

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21  
BURO STAIRÉ MILEATA 1913-21  
No. W.S. 730

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COSANTA.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 730

**Witness**

Seumas O'Mahony, B.A., H.Dip. Ed.,  
"Sliabh gCrot",  
Knockaverry,  
Youghal,  
Co. Cork.

**Identity.**

Member of Irish Volunteers, Mitchelstown,  
1914 - ,

Battalion Adjutant Cork II Brigade, April 1921.

**Subject.**

- (a) National activities, Co.Cork, 1914-1921;
- (b) Military activities, South Cork, 1920-1921.

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Nil

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STATEMENT OF SEAMUS O'MAHONY, B.A., H. DIP. IN ED..

"SLIABH gCROT", YOUGHAL, CO. CORK.

1887-1921.

Mitchelstown has always been to the fore in Ireland's struggle for Independence, and it is no wonder that my brothers and myself were imbued with a lively patriotism because our father, the late James O'Mahony, a great athlete in his day, played his part in the Plan of Campaign and on that famous Sunday, September, 1887, when the name of Mitchelstown was written in history, he received a flesh wound while taking one of those shot near Barry's gate around the corner into the Square out of the line of fire. On that day, as a direct result of the Order "Don't hesitate to shoot", the R.I.C. shot down many defenceless people, two fatally. From then on the rallying cry was "Remember Mitchelstown". For many years that great day was fittingly commemorated with bonfire, music and prayer, and so helped to keep alive the spirit that inspired the young men and women of Mitchelstown, and the surrounding district, to play an honoured part in the fight, culminating on July 10th, 1921, when the last blow, prior to the general "Cease Fire" of July 11th, was struck.

Early in 1914 the Irish Volunteer Organisation was launched in Mitchelstown. I was then 14 years of age. My brother Tom (R.I.P.) joined the local company at its inception. Later, because of my musical bent, I was called in. As everybody knows marching men need music, and what more suitable than the martial music of the Warpipes. We learned to play the Warpipes, and just as earlier my father made Violins for us, now he made Warpipes.

I well remember the Review by Colonel Maurice Moore (deputising for Sir Roger Casement) of the Galtee Regiment, 4,000 strong, on Sunday, July 29th, 1914. I also well remember the local Company O.C., (Captain Jim O'Neill) arriving by train, with those big long boxes which contained 50 Mark I Lee Enfield rifles and ammunition. (A full account of these rifles and source, etc., is given in Page 162 of "Rebel Cork's Fighting Story".) While I should like to think that what P.J. O'B., writing in "Rebel Cork's Fighting Story", has to say about these rifles is correct, I cannot agree. Many of these rifles were surrendered to the R.I.C. after Easter Week, 1916, and the only two, as far as I am aware, remaining rifles were taken by P.J. Luddy and myself to join the first Battalion Active Service Unit formed in our area in October, 1920.

The Redmondite split occurred in Mitchelstown as elsewhere, and possibly due to my father's political affiliations and his membership of the A.O.H. our allegiance was with the National Volunteers. So, with my brother Tom and others, we played before the local Company at the Review and Parade of National Volunteers on St. Patrick's Day, 1915, in Dublin when the salute was taken by John Redmond Esq., M.P. After that the National Volunteers faded out of the picture, and the Irish Volunteers, with their rifles on Parade, were the envy of the younger generation. One of those rifles was kept in our house for safe custody during Easter 1916.

September 1917 came, and on a Sunday evening the Irish Volunteers turned out to meet J.J. Walsh (R.I.P.) who had been

released under the general amnesty. Aroused by the sacrifice of 1916, I had already been studying British Army drill-books, and carrying out our own manoeuvres while awaiting evening school in preparation for our examinations in the Summer of 1917. So it was very willingly I stepped from among the spectators on the side-walk at the Cross-of-Four-Roads and took my place in the second half-company at the invitation of Captain Mick O'Sullivan, directly behind J.J. Walsh, as we marched through the town to the Town Hall where we were addressed by J.J. and others. I was enrolled a member of the Irish Volunteers and of the Sinn Fein Club that night.

From then on, in spite of school work, began a busy time for me. The threat of Conscription brought a steady influx of recruits, and at a large parade at Clifford's, Gurrane, where we were inspected by Donnchadh Hannigan, I got my first thrill when Captain O'Sullivan called for Volunteers for Guard Duty and Intelligence Work. I took two paces to the front and then began many a nocturnal visit to the Company H.Q. at Mulberry, and careful observation of the R.I.C. Barracks, back and front, while my mother (R.I.P.) believed me in bed.

October 1918 found me an Engineering student of U.C.C. I was not long there when I was enrolled in the University Company by Jack Buttimer and Mick Crowley. Officers associated with the work in U.C.C. were Raymond Kennedy, M.Sc., Dr. Garry Scanlon (Galbally) and Dr. Eugene Callanan, who later, with Dr. Con Lucey (R.I.P.), Dr. Joe Kearney (R.I.P.), Pete Kearney, Dr. Tadg Murphy and many others, were to see much Active Service. Mick Crowley, B.E., was a Section Leader in General Tom Barry's famous Column. Other class-mates in those days were John Joe Joyce, killed in the holocaust of Clonmult, and Michael Vincent O'Donoghue, now

President of the G.A.A., who was also an active member of the U.C.C. Company.

The Hall in Maylor Street, Cork, was a hive of activity in 1918-20, and Sundays found us regularly on field exercises. Lectures on explosives and tactics, with special reference to attacks on Police Barracks, were given at the A.O.H. Hall, Morrison's Island. Later in 1919-20 the Saturdays were spent in making fulminate of mercury for detonators at the Cork Gas Works. My recollection is that one Charles Daly was in charge of this work.

And so to the Summer holidays of 1920 when members of the University O.T.C., so called when addressed by J.J. Walsh in 1918, were told to report to their local units. In due course I reported to Capt. Dan O'Keefe, Company O.C., Mitchelstown, and, though to sit for my Second Engineering examination in the Autumn, I took an active part in Company operations, and in particular the enforcement of the Police boycott, which had for its purpose the stopping of supplies by the local traders to the R.I.C. Barracks and so make it necessary for armed Police to collect them. Breadvan drivers and milkmen were forced at the point of the gun to make deliveries, and on receipt of reliable information from inside the Barracks to the effect that I was to be taken out and beaten up, it was considered desirable that I should go "on the run" for a while. So much for my Second Engineering examination.

Early in September 1920 I found myself enjoying the hospitality of Jack and Mrs. Ryan, West Street, Tallow, Co. Waterford. Frank Ryan, now famous tenor, was then O.C. Tallow Company. We had a couple of weeks intensive Volunteer activity together, collecting and raiding for arms, and also raiding and

censoring enemy mails. The night mail was held up and the mails removed at Tallow Road Station, and, after being duly censored, the mails were deposited at the door of Tallow Post Office. The local postman was also deprived of the outgoing R.I.C. mail almost every day for a week. I, being a comparative stranger, was given this task which was carried out in spite of the close attention of an armed R.I.C. man, but the postman, friendly, was accommodating.

The evening I left Tallow for home I was unfortunate to miss the operation when Frank Ryan and Paddy Ronayne set fire to a military plane forced down in the vicinity, only to find on arriving home that I had missed the capture of Mallow Barracks. Had I been home earlier I would have been with Jerry Clifford, Ballyarthur, Mitchelstown, who was sent to join the Cork 2 Brigade Column, under General Liam Lynch, which captured Mallow Military Barracks on September 28th, 1920. But I had not long to wait.

Early in October 1920, the Galbally military cycle patrol passed through Mitchelstown going in the direction of Kilworth Camp. Even then this patrol was pretty famous throughout the area lying between Galbally and Mitchelstown, along the foot of the Galtees. There was a hurried mobilisation of some of the local Company; I forget the actual number that assembled at McCarthy's, Kilglass. Some had shot-guns, others were unarmed, and I was the proud possessor of a fully-loaded .45 revolver. The fight was to have been a sudden close-up-over-the-ditch attack and rush. Everything depended on SURPRISE. Well, the expected patrol took a different route home that night, actually returning to Galbally via Kilbehenny and Anglesboro. Considering the fame of the same patrol when in May 1921 they surprised and killed four of the East Limerick Column at Lackelly, and, though later out-

numbered, fought a rearguard action without the loss of a single man to Galbally, I often think we were in luck that night at Kilglass. However, be that as it may, for myself I went home that night disappointed and straightaway wrote to my Company O.C. volunteering for active service with any Active Service Unit, and, in error, signed my name instead of my number to the letter, as I was afterwards so informed by Commandant Tom Barry, Glanworth, O.C. 3rd Battalion, Cork 2 Brigade.

The first Battalion Active Service Unit in the area was formed towards the end of October, 1920, and P.J. Luddy and myself set off with our rifles from Coolregan to join the Column at David Barry's, Parkclough, Glanworth. We were driven to Martin Lynch's, Broomhill, by Tim Luddy (now in U.S.A.) and from there we went cross-country to W. Barry's, Ballyleagan, Glanworth. We missed the Column that night by a matter of about ten minutes, as they moved off in cars for the Doneraile area where an attack on a Police patrol in the town of Doneraile had been planned but was abandoned owing to the many children playing on the streets.

We joined the Column a couple of nights later in Shanballymore and were billeted at "Captain" Magnier's. Rifle and grenade training was undergone here and an ambush position on the Mallow-Kildorrery road was occupied without result. From Shanballymore we moved to Dunmahon, Glanworth and on November 26th had our first engagement.

The Black and Tans stationed in Kildorrery shot a young man named O'Donnell in November. Earlier, on August 4th, the East Limerick Column, under Brigadier D. Hannigan, assisted by Commandant Tom Barry and some others from Glanworth area, had captured an R.I.C. patrol on the Kildorrery-Rockmills road, inflicting losses of two

killed and four wounded. The shooting of O'Donnell was by way of reprisal. An inquest was held on O'Donnell, and Anthony Carroll, Crown Solicitor, Fermoy, with his military escort, proceeded to Kildorrery. This information was promptly conveyed to Commandant Barry, and our small Column, supported by local Volunteers, armed with shot-guns, from Glanworth Company, moved from Dunmahon and took up positions at Labbacally. The enemy approached at dusk and as they slowly climbed the big hill they were met with a fusillade from shot-guns, rifles and grenades. Unfortunately, there was no time to throw a barricade across the road, and, while severe casualties were inflicted, the driver of the lorry, though wounded, righted it and got clear away. One Officer was thrown from the lorry, captured and disarmed. The touring car did not enter the ambush position.

The Column lay in wait that night close to the village of Glanworth fearing enemy reprisals. The military from Fermoy, with armoured car escort, arrived but returned again without incident.

In the Labbacally ambush a shot-gun burst in the hands of John Leamy, inflicting severe facial burns. Another Volunteer drew the pin of a home-made grenade, but the lorry having moved out of range he put the grenade in his pocket. Imagine his consternation when he discovered his mistake having gone a field or so from the position. The pocket, apparently, had held the lever in position.

Through the night we marched from Glanworth via Shanballymore to our billet at James Tobin's, Skehanagh House, Doneraile. The Column strength was eleven: Commandant Tom Barry, Vice-Commandant and Column Leader, "Dorney" O'Regan, Battalion Adjutant, Dan Shinnick (R.I.P.), Liam Kearney, Tim Barry, Willie Barry, Davy



Bernard, Dick Smith, Paddy Cronin, P.J. Luddy and myself. While here efforts were made to entice an R.I.C. patrol from Doneraile to an ambush position at Carker, on the Buttevant-Kildorrery Road, without avail.

The Column moved to the Kildorrery Company area in the first week of December, being billeted at Noonan's, Clancy's and Hennessy's, Ballyvsteen. It is only fitting to say here that the I.R.A. had no more loyal friends than the Hennessy family. The home of Captain John Noonan, O.C. Kildorrery Company, was later blown up by enemy forces. During our stay efforts were made to contact Black and Tans by night in Kildorrery without result.

James Murphy (R.I.P.) "The Star", as he was called, joined the Column as it left the Doneraile area. During our stay in that area he had been practically night and day with the Column, as were others of the local Company like Dave Magner, Michael Murphy (Brook), John "Crippin" Murphy, Michael Murphy (Syamore), Con Clear, Dan O'Connor and Michael O'Connor (Donnybrook), the Hurleys and the Caseys. Others to join the Column at this stage were Jackie Sullivan, Glanworth, and John Curtin, Ballylough.

From Kildorrery the Column moved on to the Mitchelstown Company area near Glenacurrane. Column H.Q. was at Moriarty's. Contact was made with the East Limerick Brigade Column under Brigadier D. Hannigan and though our Column was obliged to withdraw from the area for a few days, we moved to Knockadea (East Limerick Brigade Area) and from Knockadea National School both Columns moved off on the morning of December 17th and occupied selected positions in Glenacurrane, three miles from Mitchelstown. Others of the East Limerick Brigade Column, who had been billeted in Shrove,

near Kilbehenny, joined us here. (There is a personal account by Major General D. Hannigan of this operation in "Limerick's Fighting Story", Page 99).

The ambush position had been carefully gone over some days previously by Brigadier D. Hannigan and "Seán Ford" (Thomas Malone) of East Limerick, and Commandant T. Barry, "Dorney" O'Regan and Dan Shinnick of our Column. The men, who had been resting on the old road to the rear of the position, moved to their allotted places just at 12 o'clock noon. Later a touring car with a Lancia escort passed through the position going in the direction of Mitchelstown. A barricade was then placed on the road and all traffic diverted and held. Towards 5 p.m., as dusk was falling, the touring car with its escort returned. Steadily they advanced, roughly 150 yards apart. Still no shot was fired. Around the final bend, beneath the quarry and then the barricade. Almost simultaneously the tourer reversed and fire was opened on both vehicles. The Lancia car was met with a withering fire from rifle and machine-gun while those in the tourer were readily dealt with. The Hotchkiss gun, previously captured at Mallow Barracks and manned by the Mallow painter, Dick Willis, spoke again. In the stillness that followed could be heard the voice of "Seán Ford" saying "Give them another taste of 'The Baby'". Dick duly obliged with a clip of thirty, and immediately afterwards the Tommies, those surviving, came on to the road with hands raised high. It was all over. A couple of minutes or so it lasted.

Possession was taken of 19 rifles, a box of Mills hand-grenades and enemy mails. The dead were removed from the lorry, the wounded were taken to a house and attended to, the vehicles were set on fire, and the Columns moved off for Knockadea, where,

after refreshment and a brief rest, they moved on again to part company at Shraherla. Our Column billeted that night in Kilclooney, close to famed Kilclooney's wood, where every house had a welcome for us.

Here I should like to pause to record my tribute to those local Volunteers who worked night and day finding billets, acting as guides, guarding the Column, and finally co-operating with the Column, sometimes in actual combat positions, and other times as outposts, dispatch riders and intelligence staff. The Volunteers of Mitchelstown and Knockadea Company area were untiring in this respect and in the Glenacurrane ambush the "wanted" men in Mitchelstown area manned the outposts. That those men would be in the Column were there arms to go around, I have no doubt, but there were no arms for all and others, married men for example, would not be accepted in the Column. It was hard on such men because, as everybody knows, there is safety in numbers, and at any rate we, in the Column, were armed and able to protect ourselves, but those others "on the run" were liable to be run to earth at any moment in the dead of night by enemy forces and done to death. Of one such I often think with pride because I, one of the younger generation, was associated with him, one of the older, earlier in the Spring of 1918 when week-end route marches and field exercises were often carried out by Mitchelstown Company, moving far afield to Galbally. A foundation member of the Irish Volunteers in Mitchelstown he was active up to Easter Week, 1916. In 1920 he was arrested and interned in Wormwood Scrubbs, England, where he took part in a successful hunger-strike for his release. Now, on the evening of December 17th, 1920, as the Columns lined up prior to moving off after the Glenacurrane ambush, he came forward imploring the Battalion O.C. to allow him

come with us. But no. He was married. There were others to be considered, and, considering the responsibility placed on the shoulders of the Battalion O.C. and Column Leader by Brigadier Liam Lynch (R.I.P.) where their men were concerned, it is not surprising that the married man, who had a wife and large family, was refused. I refer to W.J. Ryan, Mitchelstown.

From Kilclooney we moved on to the Kildorrery area and shortly afterwards the Column was disbanded for Christmas, "Dorney" and I going to James Tobin's, Skehanagh House, Doneraile, where we were joined later by Dan Shinnick. "Dorney's" stay was short as St. Stephen's night found him en route for a Brigade Training Camp at Naad. That Christmas we were able to attend 7 o'clock Mass at the Presentation Convent, Doneraile, and on New Year's morning Danny and I received Holy Communion with Constable Shine, R.I.C.

"Dorney", after some narrow escapes in the Glanworth area, got back again and the Column re-assembled at Dunmahon, Glanworth, on January 26th, 1921. Additions to the Column at this period were Captain Dan O'Keefe, James ("Bosco") Walsh, William Gillahue and Tim Fay (all of Mitchelstown); Dan O'Connor, Donnybrook, Doneraile; John Leamy, Glanworth and John Lane, Annakissa, O.C. Kilavullen Company. From Dunmahon we moved to Annakissa, Mallow, later moving to Kilcanway, all in the Kilavullen Company area. Rail communications between Mallow and Fermoy were dislocated by local Volunteers under Column protection. The Column's hosts were legion in the Kilavullen area, and long may the families of O'Sullivan, Nagle, O'Neill, Murphy, Magner, Roche, O'Regan, Leahy, Hunt and Buckley thrive and add lustre to the glory of their ancestors.

Back again in the Doneraile area and billeted in the Skehanagh and Donnybrook districts, the Column moved out each morning before sunrise and lay in ambush at Kilbrack till after sunset each evening for a week but the enemy forces were not obliging.

The Column now moved to Annakissa and Cleanor. Two mounted military police patrolled the Ballyvonare - Donerail roads on Sunday nights at this time and the Column Leader thought it would be rather a novel idea for some member of the Column to fire over them and so entice the military from Ballyvonare to an ambush position at Kilbrack. Everything went according to plan and a small party - Column Leader O'Regan, Dan Shinnick, Liam Kearney and myself - fired over the military police at the Turnpike, Doneraile, Sunday night, January 20th, 1921. Meanwhile the Column had moved into position at Kilbrack. About 2 a.m. on Monday morning, January 21st, a covered lorry of Military with police guides entered the position. Rapid fire was opened on it at once, and a spray from a Lewis Gun along the top of the fence was the reply. A Mill's hand-grenade aimed at the lorry is said to have struck a policeman seated at the back, falling on to the roadway where it exploded harmlessly. The military pulled up just beyond the position and, driven by a brave officer, they mounted a Vickers machine gun and began at once to enfilade our position. The Column Leader decided, immediately, to attempt a flanking movement and leading a small party of five he reached a position a short distance to the right of the enemy machine gunner. Meanwhile other members of the Column had kept up constant frontal fire on the enemy's position. Across Tim Nagle's half-acre could be seen the long tongue of flame of the Vickers, then enfilading the Column's position. "Five rounds rapid" was

the order given and the Vickers, for the moment, was silenced. The Column then retired but the flanking party got a particularly hot reception. They eventually succeeded in extricating themselves and later rejoined the main body, after which the Column moved at once for the Kildorrery area. The flanking party consisted of Column Leader D. O'Regan, Tim Barry, "Bosco" Walsh, Billy Gillahue and myself. "Dorney" was now Battalion O.C., as Commandant Tom Barry had been captured on a visit home for the "Stations" in January.

Unsuccessful attacks were made on Kildorrery and Castletownroche Police Barracks about this period.

Towards the end of February and early March the Column, now about twenty-two strong, and augmented by local Volunteers from Ballyhooley Company, occupied a position on the Ballyhooley - Glenville Road, while further ahead on another road the Fermoy Battalion Column, under Commandant Con Leddy, occupied another position. All Columns in the Cork 2 Brigade area were on the alert for General Cummins, then on a tour of inspection of enemy forces in the South. Vice-Brigadier Seán Moylan and his men got him at Clonbannin on the Cork-Kerry border.

St. Patrick's Day, 1921, found us in the Kilavullen area, and here we were afforded the consolation of Confession and Holy Communion by Rev. Father Michael Rea, C.C., at O'Regan's.

It was about this time that the Column moved into Castletownroche and fired on a police patrol, inflicting some casualties. Castletownroche had also a military garrison, 100 strong, besides a Police Barracks with a strong force of Black and Tans.

The Column was very much on the move now, March - April, 1921, and a glance at the position of our Battalion area, extending from Ballyvonare to Kilbeheny and Ballygiblin on the North, and from Mallow to Ballyduff on the South, practically surrounded by strong enemy forces, will, I feel, make one wonder how a Column could exist for so long and avoid annihilation or capture. Mitchelstown had a strong enemy garrison of military, R.I.C. and Tans. Kildorrery was garrisoned by R.I.C. and Tans. Doneraile had its R.I.C. Barracks, while strong military forces were encamped at Ballyvonare. Buttevant, an old garrison town, had an R.I.C. Barracks and a strong force of military. Mallow had its military and police; Castletownroche - military and police; Fermoy had its Police Barracks, the New and Old Military Barracks and the Aerodrome; Moorepark and Kilworth Camp held strong enemy forces. And yet inside this ring there had been in operation from October 1920 to March - April 1921 an Active Service Unit, commencing with eleven men, with local Company support, and now twenty-two strong.

After a short visit to the Mitchelstown area the Column luckily evaded a large round-up by encircling enemy forces. I cannot remember the actual date of this round-up but it was around the Spring of 1921. On that particular night I happened to be on guard duty on the boreen leading to Hennessey's, Ballyvirsteen, from 10 p.m. to 2 a.m., with Maurice Hennessey, when we saw the lights of the lorries approach from Kildorrery direction shortly after midnight. The military party, which came from Fermoy, comprised eleven large lorries of troops and, preceded by an armoured car complete with search-light, actually passed by the assembled Column in the Kildorrery area on their way to commence operations at Ballyarthur, Mitchelstown, where they picked up Captain Dan O'Keefe, who was ill, and whom we were obliged to

leave behind only the night before. The Column, roused from their slumbers, spent a few anxious hours that night, but, fortunately, the enemy did not know of our whereabouts. The enemy convoy also passed through some East-Limerick billets on the way to their starting point at Ballyarthur that morning. Arrived at Ballyarthur they proceeded, in extended order, across country to meet other enemy forces advancing from Clonmel and Cahir, incidentally missing Seán Hogan's Column, South Tipperary, in the neighbourhood of Kilbehenny. The name of Jimmy Sheely will ever be linked with the Column's escape, which surely must be as stirring, and ever so much more serious, as the rescue of Seán himself at Knocklong.

Shortly after this, about Easter 1921, the Column was divided into Sniping Units to operate in the different Company areas. The longer days and shorter nights were all in the enemy's favour and with increased enemy activity on a large scale, it was felt that our Column was not strong enough to defend itself from capture or annihilation, and surrounded, as we were, a large Column was out of the question. Liam Kearney, Glanworth, had succeeded "Dorney" O'Regan as Column Leader. Liam, on a visit home, was arrested and conveyed to Kilworth Internment Camp. I was now appointed Column Leader, responsible for the various Sniping Units in the Battalion area. The appointment was sanctioned by General Liam Lynch, but, much to the surprise and delight of all who knew him, Liam Kearney was released by the British. At the time of his arrest, Liam, suffering from the effects of a septic finger, was very ill, and certainly looked it. Some remark, in jest, by a visitor to Liam at Kilworth to the effect that he (Liam) would surely die on their (the British) hands was seized upon and played up to, with success, by Liam.



Little did the British know their man.

I was then put in charge of Signals and a Training Camp was held at Annakissa just after Easter. One member of the Camp, Dan Butler, was captured by a large convoy of military on the Mallow-Mitchelstown road, complete with flags. Only recently I learned from Seán Matthews, Waterford, who was carried as a hostage by that convoy, that things looked pretty black for Butler for some days, but both were later interned. Matthews was in Spike Island when Tom Crofts, Moss Twomey and Bill Quirke escaped.

In April, 1921, Dan Shinnick, Battalion Adjutant, was appointed Brigade Adjutant, Cork 2 Brigade. I was now appointed Battalion Adjutant, and a permanent Battalion H.Q. was set up at Dromdeer, near Skenakilla, and convenient to our great friends, Mr. and Mrs. Garrett Cooper. Here either the Battalion O.C. or myself ~~was~~ always to be found and there was a spare bed for Column members or dispatch riders passing to and fro'.

Organisation throughout the ten Companies comprising the Battalion was intensified and there were numerous activities - such as falling bridges and cutting road trenches; sniping of enemy convoys; the shooting of two Black and Tans at Rockmills; the shooting of Constable Shanley returning from Mass in Kildorrery; the shooting of a Black and Tan at Ballygiblin; the wounding and shooting of soldiers near Fermoy; and the dislocation of enemy communications throughout the area. The Company areas of Mitchelstown and Ballygiblin were combined to form a Sub-Battalion for operational purposes at this period. It was on the occasion of a combined operation that Mick O'Sullivan and Paddy Clifford were captured by a military patrol which might.

well have had serious consequences for those assembled at Ballygiblin Church, bent on bridge destruction and road-trenching, apart from the death sentences passed on them both later. The fight to save their lives was long and arduous. To J.G. Skinner (R.I.P.), Solicitor, Mitchelstown, goes the credit. The Battalion found the finance necessary to enable him to bring their case to the House of Lords. Two of the most grateful mourners ever to follow mortal remains were O'Sullivan and Clifford at the funeral of the late J.G. Skinner. Solus na bhFlaitheas da anam.

Those activities had their repercussions. The British, now desperate, sought to strike terror into the hearts of the defenceless and so our dearest friends were called upon to pay with their very homesteads for their loyalty to the cause and their hospitality to the Column. Captain Tim Barry's home at Parkclough, Glanworth, was blown up, the family being permitted to remove only the bare necessities of life. Likewise the homes of Captain John Noonan, Kildorrery, and Battalion Adjutant, Dan Shinnick, Castletownroche. We replied by burning the homes of three wealthy loyalists - Lord Listowel's at Ballyhooley; Penrose Welstead's, near Castletownroche and Oliver's, Rockmills. This was on April 30th, 1921. Back came the British on May 3rd and by order of Colonel Commandant N.J.G. Cameron, Commanding 16th Infantry Brigade, Fermoy (copy of Order attached) the houses of Michael Walsh, Farrahy, James Burke, Rockmills; M. Magner, Shanballymore; two houses of Dalys, Shanballymore (one in error, I believe); Ned Creed's, Meadestown, Kildorrery; and Linehan's Public-house, The Bridge, Ballyhooley, were destroyed by enemy forces. There were no further reprisals.

The ambush of the military water-patrol at the Fountain,

Mitchelstown, on July 10th, 1921, was not a Column operation and I have no doubt that P.J. Luddy, Coolyregan, Battalion Vice Commandant, or Bill Roche, Skeheen, O.C. of the Sub-Battalion area of Mitchelstown and Ballygiblin will bear me out when I say that the Companies would resent any suggestion to the contrary. Commandant "Dorney" O'Regan went over the ground, prior to the operation, to see that everything was in order, but my recollection is that, though co-operation was forthcoming in abundance, the Officers and Active Service men in the area felt competent to carry out this operation themselves. As they were so anxious the Battalion O.C. acceded to their wishes. Active Service men taking part were P.J. Luddy, Jimmy Walsh, Billy Gillahue, Tim Fay, Jack O'Neill and Pat Quinlan. Leo Skinner and Billy Gillahue were wounded in the fight, and while Skinner was cared for at O'Donoghue's, Gurteenaboul, Gillahue, more seriously wounded, was removed to the Mercy Home. (A very good account of this ambush is to be found on pages 173, 174 of Rebel Cork's Fighting Story, published by The Kerryman). An account also appeared in An tOglach at the time, and Mark Aherne, Skeheen, was mentioned for conspicuous bravery when he disarmed, single-handed, two of the enemy forces as they hurriedly retreated.

On July 9th, 1921, Commandant "Dorney" O'Regan received a summons to a Brigade Council meeting at Lombardstown on the next day. Tired and weary he returned in the early hours of Monday morning, July 11th, bearing definite news of the "Cease Fire". Straightaway the necessary dispatches were got ready and dispatch riders set out to reach the various Company O.Cs. by mid-day. It was in Mitchelstown, as we have seen, that the last shots were fired in the Battalion area, and it was here that despatch rider, Tom Lee, narrowly escaped death at the hands of enraged enemy

forces as he arrived on his hunter with the "Cease Fire" Order for the local Company O.C. Fortunately, through the good offices of the late Monsignor David O'Connell, P.P., V.G., he was spared and subsequently released, with apologies.

Memory is fickle and it is hard to recapture so much after a lapse of thirty-one years. I owe much to what P.J. O'B. has already contributed to "Rebel Cork's Fighting Story" - Campaigning in the Mitchelstown Area - to recall various dates that have acted as guide marks along my own little road of memory. But just as my account may help to clear up some of the matter written by P.J. O'B. so also will other accounts ultimately help future historians to give a fairly accurate picture of what undoubtedly was a glorious chapter in Ireland's history to future generations.

The following served in the 3rd Battalion (Glanworth) Active Service Unit :

Comdt. Tom Barry, Battalion O.C., Glanworth.

"Dorney" O'Regan, Battalion Vice-Comdt. and Column Leader, Doneraile.

Dan Shinnick (R.I.P.), Battalion Adjutant, Castle-townroche.

Liam Kearney, Column Leader, Glanworth.

Tim Barry, Parkclough, Glanworth.

Willie Barry, String, Glanworth.

David Bernard, Tailor, Glanworth.

Dick Smith, Ballylough, Ballindangan.

Paddy Cronin, Rockmills, Kildorrery.

P.J. Luddy, Battalion Vice-Comdt., Coolyregan, Mitchelstown.

Seamus O'Mahony, B.A., H. Dip. in Ed., Battalion Adjutant, Mitchelstown.

James Murphy ("The Star") (R.I.P.), Brook, Doneraile.

Jack O'Sullivan, Glanworth.  
John Leamy, Glanworth.  
John Curtin, Ballylough, Ballindangan.  
Dan O'Keeffe, Mitchelstown.  
Jimmy Walsh, (R.I.P.), Mitchelstown.  
Billy Gallahue, Mitchelstown.  
Tim Fay, Mitchelstown.  
Dan O'Connor, Donnybrook, Doneraile.  
John Noonan, Quatern, Kildorrery.  
Jack Lane, Annakissa, Kilavullen.  
Jerry O'Donovan, (R.I.P.), Shanballymore.  
James O'Neill, (R.I.P.), Castletownroche.  
Thomas O'Gorman, Ballinree, Doneraile.  
Jack O'Neill, Skeheen, Mitchelstown.  
Joseph O'Keeffe, Ballylough, Ballindangan.  
Pa Quinlan, Ardglaire, Ballygiblin, Mitchelstown.

Signature:

*Seamus Mathuna*

(Seamus O Mathuna)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

23/9/52.  
25/9/52.

Witnessed by:

*Thomas Halpin*  
(Thomas Halpin) Lieut.Col.

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No. W.S. 730

NO. 11.

*Associate with  
Sheet 17 Lines 23+24  
L.H. Moore*

B R I G A D E

P R O C L A M A T I O N .

BY COLONEL COMMANDANT N. J. G. CAMERON,  
COMMANDING 16TH INFANTRY BRIGADE.

ON 30TH APRIL, 1921, THE REBELS BURNED THE HOUSES  
OF THREE LOYALISTS IN THE VICINITY OF BALLYHOOLY AND  
CASTLETOWNROCHE AND SHANBALLYMORE.

I HAVE THEREFORE ORDERED THAT SIX HOUSES IN THAT  
DISTRICT OF INDIVIDUALS KNOWN TO BE ACTIVE SUPPORTERS  
OF THE REBELS SHALL BE DESTROYED.

IF THE REBELS REPEAT THEIR ACTION THEN, THE  
PROPORTION OF TWO FOR ONE WILL BE INCREASED.

SIGNED AT FERMOY THIS 3RD DAY OF MAY, 1921.

N. G. CAMERON, COLONEL COMMANDANT.  
COMMANDING 16TH INFANTRY BRIGADE.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21  
BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21  
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