughts. After climbing the iron gate we went up the fields a small bit, and we found at this stage that there was a boy with us who knew the country, and he gave us directions. I think this boy was Thomas Howard, who was afterwards killed in the Lackelly ambush; I am not definite on this but I think I am right. He had been working on a farm up the fields - the property of Mr. Shanahan and his brother, the man who had given us the wire - when the fight began, and he was most anxious to give us what help he could.

Dan Breen was also very badly wounded, he was losing a lot of blood, and Tom Howard and the rest of us were helping him along. Jim Scanlon at this stage had discovered that he too was wounded, and at this point I also discovered a wound on myself, in the body under the arm, which I had not noticed in the excitement of what had occurred.

We proceeded up the slopes towards Shanahan's house We wondered what to do next, as Breen was losing a good deal of blood and we had not discovered where Seán Treacy had got to at this time, so we came to the conclusion that it would be better for us to divide. It was agreed that Jim Scanlon and I would go on to the Glenbrohane Ballylanders area, where we knew the Volunteers would give us every assistance, while the others would get Breen, and Treacy when they found him, to another area.

Jim Scanlon and I, who had not lost as much blood as Dan Breen had, went to Ned Tobin's of Glenbrohane, who was a very prominent Volunteer then. We knocked at Tobin's door, and when he came out and we told him what had happened,

he immediately arranged to provide us with every assistance necessary. He sent word to Tadhg Crowley, who, with other members of the Ballylanders Company, got in touch with Dr. Hennessy, and instructed him to proceed to Shanahan's immediately to attend to Dan Breen.

In the meantime Seán Treacy had joined the others, and both Treacy and Breen were bleeding very much at Shanahan's. Dr. Hennessy came out there and dressed the wounds of these two Volunteers, Dan&Seán, following which other Volunteers from Kilmallock, Newcastle West and other areas got working to effect their removal to West Limerick.

When we went to Ned Tobin's he carried out a first-aid dressing of our wounds and we bandaged them up as best we could, which did all right for the time being. We then proceeded on to Paddy Maguire's house in company with some of the Ballylanders Volunteers, I am sure Ned Tobin, Paddy Maguire and probably some of the Crawfords were with us. From Maguire's early next morning, we went on to Quane's of Anglesboro, and here Dr. Hennessy came to us and dressed our wounds. The help of the Ballylanders Volunteers at this critical stage was beyond praise, all the more so, as we were divided from them during the unfortunate Battalion split.

We stayed in Quane's during that day, and at night the local Volunteers - there are so many names involved I will not mention any of them - helped us to get in touch with the Mitchelstown Volunteers. They brought us to William Bailey's farmhouse outside Mitchelstown, at a place called Ballinabrooke, where both Mr. and Mrs. Bailey were like mother and father to us in the attention they gave. Some of the Mitchelstown Volunteers were detailed to guard us, while more of them went to Fermoy, where they located Dr. Barry and brought him to us to give further attention to our wounds.

After a few days' rest at Bailey's farm, we proceeded in the direction of Ballyporeen, where I had a number of cousins named Farrell. This was nearly being a fatal mistake, as we forgot about the R.I.C. Intelligence being aware of all our relations. We had left Farrells one night when Liam Lynch got word from Mitchelstown that the district was getting very hot.

In the meantime continuous raids were being carried out all over the place in the search for us. My own house and my father's in Galbally were surrounded for a few days, and nobody was allowed into them except under severe questioning.

We were removed by Liam Lynch after a very narrow escape in Farrells. Liam Lynch brought us in a car through Fermoy and out to a place called Ballydurgan, in the hills above Tallow, where we recuperated for a few weeks.

On the night of the Knocklong fight, Seán Lynch, Ned Foley and my brother John Joe had returned to Galbally. Seán and John Joe had gone in the back way into their homes, changed their clothes which were all wet as it had been raining all that evening, and when the military raided early in the morning and brought them out for questioning, they were spick and span, and had their alibis complete. During that time they went through a very, very serious test. Their statements were taken several times during the day. They were brought in and then let go, brought in separately and then brought in together. Their statements were read out, then were altered and read out to them again. Still they kept free from arrest for about three or four days, until eventually, as the thing was getting very hot, and they saw the military coming for them one morning, both boys escaped out the back way and went towards Tipperary on the run.

Meanwhile, as already stated, Jim Scanlon and I had been moved to Ballydurgan, near Tullow, by Liam Lynch and his friends, where we lay low for a few weeks. The wounds still needed dressing and Liam Lynch brought out a young chemist's assistant from Fermoy on a few occasions to dress them. From there we proceeded to Dr. Con Molan, where we stayed for a few more weeks at Conna, County Cork, and from that place on to Volunteer Dan Daly of Bushypark near Watergrasshill, between Rathcormack and Watergrasshill where we stayed for a number of weeks.

During our stay at Bushypark Liam Lynch and his friends were in touch with Tomás MacCurtain, Cork City, regarding us, and Liam arrived one night, I think, with George Power, Fermoy, and Michael Fitzgerald (who died later on hunger strike). He had instructions from the O/C Cork City that both Jim Scanlon and myself were to hold ourselves in readiness for a quick call as arrangements were being made for our get away from Cork. Two parcels containing firemen's suits were also sent (per Liam) with usual ship's firemen's glazed peak caps and shirts.

About this time, arrangements were being made by Liam Lynch and his comrades to carry out an attack on the military marching to church in Fermoy and capture their arms. After discussion with Liam in connection with this project it was decided that we should come in near Fermoy that night so as to be at hand, but in view of the fact that we were wanted men, and as Volunteers had to be on the sidewalk for some time before the attack, it was decided later that we were not to take part in the operation, but we stayed in Barrys', about a mile from the town.

The operation was carried out successfully by Liam Lynch and other Volunteers. These Volunteers who had been engaged in the carrying out of the raid were now all on the run, so that evening Mr. Barry, in whose house we were staying and who was also a Volunteer, together with a friend of his, whose name I cannot remember, drove us in the Mitchelstown direction.

We were anxious to get back to our own area at this time, but we had forgotten that the military would be on the alert all that

evening on account of the Fermoy raid, and it eventually transpired that all cross-roads between Thurles and Fermoy were manned by the military, in the hope that the missing arms and ammunition would be recaptured. Coming near Ballahadrohid Bridge in Mitchelstown, we turned off the main road, and we did not know until the following morning that we had avoided a military guard at the bridge by about thirty yards. We turned up a by-road in the direction of Kilglass and above Glenacran wood, but being unable to get shelter there we continued on down the hill. Our idea was to get to Quane's in Anglesboro, where we had been on the evening we were wounded, and, as we were passing down the hill towards the cross-roads that leads to Anglesboro, we saw a number of men sitting on the wall of the bridge. This was approximately three o'clock in the morning and we should have known immediately that they were not local lads, but I suppose we were probably too worn out to think quickly. We kept marching on until we were within about twenty yards of the bridge, and we were quickly brought to our senses by a shout of "Hands up. Halt". We wheeled, and not knowing the local topography very well, we dived for the shelter of a bend on the road. We kept going while the soldiers, as it transpired they were, fired on us. They fired several rounds but we escaped being hit. It was raining all the time, but we got up the side of the hill and kept going in the dark. We made what we thought was a bee-line towards Ballylanders, but eventually found we had made a wide detour and had arrived near Bill English's of Culhane near Ballylanders. Bill acted as a great friend to us and brought us to Jack Meade, who was a prominent Volunteer in the Ballylanders Company. Jack, as well as his mother and family, gave us every help. We were put to bed after a good bath and a meal, and enjoyed a much needed rest

Meanwhile Jack Meade and his brothers were not idle. They got in touch with the Ballylanders lads, and informed

Tadhg Crowley and his comrades that after such a long time I was anxious to see my wife and my child, if this could possibly be arranged, as it might be some time before I could see them again when I left the area. I got in to Ballylanders that evening and entered Crowley's by the back way, where I awaited the arrival of my wife. She arrived shortly afterwards, bringing our baby daughter with her, and we stopped for a few hours there, chatting over our affairs. Then about half a dozen of the Ballylanders lads formed a cycling escort to conduct Scanlon and I to Kilmallock.

About this time Tadhg Crowley went to Dublin to make arrangements for our going to Dublin, and it was arranged that we should take advantage of an excursion train to an all-Ireland hurling final in Dublin in September, and go up on that. While in the Kilmallock area, Seán Riordan and other Kilmallock Volunteers were very helpful, including the late Mick Scanlon, a brother to Jimmy, who was then a teacher in Kilmallock. Mick procured a priest's clerical garb for me, and Jimmy also was disguised with glasses. We joined the late train going up with the Cork supporters for the match. It pulled up late at night in Charleville, and we went into different compartments. A number of Volunteers spread throughout the carriages were acting as our bodyguard, including Ned Tobin, our old friend of Glenbrohane, who, I think, was in charge of the escort.

We were landed in Dublin in the small hours of the morning, and, by a miscarriage of arrangements, there was no taxi to meet us, which was rather awkward as we were all strangers to Dublin. However, Jack Crowley, Tadhg's brother who was one of the escort party, knew a family by the name of O'Rourke, who were active in the movement, and we set off on a jaunting-car to O'Rourke's in Sandymount.

Unfortunately, it happened that the driver did not know either the place or the people, and before we knew anything he had pulled up at a police station to make enquiries. We did not realise what was being done until the car stopped and the door opened. A policeman came out and the jarvey asked him did he know where O'Rourke's of such a place lived. He got his directions and then proceeded on. We did not like the situation but could do nothing about the matter. I was still dressed as a priest.

Eventually we wound up at O'Rourkes, where we changed our clothing and had a good rest. We stayed the night there. The following morning we discovered that the house was under observation by plain-clothes policemen, known as G-men, who were across the street keeping an eye on the house After a consultation indoors, some of our escort of the night before went out the front door and drew the attention of the detectives after them, while we, the O'Rourke boys and ourselves, slipped out the back way. Jim Scanlon and myself were conducted to Flemings of 140 Drumcondra Road, Dublin, where we stayed for over a month.

During our stay in Flemings we got in touch with Seán Treacy, Dan Breen, Seán Hogan and Séamus Robinson, who were also in the city at the time, and they put us in touch with Michael Collins, Dick Mulcahy and several others of the Dublin prominent men. These came to see us at Flemings of Drumcondra, which was a noted place for all men on the run. Michael Collins and Richard Mulcahy informed us that arrangements were being made to get us to America.

After some time had elapsed, I think it was about the middle of October when one morning early we were placed on board the steamship "Killiney" for Liverpool from Dublin. We were conducted down to the docks by Joe O'Reilly, Michael

Collins's Aide de Camp, and were escorted by Seán Treacy, Séamus Robinson, Dan Breen, Seán Hogan and one of the Volunteer men who was on the crew of the boat whose name was Paddy McCarthy. McCarthy got us down secretly into the men's quarters on board, where we were hidden away until the boat had started on her journey. In the dusk of the morning while waiting, I could see through a porthole Seán Treacy, Dan Breen, Séamus Robinson, Joe O'Reilly and Seán Hogan in different doorways down along the dock. They were unobtrusively watching out for our safety.

When the vessel was outside the harbour, Paddy McCarthy came down to our quarters. We had already got our tickets from Joe O'Reilly, so we separated and got on deck, where we slipped in a side door and mixed with the crowd. We did not keep together.

We arrived at Birkenhead in the morning, and then went across to Liverpool. In Liverpool we got in touch with the local Volunteers, including Neil Kerr and Steve Lanigan and many others who were prominent and active in the Volunteer movement there. We were in Liverpool for a long time and stayed with John Russell of Bootle. Both Mr. Russell and his wife, and also Jim Murphy, manager of the Neptune Hotel, were very good friends of ours.

For many months these men who were in the Volunteer movement, and who were also mixed up in shipping circles, were doing their best to get us placed on board one of the Atlantic vessels, but all their best efforts failed. For a long time it looked as if it would be impossible for them to attain their objective, until a Volunteer named Joe Kelly from/Ballaghadereen Mayo, who was in Liverpool on the run for shooting police, and who was mixed up in shipping circles, got in

touch with one of the agents of a shipping line which ran a number of cargo boats to different ports in the United States. The boats belonged to what was called the Johnson Line. The names of all the boats finished with "more", "Templemore", "Galteemore", etc. Eventually he got us placed, under false names and with false papers, as firemen on board the s.s. "Thistlemore", bound for Baltimore with a cargo of grease, oils and other things of that nature.

We got on board the "Thistlemore" and sailed from Liverpool about the middle of February 1920. Somewhere off the Irish coast a severe storm struck the vessel. I was working on the first watch - we were on separate watches - and I happened to be down in the stokehold when we were thrown in all directions with the heavy pounding of the seas. When my watch was up and I got on deck I found that things were in a bad way, that the vessel had taken a decided list to one side. I saw a number of tugs around us, and we were hauled back, first we thought into Cobh, but eventually we were brought back into Liverpool, where it was found that the vessel had lost her steering gear and several other things were broken. The ship was altogether unseaworthy, so she was kept in dock for a fortnight under repair. We had to hold down our jobs in the meantime, so we worked on the cleaning up of the ship inside and outside.

One day before the repairs were finished, we were all ordered to put up our hands. I should mention that up to this period we had been armed all the time until we decided about two days before this that it was very dangerous to be going on board armed, as, when we were bending down, the men behind could easily see what was in our pockets, so we had left our guns ashore. If any of the crew had noticed we were armed they could easily tip off the fact to anyone,

so we had to risk going unarmed. We were on deck scrubbing away when everybody was ordered to "Hands up". We found that there were four or five detectives on board. We did not know what was up at the time, but eventually it transpired that, owing to pilfering by dockers all along the Mersey, every vessel in dock, either going or coming, on that morning was subject to a hold-up. All on board every vessel were searched With the others we were also searched but, of course, had nothing incriminating on us. It was fortunate, therefore, that we had decided to leave our guns behind.

Eventually our vessel pulled out. The first four or five days were uneventful, then the weather got severe again and our cargo shifted. We ran short of water. The pumps were chained, and there was only a certain amount of water allowed to the men on watch in the stokehold. Finally, on a very uneven keel, we struggled into Baltimore, where we docked in the midst of a snowfall, which was very heavy all over the city.

At that time war conditions were still on, and photographs of every member of the crew had to be taken before he was allowed on shore, but we got ashore that evening by a ruse, on the pretence of going to buy food for ourselves and for some of the crew, who assisted us by watching for us, not knowing who we were. We escaped in the dark past the dock policeman, boarded a street car and got into the centre of the city.

I may remark that we carried dispatches and letters of introduction from, I believe, Michael Collins to Harry Boland, who was in the United States at that time.

Our arrival in Baltimore co-incided with extreme cold and a very heavy snow-fall and our light clothing and boots made conditions very severe for us. To add to the situation, Jim Scanlon was suffering very much from a bad knock he

received on the head while working in the stokehold of a cargo boat. We got on the New York bound train about midnight and arrived in New York about 6 a.m. The heating on the train was a God-send after what we had experienced, and we slept practically all the way. My comrade, Jim Scanlan, suffered a great deal from this injury to his head which caused him much annoyance afterwards. On arrival at New York, bitter cold conditions similar to our experience at Baltimore prevailed there and a very heavy snow fall lay over the city. In our shipping (seamen's) papers, Jim Scanlan was down as James Buckley and my name as Edmond Brown. We kept our Christian names, so as to avoid making a mistake when speaking to each other in company of other members of crew.

We got in touch with Harry Boland at 411 - 5th Avenue, Head Office of the Irish Republic External Loan, and Harry's reception for us then and subsequent treatment is an incident in my life that I hold happy memories of. After medical treatment by Dr. Moloney, author of a book exposing the Casement Forgeries, and a rest, we went to work in the External Loan Office mentioned above.

During the short period between our arrival in New York and going to work at the Irish External Loan Office, we were busily engaged in removing the dust and grit of the ship's stokehold from our bodies, and numerous immersions in the bath tub were necessary before the desired result was achieved. In addition to the honour of being introduced to President de Valera (about this period), my comrade and myself met many men (including the members of the Irish Mission already mentioned) who had made their name in the Independence movement, such as, Liam Mellows, Seán Doyle, Cyril Keogh (1916 man), Dr. Pat McCartan, Seamus Burke, T.D. (Tipperary), James O'Mara, T.D., J. McNellis (Cork A.S.U.),

Mick McDonnell (Dublin A.S.U.), Padraic Fleming (Hunger-striker), etc. The tremendous amount of energy put into their various activities by President de Valera and those who composed the Irish Mission in the U.S.A. gave an uplift to the Irish race over there, that my humble efforts to explain them would be hopelessly inadequate to do justice to the matter.

Shortly after this Harry Boland got us going on the collection of arms and ammunition for transfer, per friendly seamen, to Irish and British ports. For boats going to the latter, arrangements were made by the I.R.A. men in Liverpool to re-forward stuff to Ireland.

The first recollection I have of that experiment was when Seán Nunan and myself brought a box of .45 ammunition from Gene O'Beirne's store in 130th Street. From then on things began to happen, and presents of such goods from friends of the cause and purchases by Harry Boland, on behalf of the Government of the Republic, started to be made. Gene O'Beirne was a typical member of the Clan-na-Gael rank and file who were anxious to give of their best to aid in every way the Irish Republican Army.

This box of ammunition was brought to Michael O'Callaghan's flat. O'Callaghan, whom I mentioned earlier in this story in connection with the events of Easter Week, 1916, in Tipperary, was now in the U.S.A., and was married and had a family. Jim Scanlon and I were staying with him as boarders at this time, and the box of ammunition and others that began to come along then, we stored for the time being in suitcases under the beds. Later, a safer and more commodious store for such goods was found in the Carmelite Priory, which was, if I remember correctly, on 29th Street, on the East side. The Carmelite priests were very favourably disposed towards the Irish cause and gave their

help in every way. In this case they provided us with a place within their grounds to use as a dump for arms and ammunition, which relieved us of a lot of anxiety regarding the safety of such stuff.

Harry Boland, Seán Nunan and Liam Pedlar, with some others whose names I cannot recollect at the moment, were the initiators of this collection of munitions and, of this group, Harry Boland was looked upon as the chief. It was he who directed all these operations, and it was to him we looked for our instructions. Larry de Lacey (Wexford) was one of the men who also took a very important part in the collection and transportation of arms and ammunition from the U.S.A., and Jimmy McGhee, New York, who was a shipping official at that Port, was one of those who gave invaluable service to Harry Boland in the various types of work that had to be done through the Port.

From my own personal recollection of such matters, I can state that numerous gifts of guns and ammunition were received by us in New York from supporters of the Irish cause in the United States. I remember collecting a number of suitcases full of guns and ammunition from the Grand Central Station from time to time. These had been sent to us by rail from various parts of the States but, in addition to this, quite a lot came to us by hand, having been collected locally or brought to New York by road or otherwise from various cities throughout the United States.

As an example of this, I remember on one occasion being sent by Harry Boland to a town called, I think, Waterbury, Connecticut, to take over rifles from a local organisation of young Irishmen, which had been collected there by this organisation.

The rifles were packed and put on the train for me

that same evening, and I had as an escort back to New York at least one member of the American Police Force as a means of protecting me from official interference on the journey. He, of course, was aware of my mission and knew what was in the cases travelling with me. Our friends in Waterbury had arranged with him to lend the protection of his official status to me, in order to get the guns safely to New York.

There were many other such incidents which my memory is hazy about now, but there was one factory outside the City of New York, which made ammunition, and I remember being sent there on a few occasions by Harry Boland. Arrangements had been made over the telephone with the factory, in the name of a legitimate wholesaler, and I went there with a lorry lent for the occasion by a member of the Clan-na Gael. I paid for the ammunition in cash, which I had received from Harry Boland for the purpose, and loading the stuff, amounting to several thousand rounds, on to the lorry, the driver, who was well acquainted with the topography, made his way through devious by-ways to the Carmelite Priory in 29th Street. One of the priests there had the back entrance opened promptly on our arrival, so that we could drive straight in and dump our load without delay. The same procedure was followed on the few occasions I collected ammunition from this factory.

Some of the members of the New York Police Force were very active helpers of our cause. One of these, whose name was Chris. Lynch, if my memory serves me right, travelled with me in a private car to the dump on several occasions. He was in uniform and sat with me in the front of the car with his handcuffs on his lap. The idea was that, if there was any police hold-up of traffic, which was of frequent occurrence then because of the operation of the Volstead Act (Prohibition), he would snap the other side of the

handcuffs on to my wrist to indicate that I was in custody as his prisoner. This would give us a free pass through any police cordon. Suspicious-looking cars were always liable to be held up and searched for contraband liquor at that time.

Another incident like this, I remember, was a consignment of two large suitcases of stuff which was brought from San Francisco by a priest, a Wexford man, whose name I have forgotten. He was going on a visit to Ireland and brought the stuff as far as New York, placing the cases in the railway cloakroom and giving the tickets for them to Harry Boland. Harry gave me the cloakroom tickets to get the stuff, and I, using a car with a driver we knew and relied upon, collected the two large and heavy cases from the Grand Central Station and dumped the stuff in the Carmelite Priory.

A number of us, including Jim Scanlon, myself, Liam Pedlar and Tommy Walsh, were engaged a lot of the time during this period in making up the guns and ammunition in the dump into convenient parcels for shipping to Ireland. Tommy Walsh's real name was Tommy O'Connor. He was a seaman and had taken part in the 1916 Rising in Dublin, so, to conceal his identity, he went under the name of Tommy Walsh and his seaman's papers were made out under that name. The kind of stuff we were handling consisted chiefly of Webley and Smith and Wesson .45 revolvers, as well as Peter the Painters and various other makes and types of revolvers and pistols. There was also .45 and other sizes of pistol ammunition as well as .303 rifle ammunition, and a small supply of Thompson sub-machine guns, and ammunition therefor, began to become available at this time. The first small supply of the Thompson guns that I saw was, as far as I can remember, about May or June of 1920. There were, of course, larger supplies obtained later, and I do not know whether this first lot I saw had come to us by way of gift from some

of our friends, or whether they had been purchased by our people in New York.

It was just following this, perhaps a month or two later, that Seán Nunan sent me to Washington, D.C., to deliver to Joe Begley a large sum in dollar currency. This money was, as far as I know, for the purchase in bulk of the first large quantity of Thompson sub-machine guns. Begley was staying in Washington at that time and was in touch with some member of the firm which manufactured the Thompson guns. Begley was to hand over the money to this man, and delivery of the guns to our people for shipment to Ireland had been arranged. Joe Begley took part in the Rising (1916) and was at this time a member of the Irish Mission in the U.S.A.

The method of getting all this stuff over to Ireland was by smuggling in small lots on liners and cargo vessels by the connivance and through the good offices of friendly seamen and dock labourers. A number of these were always in touch with Boland, Nunan and Pedlar, and faked passes were provided to Jim Scanlon and myself to get us through the docks and on to the ships with suitcases filled with arms and ammunition.

Liam Pedlar was also associated with Harry Boland and Sean Nunan in issuing instructions re forwarding of war material and dispatches, and I have a recollection of the former and myself bringing supplies of ammunition, etc., on board ships at the dockside.

Tommy "Walsh" and some others also worked on this job of getting the stuff on to the ships. We always arranged things with the seamen the evening before, so that, when we went to the docks, showed our passes to the dock policeman and went aboard the ship, we were met by our seamen friends without any delay, and they took and stowed away the stuff

immediately, advising us then whether it was safe to bring any more along or not.

There was a man named Dick O'Neill who was one of those actively concerned in the shipping of stuff to Ireland. O'Neill was a seaman who went under the name of Dick Murphy for the purpose of his seaman's identification papers, and he stayed in a boarding-house in 10th Avenue, New York, when ashore. On one occasion he and I were bringing a load of ammunition, about 17,000 or 18,000 rounds, from our dump to his boarding-house where, it had been arranged by him, it would be picked up by three or four of his friends, who were also seamen, and placed aboard a ship, which I think was the "Baltic".

As I already mentioned, there was always a danger of being held up in the prohibition days, owing to the close watch kept on the movement of contraband liquor, and when we reached a traffic light about 8th or 9th Avenue, it was against us and we had to stop. While we were stopped there, two detectives, who were on the sidewalk, crossed over to the car and, seeing the parcels in the back of it, ordered us to pull in to the sidewalk. We had no alternative but to obey, of course, but, knowing as I did how favourably disposed to our cause most of the New York police were, I was under the impression that we would be allowed to proceed once matters were explained. But this time we had happened to hit the wrong one, because it was a young Polish policeman who was in charge, and he, taking a serious view of the situation, blew his whistle, calling out seven or eight uniformed police at the double from a nearby station. We were duly arrested and brought with our carload of stuff to the police station, where we were subjected to a severe questioning from a number of plain-clothes detectives in a room in the basement.

We accepted full responsibility for the stuff, not

concealing the fact that we were sending it to Ireland, but we insisted that we were acting entirely on our own and refused to implicate anyone else. We said that the stuff was our own personal property and that we were quite satisfied to accept any punishment that might follow from its possession. From there we were taken in some kind of a "Black Maria" or police wagon to a New York gaol of some kind, where we were placed in separate cells. In this gaol we were searched on a number of occasions, subjected to further questioning and our fingerprints taken. We were kept in these cells for about ten or eleven hours until we were brought before a midnight court.

While we had remained in custody, other things had been happening of which we were not aware at the time. Despite the great size of New York and the number of its population, a crowd had gathered to see what was happening when we were arrested and amongst the crowd was an old friend of mine from my home town in Ireland. He saw us being handcuffed and put into the police wagon, and immediately sent word through some friends of the Irish cause to Harry Boland and Seán Nunan to let them know what had happened. They apparently made contact with some of the sympathetic police officials they were in touch with, and so, when we were brought before this court, the procedure was the merest formality.

I forget what the charge was that was brought against us, but it was something trivial. We were fined a dollar each and released immediately. After the trial, we got out by a side door where we were met by several police who were all apologies for the incident. They were very annoyed that such a thing could happen and blamed this young Polish officer, or Polack as they called him, severely for not knowing his business, as they put it. They told us to call around that

evening for the stuff, giving us a 'phone number to ring so that they would have the stuff waiting when we called. I am not sure whether the stuff was collected or not afterwards but, at any rate, I was not on the collecting of it, as we got instructions to keep away from the place lest the British Intelligence would have been tipped off to identify and trace anyone calling for it. I presume that arrangements were made to get possession of it in some other way.

At this period I was employed in the Irish External Loan office at 411, 5th Avenue, New York, where also my comrades, Jim Scanlon and Michael O'Callaghan of Tipperary, with Liam Pedlar and Tommy Walsh were employed. Seán Nunan also worked in this office and was one of the principals employed there. Séamus O'Meara, who was then T.D. for South Kilkenny, was in charge of the Bond drive in the United States. Attached to this office was an office of the Dáil Propaganda Department, from where propagandist literature, such as, historical pamphlets, books and articles explaining the various aspects of Ireland's fight for freedom, was distributed to various parts of the United States. Pamphlets, etc., in relation to Ireland's Case For Independence As A Republic were translated into Spanish and dispatched to the Argentine and other South American countries from the Irish Office, New York. My chief duties were in connection with this branch of the office, but I also had the daily duty of bringing money in cheques and currency, given to me by Seán Nunan, for lodgment in the Hudson County Bank in Jersey City. This money represented investments in the Dáil Loan made by people all over the United States. I was always armed when going on these bank errands. Jim Scanlan was engaged at times in the same role re bank lodgments, and I am sure other Irish members of the Bond office staff also did similar work but, at the moment,

I cannot exactly name them.

At various times, on a hint from Harry Boland, Seán Nunan or Liam Pedlar, we would go down to the dump to prepare stuff for shipment but most of this work, whether getting stuff on to the ships or collecting it into the dump, was done after working hours, at night. Some of this work had to be done in the day-time, such as, meeting seamen from incoming ships, collecting despatches from them, or arranging to have arms or ammunition put aboard. We looked upon this as a very important, if not the principal part of our work in the United States.

A point that struck me very forcibly at this period was what I considered the peculiar attitude of the Clan-na-Gael. Individual members were very good and, personally, I found some of them very helpful in the collection of arms and general assistance to the Irish national movement, but the organisation as a whole seemed to hold itself aloof from what we might call the military side of things. I had read and heard so much about the Clan-na-Gael as the Irish revolutionary organisation in America that perhaps I expected something very different but, despite all the talk at their meetings of fighting for Ireland's freedom and all that kind of thing, the organisation as such seemed to concern itself more with political matters than with any practical efforts to help to carry on the fight in Ireland. In conversation with many people to whom I expressed surprise that this state of affairs should exist, they pointed out to me, in explanation of it, that they were American citizens first and last, and, while being sympathetic to the Irish freedom movement and being of Irish blood, they could not take part in any activities which might be contrary to the American Constitution. They considered that the sending of arms and ammunition to Ireland was a matter which they, as American

citizens, should not be party to. Personally, I could not accept this explanation because this organisation posed as an Irish revolutionary organisation which had no use for what at home here was called Constitutional methods.

The Clan-na-Gael was affiliated to the parent organisation in Ireland (The Irish Republican Brotherhood), generally called the I.R.B., and at all meetings of the Clan it was strongly emphasised that its members relied only on physical force (in the old land) to overthrow British rule. I personally believe that this organisation, if allowed to do so by those in authority, could have given tremendous assistance to our Active Service Units at home. The Clan was run on secret lines much as the I.R.B. was in Ireland, and at some of their meetings (which I attended) a password was necessary. The latter took the form of an Irish leader's name, such as, Sarsfield, Mitchell, Collins, etc. The rank and file of the Clan were composed of real good Irishmen, eager and anxious to do all in their power for the cause.

Another organisation in the U.S.A. that had a tremendous membership was the "Friends of Irish Freedom", and practically every city and town in the U.S.A. had branches of this organisation. This latter body was carrying on wonderful propaganda work, showing up the British war of aggression against the Irish nation and helping the External Loan wonderfully. The "Clan-na-Gael" held a controlling grip on the "Friends of Irish Freedom" in much a similar way as the I.R.B. did on the I.R.A. movement in Ireland, and both the Clan and Friends of Irish Freedom were dominated by Chief Justice Cohalan, John Devoy and their lieutenants.

When the President of the Irish Republic sought the recognition of the elected and existing Government of the

Republic of Ireland from the U.S.A., he found the leaders of the Irish-American organisations anything but helpful.

When President de Valera was making the straightforward appeal that the U.S.A. should recognise the Republic of Ireland, the help that one would expect from the leaders of the Clan and Friends of Irish Freedom was not forthcoming. About this period the Conventions of the two big American Parties, Republican and Democrats, were about to take place. The Irish leader saw a wonderful opportunity of having a "plank" inserted at both Conventions, which would bind either of the Parties if returned to Governmental office to recognise the newly elected Republic of Ireland Government.

The power and propaganda of the Irish race abroad was at its highest influence at this time, and both big American Parties were honeycombed with people of Irish blood and sympathy. It was at this critical stage that the Clan-na-Gael and Friends of Irish Freedom spokesmen, Messrs. Chief Justice Cohalan, John Devoy, etc., knocked out any hope of recognition by the coming American Government. At both Conventions when respective policies were being put forward, those latter Irish-American leaders, for reasons best known to themselves, used their influence with the delegates and succeeded in having a substitute resolution of no material value passed by both Republicans and Democrats. This high-sounding substitute resolution was of no value, as it merely expressed sympathy with all small nations struggling to be free, including Ireland. After these and other incidents, the vast majority of Friends of Irish Freedom members broke away from that organisation and formed "The American Association For the Recognition of the Irish Republic".

The Clan-na-Gael was also re-organised, and over ninety per cent. of both the Clan and Friends of Irish Freedom withdrew from the leadership of Justice Cohalan,

Devoy and colleagues.

John Devoy, the old Fenian leader, was head of the original Clan, and Joe McGarritty was one of the heads, if not the actual one of the re-organised body. McGarritty was also one of the leaders of the old Clan. Some time previous to this departure, the I.R.B. in Ireland cut off the Devoy Clan from further affiliation with it, in view of the Clan's actions. I remember the latter occasion clearly, as I personally brought the dispatch conveying the I.R.B. order from Harry Boland to John Devoy at the "Gaelic American" offices. The Fenian leader was a very old man at this time and was extremely deaf. With him in his office as assistant was Séamus McDermott, brother of Seán McDermott, one of the Easter Week signatories. The "Gaelic American" weekly was noted for very bitter personal attacks on the Irish President (E. de Valera) and Harry Boland, but it was held by many that Chief Justice Cohalan, the American politician, was the person who was in virtual control and directed all Devoy's policy.

The re-organised Clan, immediately it had "thrown overboard" their American politician type of leadership, began to function on real helpful lines in support of the I.R.A. at home.

The replacing of the American politically bound Friends of Irish Freedom by the American Association for the Recognition of the Irish Republic was also of great value, as this latter huge organisation set to work with a will to canvass for the success of the Irish Bond Loan drive, propaganda, etc., etc. Two Irish-American weekly papers deserve special mention for their wonderful support at this period, "The Irish World" and "Irish Echo", both of New York. The "Irish Press", Philadelphia, and other journals, whose names I do not remember, also were very helpful. Of

the American daily press I must give pride of place to the Hearst chain of dailies, who were certainly most favourable to the Irish demand for justice.

On a date some months before 17th March, 1920, Harry Boland asked me if I was prepared to carry out a mission of responsibility which had some risk attached to it. I said I was. This mission, I learned, had to do with the activities of a certain British Intelligence agent who was staying at or using a hotel in New York as a postal address. Boland had learned something about this agent's activities somehow or other, and my mission was to impersonate the agent and try to obtain some more information in that way.

If my memory serves me right, I think the name of the hotel, where this agent stayed or had his letters addressed to, was the Breslin Hotel, one of the biggest hotels in New York, although I forget the precise whereabouts of it in the city. I was to go down to this hotel, posing as A.D. Pate, which was the name of the British agent, and book a room there. I was to take possession of any correspondence for the latter, which I could lay hands on.

Accordingly, on this particular night I drove up to the hotel in a taxi and, walking up to the clerk at the desk, I booked a room as A.D. Pate, collected any mail already there addressed to A.D. Pate, and left instructions at the desk that any further mail, special delivery letters or telegrams that might arrive during the night were to be forwarded to my room immediately. I then went up to my room and, going in, locked the door. I had some books with me to while away the time during the night by reading. From time to time some member of the hotel staff came, tapped at the door and pushed some telegrams and special delivery letters under the door. I also received a registered letter. All of these I placed in my pocked to bring away

with me.

I might mention that in New York there is an all-night service for special delivery letters and for telegrams, Western Union or Postal Telegraph.

I had not undressed during the night but sat there reading while I waited for letters to come along. In all, I obtained about half a dozen letters and telegrams.

Towards morning I decided that nothing further was likely to come, so I telephoned from my room to have coffee and my bill sent up. Having had the coffee and paid my bill, I moved off. My room was on the ninth or tenth floor. By this time I had begun to get a bit anxious about the possibility of my impersonation being discovered because, under some law, a person giving a false name in a hotel was liable to heavy penalty, and I did not know at what moment the real A.D. Pate might show up. However, a few people were moving about the hotel corridor at this time and, having descended in the elevator, I left the hotel. I jumped into a taxi, which had just arrived at the door with a fare, directed the driver to Pennsylvania Station and there got on the underground railway. I took the subway up-town, getting out after passing about ten stations, and then took a street car across-town. I felt that all this was necessary in case I had been followed. I then went down-town and met Harry Boland in accordance with my arrangements with him. I gave him the packet of letters and telegrams, and he seemed very happy that my mission had been so successful. I had not known the full significance of the job I was on until then.

There were one or two others with Harry Boland when I met him; I forget for the moment who they were. They opened the letters and telegrams while I was there. They were all in code but Boland and the others had the key, and I

interestedly watched the process of decoding.

I cannot remember the precise wording of these messages but I know that the gist of them was that this British agent had been authorised by his Government to recruit gunmen and thugs in America for employment in Ireland against the I.R.A. The idea was that these people would be sent to Ireland to act on instructions given to them but no British Government Department would have to accept responsibility for them or for their actions. There was a figure mentioned as rate of pay, which I think amounted to about £8 or £9 per week, for any men who would carry out the work required. In plain terms, these men were to act as paid assassins, for whom the British Government could disclaim all responsibility. The British Government had instructed this agent that the type of people he should recruit were to be suitably tough and unscrupulous to carry out the work they wanted done in Ireland. The letters and telegrams I had obtained were in connection with people the agent had contacted in this matter, and the registered letter contained a large number of English currency notes, which I think was stated to be a first instalment.

Harry Boland took action to give publicity to this discovery, but I think the ordinary press in New York was shy of printing anything about it. However, one newspaper did publish the incident, but I cannot remember what paper it was. It was not the "Gaelic American" and I do not think it was a daily paper. I have a hazy idea that the paper that published it was a small weekly paper run as a sort of Workers' Journal. It may have been published in more than one paper but I am not sure. I think the ordinary daily papers would not handle the story for some legal reason. I remember reading the article in the paper that did publish it, and it laid emphasis on the fact that it was a breach of

the American Constitution to recruit for a foreign power on American soil without the permission of the American President or Government.

I am rather hazy about the date of this episode but I think it would have been about the autumn of 1920 - it could have been August, September, October or November.

The newspaper article also quoted the numbers of the English currency notes which had been obtained, as a sort of authentication of the story.

In the beginning of June, 1921, the impending executions of Foley and Maher for their part in the Knocklong train rescue received great prominence in the headlines of the American press. The trial of these men had gone on for a considerable time; actually they were tried at least three times. The third of these trials took place in Belfast. Foley was a member of the rescue party at Knocklong, but Maher was not. Maher had no connection with the rescue at all; nevertheless both were convicted of complicity in the affair. The evidence against them as published in the American papers, which had been taken from the press at home, was completely false to my knowledge. Apart from the fact that Maher was not concerned in the rescue at all, the details of evidence sworn against Foley were completely at variance with the facts. While Foley had, in fact, been one of the party concerned in the rescue, the evidence against him was false.

Previous to the announcement of the impending executions, I had discussed with Harry Boland the question of whether or not it was desirable that I should do something towards contraverting what I knew to be false evidence, and so make an effort to save these men from death. At the time, Harry did not see eye to eye with my suggestion in the

matter. He thought it might not do the men any good and, on the other hand, might involve me in such a way as to render my services in America useless to our cause. I had, however, a communication from him on the matter saying that he would let me know if he thought anything could be done.

In the meantime I was in touch, through our despatch system, with Seán Treacy in Ireland. I have the despatch that I got from Seán Treacy in reply to a note I sent him giving my ideas about what I thought I should do in the case of the men who were due to be executed. Treacy's reply was in effect: "No further news about Knocklong case. I have been speaking to Mick Collins, and his instructions are to lie low for the present and he will let you know if anything can be done in the matter".

About the time all this was happening, my wife arrived in New York from Ireland. She had been evicted from our house in Galbally and it had been taken over by the British army as a military post. She was going down to stay with some relatives of hers in Chicago, and I also went down to Chicago for a period with her.

It was while I was in Chicago that the final trial and sentence of Foley and Maher appeared in the papers. I immediately got in touch with Harry Boland again and pointed out that I thought I should do something in the matter, with a view to saving these men's lives. This was about three days before the executions, which took place on 7th June, 1921. Finally, Harry Boland consented to my request. I forget whether it was at his instigation, or whose it was, that in company with some Irish-Americans who were friends of the cause and also Peter MacSwiney, a brother of the late Lord Mayor of Cork, Terry MacSwiney, we went to a sympathetic newspaper organisation, the Hearst Press, the Chicago American newspaper syndicate. In the inner sanctum of this

office I produced my story, which I had already written out. It was published by them and was cabled to responsible people in England and, if I remember correctly, also to Dublin Castle, some two days before the executions were due to take place. In that statement I took full responsibility for the shootings that had taken place, and I emphasised the fact that the people who had been sentenced to death by British law could not possibly have carried out what a number of police witnesses had proved against them. While Foley had been a member of the rescue party, there were matters of detail sworn against him which were palpably false, and this gave me a chance of including him in my plea with Maher, who was innocent of any connection with the rescue. I had reason to believe afterwards - I had proof, in fact - that the statements were received both in London and in Dublin, but they were not released for publication until some days after the executions.

While in Chicago I underwent an operation for an old complaint which had been threatening me for years. On my recovery, I was associated with a group of young Irishmen in Chicago who had been in the United States for some time. Some of these men had served with the American forces in World-War I, but they were all Irishmen from various counties in Ireland; they had been born in Ireland. They put up a proposition to Harry Boland as a means of helping the arms fund, and a number of them contributed their own money and guaranteed the purchase of a field, which was called Gaelic Park. For a number of months during the summer they ran hurling and football matches, and all money taken in at the gates was contributed to the Irish arms fund. Actually, the Dáil Éireann auditors, who had been appointed to deal with the Loan Fund, handled this account also and checked the money contributed by this group before passing it on for the

purpose for which it was intended. There was a Dáil Éireann auditor in Chicago, named Healy, who is now a Consul General, I think, in New York City. He had been sent out earlier to the United States by Michael Collins as an auditor.

The money raised at these hurling and football matches in Gaelic Park was raised under the name of the Irish Refugee Fund because it was not legal to collect money openly for an arms fund.

Some of the young men whom I met during that period came over to Ireland afterwards to teach the I.R.A. the use of the Thompson sub-machine gun. Two of these men whose names occur to me were Dineen and Cronin. I was there in Chicago the night they were being seen off for Ireland.

Some time while I was in Chicago after my operation, I got word from New York that there were big purchases of Thompson guns taking place. My comrade, Jim Scanlon, was associated with this work. One consignment of these guns was captured by the American authorities on board the vessel that was to bring them across. This was probably the first big consignment of Thompson guns. Other Thompson guns had gone in small lots, but this consignment was put aboard a ship at, I think, Hoboken, New York. I only have this information secondhand, and perhaps someone else, such as, Seán Nunan or Liam Pedlar, could give more accurate details.

I heard from Scanlon and others that this consignment, which had been put aboard the ship at Hoboken Docks, was discovered through an unfortunate accident. Apparently what happened was that some seaman broke open a case by accident, or else under the impression that it contained something worth pilfering. At any rate, he displayed its contents, so that the dock police, who were invited to view

it, communicated with the city police and they confiscated the consignment. The consignment was not discovered through a deliberate search but purely through this accident.

Before I went to Chicago, Harry Boland mentioned to me very privately that arrangements were being made to get de Valera home and that he was going home on a ship called the "Celtic" as a stowaway, through the connivance of some of the crew. I was told to provide him with the necessary supplies of foodstuffs and such like to take with him on the voyage, as he would be unable to get fed in the ordinary way. Having done all that, I got a wire from my wife, who was due to arrive in the United States at the time, and I went off to meet her at eight o'clock the following morning at Pennsylvania Station, New York.

The first thing my wife told me when she landed was that she had a verbal message from Steve Lanigan in Liverpool to say that there was a very close watch being kept on all ships and that all ships were being searched. She did not know that de Valera would be travelling nor, I suppose, did Steve Lanigan know when he gave her the message. He just wanted to ensure that the utmost care would be taken in sending anybody or anything across.

Realising through this information that de Valera's safe passage would be affected, I went straight back to make contact with Seán Nunan and, having informed him of the message I had got, we both got into a taxi and drove to the docks. Nunan did not know that I was aware of de Valera's journey, and neither he nor I said anything to each other about what the hurry to the docks was about. However, when we arrived at the docks, we found the "Celtic" already pulling away in charge of a tug, and we stood looking after the ship. Presumably, Nunan's intention had been to intercept de Valera and stop him from travelling rather than

merely to warn him. Realising that nothing could be done about it at that stage, I remarked, "There is nothing we can do now. He is in God's hands". It was then for the first time that Nunan realised that I was aware that de Valera was travelling on the ship. He asked me how I knew about it, and I told him that Harry Boland had informed me.

This incident happened before the occasion on which myself and Dick O'Neill were arrested while bringing arms and ammunition to the docks, already related.

Dick O'Neill and another seaman, named Barney Downes, were the two principal men we relied upon for smuggling arms and for getting people of note back and forward between the United States and Ireland.

Regarding de Valera's voyage back to Ireland, I remember Dick O'Neill gave me a description of the passage and of the incidents that occurred during it when he returned to the United States. He said that, when they arrived at Liverpool, or whichever English port it was that they arrived at, the passengers went off first and then the crew started to go ashore, the crew being always last to leave the vessel. Dick O'Neill came to the top of the gangway just as the crew were starting to file off with their packs and personal belongings on their backs. These ships carried very large crews. The arrangement to get de Valera ashore was that he should pose as a member of crew going down the gangway, while Dick O'Neill remained at the top of the gangway keeping an eye out for anything of note. From here, Dick O'Neill spotted a group of about five detectives, two of whom he knew as they had searched him on previous occasions. The detectives were standing on the quayside near the end of the gangway, apparently scrutinising the members of the crew as they came ashore. Realising that there was considerable danger that they might identify

de Valera, Dick O'Neill got the idea of drawing their attention on himself, so he stood on the deck near the top of the gangway and in plain sight of the detectives, his delay in coming ashore being a sufficiently suspicious circumstance to draw the attention of the group of detectives on him. This had the desired effect, because the detectives never took their eyes off him, with the result that de Valera went coolly past them while they were watching Dick O'Neill above.

O'Neill had some despatches for Mick Collins from Harry Boland but, seeing that he had no chance now of getting them through and having prepared beforehand for such an eventuality by weighting them, he dropped them over the side of the ship into the water. These despatches were always sent in duplicate or triplicate by different routes or different agents, so that one or other copy had a chance of getting through. In case of danger, anyone carrying despatches might destroy them with the assurance that probably another copy would get through. When O'Neill first saw the detectives at the foot of the gangway, he took immediate precautions to dispose of the dispatches in the way I have mentioned.

It was in March, 1921, that I went with my wife to Chicago. My wife had come to the United States about December, 1920. She went to Chicago to take up housekeeping for her uncle, and I went with her because her uncle there had arranged to get a doctor to attend to my complaint. It was while I was in Chicago that I made contact with the Hearst Press about the Knocklong executions. After my operation I was convalescent for a long time, and was engaged in giving a hand at the Gaelic Park business, that is, the running of football and hurling matches there in order to raise money for the arms fund.

During the latter part of 1920 I had discussed with Harry Boland the prospect of my getting back to Ireland. I felt that I ought to be at home taking part in the fighting, in view of the conditions that had developed since I left, but Harry was not enthusiastic about it. In the meantime my people had been evicted from their home in Galbally; it had been taken over by the British military and my family affairs were upset. Harry Boland was not keen on my going back to Ireland. He said I was needed in New York, that he had plenty of work for me to do there, and so things carried on.

While I remained in Chicago convalescent and, as I stated, helping with the Gaelic Park effort to raise funds, I was in constant touch with Harry Boland in New York. This was the conditions of affairs up to the date of the Truce in July, 1921.

I returned from the United States with my wife and daughter and Mick O'Callaghan of Tipperary about March, 1922.

SIGNED: Edmond O'Brien

DATE: 9th October 1957

WITNESS: J. B. Rawlins Col.