

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21

No. W.S. 734

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 734

Witness

Thomas J. Meldon,
45 Lower Gardiner St.,
Dublin.

Identity.

Brigade Musketry Officer,
Dublin Brigade,
1915-1921.

Subject.

National activities, 1913-1921.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil

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W.S. 734

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STATEMENT BY THOMAS J. MELDON,

45 Lower Gardiner Street, Dublin.

Pre-1916.

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About 1912 I made the acquaintance at a Gaelic League class of a man with a strong revolutionary outlook, who mentioned during the course of conversation that he was a member of the Civil Service Rifle Club, having a miniature rifle range in the vicinity of Dolphin's Barn. He suggested that I should visit the range as his guest and await developments, which I did. After a few visits I was approached by another member and asked if I cared to join, and being given particulars, applied for membership. Still attending as a guest, having the use of the club's rifles, but wishing to have my own rifle, I put something aside each week for the purchase of a Martini-Henry converted rifle which I was advised was the most suitable. They also had another range for ball practice, open to members obtaining a certain degree of proficiency.

In the early part of 1913 I purchased my rifle, and was preparing for membership when the Ulster question took shape, followed by the formation of the Irish Volunteers in the following autumn, which upset all arrangements. As the Volunteer organisation progressed, and when musketry classes were formed, the rifle was pressed into use and helped materially towards efficiency. In passing, I may mention that my sponsor won first prize (100 rounds .303) at the annual shoot of the club. I do not know what became of that first prize but can give a good guess.

Having decided in 1912 that there was nothing in this country to wait for except loss of employment and the open road to "God knows where" I decided on emigrating to Australia. In October, 1913, I was preparing to carry out my resolve when, out of the blue, came "Ireland's call" again, and I found myself one of a vast concourse of people in the Rotunda.

listening to her message from a group of unknown men, and feeling that the speakers' voices were backed by conviction, I decided to postpone my resolve. After the meeting, a call for volunteers was made and my brother John (afterwards captain of 'C' Company, 2nd Battalion) and myself handed in our names and awaited developments. These followed quickly and we were summoned to 25 Parnell Square where 'C' Company of the 2nd Battalion was formed. We reported and were appointed to a section and after a few weeks of drill were promoted - John to squad leader and myself to section commander, with the added duty of fitting ourselves, by attendance at special classes at Hardwicke Street Hall for the new responsibilities, taken with a light heart. Then rumours of demands and ultimatums were heard, followed later by an addition to our governing body by the Irish Parliamentary Party nominations, with subsequent interference by them in the organisation, and finally the "split".

On the formation of the Irish Volunteers a system of district companies was set up with, when possible, military instructors as trainers, whose instruction, by the way, was mainly ceremonial and foot drill. These continued with varying success till mid-1914 when the Great War started and most of our British army instructors were called up, thus throwing us on our own resources.

One evening later our company commander, Thomas McDonagh, addressing us, stated the new position and asked those not in agreement with the altered circumstances to fall out and leave the hall. Those who remained were reorganised; my brother and I returned to the ranks and routine. When the company was recruited to strength, my brother John was promoted to section leader and I, having a knowledge of small arms and, more important, a .22 bore rifle, was made

company musketry instructor which, for me, meant lectures on the use and care of the rifle. This meant the purchase and study of British textbooks and their adaption to our particular conditions, the setting up of a twenty-five yards range at 25 Parnell Square, and the management of same.

Shortly after the transfer to Dawson St. headquarters, I was instructing a musketry class when our Director of Training, Commandant McDonagh, entered, bringing with him a man who, he suggested, might be of some advantage to me as he was an ex-British soldier holding a Hyde School certificate for musketry. I asked him to join the class and proceeded with the lecture, the subject being trajectory. At its ~~de~~ termination and after the class was dismissed, I engaged him in conversation re our work and asked what he thought of it. He said the subject was not taught to the ordinary soldier in the British army, but further conversation made me doubt his credentials. However, as he continued his attendance and evidently attended to his company duties, I gave no further thought to the incident till some time later meeting Commandant McDonagh who, amongst other matters, mentioned this man, asking my opinion of him. I stated that I did not trust him; with this he agreed, but said that the safest place for him was where I could keep an eye on him and, if possible, keep him busy without arusing his suspicion. He hung about headquarters till close up to the Rising, but, as far as I could discover, took no part in it, re-appearing again about the middle of 1917. He resumed his activities, but did not return to the classes, having secured a job in the Cleansing Department, Dublin Corporation, as street sweeper.

After the general round-up in November 1920, I again came in contact with him in the North Dublin Union guardroom, where he had apparently been arrested and lodged. On my entry he at once renewed our acquaintance, stating that he had been arrested as an I.R.A. musketry instructor and asked my advice as to what to do. I suggested to him that he should produce his army

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discharge papers and disclaim all connection with the I.R.A. He then asked me what line I would follow if similarly charged. I answered that was another matter and as it had not arisen I had formed no plan. It being then time to turn in, I placed my mattress in a corner. He took up his and placed it beside mine, which decided me to keep awake, although I had had a pretty strenuous week previously. The following day at dinner time we had a visit from two 'Auxies' who made exhaustive inquiries. On their returning to the guardroom, our friend was sent for and questioned, as he informed me. Before his return the sergeant in charge of the room said that if any prisoners wished to leave the room they could do so in parties of three under escort. I went out in the second batch and, on my passing through, the 'Auxies' took a good look at us and, although there were others who wished to go when we returned, no more were sent, and, shortly after, he was escorted back and he told me that they had threatened to take him to the Castle and put him through it. When tea was over an officer came in with a list of prisoners to be transferred to Arbour Hill, on which my brother and I were evidently not included, but, on the suggestion of the sergeant, we were included in the party to be transferred, although others who had been brought in before us were left behind. After some time, other prisoners with whom I was acquainted, were transferred and he informed me that the 'Auxies' returned that night about 12 o'clock looking for someone and, not finding him, gave the balance a rough time. The alleged musketry instructor was not transferred to Arbour Hill for some weeks and, to the best of my belief, never got to the internment camp. On my return in 1922, having occasion to go to Beggars Bush on some business, one of the first men I saw was my friend of the detention prison in officer's uniform.

One evening Thomas McDonagh, calling the company to attend, stated that he required a number of men - 30 - to march out to his house in Rathgar, there to receive the first official arms to be issued and carried publicly. My brother and I being

selected, amongst others, we fell in outside 25 Parnell Square and marched to his residence, chatting as we went with that lack of discipline characteristic of our men. Arriving at our destination we were brought into his house and there met his wife and two children - a home in every sense of the word - and in after years it often occurred to my mind his leaving it behind, never to return, on that memorable morning when he led us out to his supreme sacrifice. In one corner of the room was a stack of rifles and on a table a pile of typewritten forms, one of which we each signed as we received our rifles. We then fell in outside, formed up and marched back to the hall, a silent body of soldiers, there to be received by our less lucky comrades with that respect and awe which only the possession of arms in the hands of earnest men can inspire.

While Thomas McDonagh was yet captain of 'C' Company, 2nd Battalion, Michael O'Hanrahan, our company treasurer and later Brigade quartermaster, brought out his book "The Swordsman of the Brigade", several copies of which were on the table at the entrance to the hall in 25 Parnell Square, where miniature rifle practice was being carried on. Tomas McDonagh, on entering, took a copy of the book and, later, when addressing the company, referred to the book and its author, mentioning that though the book was worthy of support it was not now time for works of fiction as all our spare time and money should be invested on military text books and other accessories for the coming struggle.

There were other activities in '25' besides soldiering. We also had Árd Craobh engaging our attention. On one occasion when leaving a class conducted by E. de Valera in the absence of our regular teacher, Brighid Ní Fhlanagáin, I mentioned to him my difficulty with the conversational end of Irish. His answer was, not to worry overmuch as I was doing more immediate work just then, but this was not wholly our teacher's - Brighid Ní Fhlanagáin - point of view. So as to promote conversation she introduced a system between members of her class, picking me out as the man with Irish and my partner in her scheme as the girl with cows, I undertaking the job of writing out the dialogue - my portion in black ink, hers in red - and arranged to give her a copy next class night, but she failed to turn up and so the scheme fell through, but this did not daunt our teacher who was a confirmed matchmaker. Some time later, when leaving the class, she met me in the hall, starting a lengthy discussion on the point that a married man was a better fighter than a single man, but alas! "he who is destined to be shot will never be drowned" - I went out as a bachelor.

And while I am on the subject another amusing incident occurred. In the course of our lessons the word "pós" came up for declension, and got, in our opinions, an unnecessary amount of attention, stretching over several class nights till one evening she asked our most taciturn member "Cé h-í pós tú?", to which he replied; "Tusa", which had the effect of a thunderbolt and from that time till the end of the season that particular word was carefully avoided.

With the growth of the movement the Hardwicke Hall became the centre of activities. Lectures on various subjects, drill, tactics, etc. - my subject being the theory of musketry - the practical work being carried out at Father Mathew Park, Larkfield, or any place available where alien activities were not too pronounced, they being otherwise engaged.

About this time one of the British activities was a school of musketry in Abbey Street, in charge of a Captain Graham. This was also used for a British recruiting depot. Discussing this school one evening, we decided to make use of it, so I approached Commandant McDonagh for a small grant to pay the fees, at the same time acquainting him of our proposal. He listened attentively and promised to put our scheme before the Council, but as nothing materialised for some weeks we decided, on my suggestion, that a levy be made to pay the expenses and that one of our members be selected to attend the classes, bring back the information gained, for our mutual benefit, but, as later, in the case of the Connolly lectures, the project was defeated on the eve of its accomplishment.

A school of signalling was also set up in the College of Science (then being built) in Merrion Street, by the British. A number of other Volunteers and I decided to join and get as much knowledge of the subject as possible. Having worked through semaphore and Morse, and having moved towards higher branches, the scheme had to be abandoned, whether through the fact that one of our group tapped a frivolous message, or to the British vigilance.

It was at the officers' lectures in Hardwicke St. Centre that I first met Tom Malone, later celebrated for his defence of Mount St. Bridge, one of these souls who never missed a lecture and never left it without learning something. We occasionally walked home together, discussing some point or other and its application to our particular situation. We also had a half-expressed arrangement that we should take different roads home when things appeared to take an unfavourable turn, which they frequently did in that unsettled period. We discussed the how's and when's of the debater and matters which appeared to retard our progress towards efficiency.

Our next headquarters was a house opposite the Kildare Street Club, from which we moved to our final headquarters, 2 Dawson Street, from which the Rising took place.

With the growth of the movement and consequent promotions, our commanding officer, Thomas McDonagh, became the Battalion Commander, followed by myself as Battalion Musketry Instructor with Company classes in Hardwicke St. Hall, where the work was extended to include field works, use of cover, distance judging and range finding in the open country; also ball firing in the Father Mathew Park and Larkfield. For practical instruction in the rifle, a rifle was procured from one of our men who had armed himself with a service rifle, brought to the drill hall by myself each class night and returned to its owner on each occasion after instruction. For convenience in carrying the rifle, the butt was separated from the fore-end and the whole lot concealed under an overcoat. This was carried out with increasing difficulty as enemy vigilance increased. On one of these occasions the rifle, having been secured, was brought along to Hardwicke St. Hall, only to find that the place had received enemy visitors. It was then brought to Father Mathew Park and 144 Brunswick St. with similar results, until it was finally brought to a house in Kildare St. opposite the Kildare St. Club, where the class was finally held and the rifle subsequently returned to its hiding place in Ballybough after midnight.

With the growth of the Movement it was decided to extend this system. Consequently a battalion musketry class was formed with an enlarged scheme of training, the new syllabus being:

Correct method of taking aim; common faults and their effects; also the use of the aiming disc.

Standing, kneeling and prone positions, when used, and the correct use of cover.

The making of range cards, target indicators and distance judging. This class was, when possible, carried out with small parties from 9 to 12 men in the open country.

The theory of fire, for which charts were used.

These classes we usually held in the hall in Hardwicke Street, where there were also N.C.O. classes, signalling, tactics, first-aid, etc., whose function was similar to the musketry classes, and which we were expected to attend. As the scheme of training extended, other centres were acquired - Father Mathew Park and Larkfield, where the theory of the classes was tested in practical small arms in the miniature range, and ball practice in the open, with field work in the open to be extended in operation either in the park or in the adjacent open country.

Two selected men from each Company were appointed to attend these classes. After the subject of the lesson had been given by me as the Battalion Instructor, each man took the class in turn and thus became proficient as an instructor. They then went to their Companies, and, under their officer's supervision, imparted the lesson to the men. When the syllabus was completed these special men went through an examination, and if qualified, became Musketry Instructors. Two new men were then appointed and the class started again. Classes were held two nights a week for a period of three months, with work in the open during week-ends on distance judging, making range cards and taking cover.

I might mention here that an extension of this scheme to the country was intended, and as the Movement spread

such of these men as could go would be sent to districts where their services would be required.

This idea would have proved invaluable later when, during the 1918 conscription menace, it was found necessary to compile and issue a leaflet on elementary musketry for circulation through the country to cope with the influx of recruits which on instructions from the 1918 G.H.Q. I compiled. There is a copy of this leaflet in the 1916 exhibits. As each group passed out, new men took their place and thus a constant stream of instructors was created.

This class usually took three months, the men receiving instruction and imparting it at the same time. When Brigade Headquarters was established in Dawson St. this branch was further extended to the Brigade area with the addition of an armourers' class composed of one man appointed from each Company, with a Battalion armourer in charge, the whole being under myself, the Brigade Musketry Instructor. Their duties were to make themselves familiar with the various weapons in the Brigade and learn how to do general repairs so as to maintain the weapons in serviceable condition when in action. These men attended classes similar to the musketry instructors and, like them when qualified, returned to their Companies as Company Armourers.

For this purpose a workshop was fitted up at G.H.Q., 2 Dawson St., containing bench, one large and one small vice, emery wheel and an assortment of suitable tools. The men attended, bringing in many cases, work from their Companies which they did under supervision, and, like the musketry instructor, when qualified, returned to their Companies as armourers, being replaced by new men.

This work was carried on with varying success until our official headquarters at Dawson St. were secured. Commandant Thomas McDonagh was appointed Director of Training. I was promoted to Brigade Instructor with the added work of armourers which I had to organise. This meant Brigade classes organised on Battalion basis to cover the Brigade area. Two extra nights each week were allotted for armourers whose duty it was to see that all Company weapons were in serviceable condition. With this object in view, all defective weapons were brought to the depot and any of us who had mechanical knowledge imparted this to those less fortunate, so that an efficient body of men attached to the Companies should be trained to do necessary repairs in action, when occasion came. As time went on minor jobs were done in class and in the Companies and our main difficulties were overcome.

In connection with this class our chief difficulty was the tempering of springs. The ordinary V. spring was soon conquered, but the striker spring of the service rifle was another matter, so it was decided to purchase, along with extra tools, a quantity of the necessary spiral springs, and, so as to divert suspicion, these were ordered double the necessary length plus a little more to allow for cutting and fitting; but, by the irony of fate, these, although ordered so as to be used in action, did not arrive till after the Rising.

During the period of the Rising the armourers proved their usefulness in many ways, but one in particular is worth mention. In taking over the College of Surgeons early in the week, a store of drill purpose rifles belonging to the G. Rs. were discovered and passed back to one of our depots - Jacob's Factory. The armourer getting to work discovered after some adjustment that a quantity

of these were serviceable, with the result that some very useful work was done with the captured arms.

As the Movement grew and facilities for training increased, more commodious and better ranges were secured, and as a further step towards efficiency, a series of shooting competitions at Larkfield having been decided on, first and second class marksmen's badges were issued for those qualifying, so that when in action, marksmen suitable for special work would be available. (Some of these badges are in the 1916 exhibits). This scheme was carried out and almost completed when the call to arms took place and a series of incidents during that fateful week proved its efficiency.

After my promotion I was approached by Volunteer Dick Mulcahy to allow my name to go forward for membership of the I.R.B., but I suggested that as we had come into the open there was no necessity for joining, especially as I had taken the Irish Volunteer Declaration, but on his repeated request I consented. On being sworn in I was made a section mobiliser and was a regular attendant of the I.R.B. up to the Rising. Shortly afterwards my rank and duties were published in the "Irish Volunteer", the official journal, 18th September, 1915. John was also approached, and on admission was appointed to another Circle; this apparently was the custom when a man attained rank.

During the course of a musketry class in Dawson Street, I had written on the top of the blackboard "Educate that you be free". Commandant McDonagh, Pearse and others, on a tour of inspection, entered the room and, commenting on the phrase, introduced me as the man who never asked questions - perhaps the reason being that

curiosity was not then considered a virtue.

One evening, just as a lecture on tactics was being given by Comdt. McDonagh, word came that a raid on Fitzgerald's of Brunswick Street was about to take place, in search of a consignment of gelignite just smuggled in from Glasgow, so it was decided that someone should be sent to prevent the raid taking place. Seán Quinn and I were selected and, being provided with small arms, set out for our destination, but on arrival, found that the police and Secret Service men had gained admission but found nothing but an old rifle left there for repairs. Deciding to follow the detectives who had taken possession of the arms to the barrack, for the possible recovery of them, but finding that all avenues of retreat were so well guarded that the attempt would be futile, we returned to headquarters, Dawson St. I met Commandant Ned Daly at the corner of the College and reported the episode and, on returning to Dawson Street, made out report to Commandant McDonagh. We had hardly resumed our place in the class when Captain Tom Weafer entered the room and called for volunteers, as the police were raiding for arms in Ballybough. My brother and I at once left the room, proceeding to Ballybough, calling at our home on the way to secure the arms in the house, and arrived at Ballybough to find the 2nd Battalion under arms and awaiting orders. One of the houses was actually in the possession of the police, but was immediately evacuated by them without their finding the four rifles and two haversacks of ammunition that were behind a door in the kitchen. This door opened against a wall which may account for the non-discovery or, which is more likely, discretion being the better form of valour, they saw fit not to discover them. However, they immediately came out mounted a side-car and drove off, the situation being

then somewhat eased. Then a Volunteer approached and reported to me that a suspicious looking man was standing some distance off at a lamp post. I approached him, letting him see that he was under observation. He at once fell back, getting his back against the wall and jumped on the next Ballybough tram. I then told the Volunteer to take a bike, which was on the kerb, and shadow the man, which he did, later reporting that he left the tram at Parkgate and proceeded to the police depot. The situation having eased by this time - about 12.30 o'clock - the Battalion was demobbed. It later transpired that what had occurred at Ballybough was repeated all over the city with similar results.

Owing to recent developments it was realised that affairs had reached a critical state; consequently, it was decided to have battalion inspections each in its own area to estimate their strength, equipment and general efficiency. This was carried out with this surprising result that, notwithstanding the variety of weapons and other drawbacks, the spirit of the rank and file was magnificent, making us feel, whatever our own immediate fate might be, the national cause was assured for all time, and our efforts would bear good fruit. A discussion took place whether we should fix bayonets in the St. Patrick's Day parade and it was decided that owing to the diversity of weapons we would not.

The next event of importance was the Brigade parade on St. Patrick's Day, 1916, and the review at College Green. Previous to this parade I accompanied Thomas McDonagh on a round of battalion inspections. I remember the 2nd and 3rd Battalions undergoing this inspection, but I have no distinct recollection of the 1st

and 4th Battalions being inspected only that I know they took place and that I accompanied McDonagh on them, perhaps because there was nothing outstanding.

The 3rd Battalion inspection was held at Battalion Headquarters, Camden Row, Commandant E. de Valera in command. This was held in an open space at the back of cottages with a long passage leading into it. At the head of this passage we were halted by a sentry who, on identification, had us conducted to the closed gate at which we were again halted. On admission the Battalion in Company formation was called to attention; an inspection of the guard then took place, followed by a display of ceremonial and field drill, march past and so the parade ended.

"The patriot's voice and poet's pen may sow the
seed in slavish men;
But 'tis the soldier's sword alone can reap
the crop when once it's grown."

The 2nd Battalion inspection was held at Father Mathew Park. Thomas Hunter was Battalion Commandant and Tom Slater, Battalion Adjutant. I would say, that these inspections took place about a month or two before St. Patrick's Day, 1916.

About a month or so before the Patrick's Day parade I had occasion to ^{go/}over to headquarters in Dawson St. Micheál O'Hanrahan stopped me at headquarters and asked me could I keep a secret. I said to him if he didn't think I could he was not to tell me. He then informed me that a rising was about to take place and that I was to hand over my rifles as he said that staff officers would not require them. I would say now that whilst there was a certain amount of indefiniteness about it most of us expected something would happen at Easter, and when

McDonagh passed the remark to me that he would stay at my house on Easter Saturday, I assumed that the critical period had arrived.

Some time before the following events, I awoke one night from a dream of which our drawing-room was the scene. Seated around the table were some of the leaders of the Movement in conference. On our entry they arose, and, after being introduced to my mother, resumed their discussions while we occupied seats in the room. As usually happens in dreams, this faded out, to be followed by another. This time I was standing on a road in the open country when in the distance a cloud of dust appeared which, as it approached, took the form of a vast body of men costumed as the Celtic people, carrying over their shoulders long spears, some with banners and some with pennants. As they came abreast of where I was standing, a voice called to me to take my place amongst them, when instantly I found myself dressed and appointed as they, marching in their midst. All this would have passed out of my memory but for subsequent events. The first fulfilment of this remarkable incident took place when Commandant McDonagh decided to alter his previous arrangement and to stay at my home on the eve of the insurrection.

For the parade on St. Patrick's Day, 1916, I got orders from McDonagh to parade in uniform at Father Mathew Park. When I reported there in uniform there was a group of officers of the 2nd Battalion present, which I joined. I was there a few minutes when McDonagh approached and said to me: "I didn't recognise you at first in uniform" and he asked me where I lived. I told him I lived at 45 Lower Gardiner Street and he said: "I'll stay at your house on Easter Saturday next".

The Battalion then formed up and marched to SS. Michael & John's Church where we joined the Brigade to attend a special Mass on St. Patrick's Day parade, after which the Brigade re-formed and marched under arms, myself and Michael Staines leading the advance guard by twenty paces. The route was by the southern quays, across Kingsbridge, Parkgate St., North Circular Road, where quite a number of the barrack garrison turned out to see us, but no incident of note took place; Berkely Road, Frederick Street, O'Connell St. to Dame St. and facing "King Billy" statue - then opposite the old Parliament House, where a general inspection was held, during which an incident worth recording occurred. A military car approaching from the College demanded the right to pass. Being denied, he was preparing to force his way through when Commandant de Valera, who was in command of this section, gave the order "about turn, load". On this show of resistance the car turned back, taking another route to Dublin Castle, its alleged destination. This car was occupied by a staff officer. No further incident marring our parade, we completed our arranged programme, and so an eventful day closed to be followed by a month's strenuous work and anxiety culminating in the eventful Easter Rising.

About two or three weeks prior to Holy Week, 1916, my brother John, who was then 1st Lieut. of "C" Company, 2nd Battalion, was instructed by McDonagh (I presume) to do a tactical exercise in the vicinity of Jacob's Factory. The factory was to be taken as a base with the position on the South Circular Road on the corner of Synge Street and a connecting line covering a retreat back to Jacob's. There were also other outposts. The most important was that at the cross-roads at Dolphin's Barn which, owing to the hasty re-mobilisation, was not occupied.

Subsequent to the parade on 17th March definite preparations were made for the parade of the Volunteers on Easter Sunday. Every man got instructions to fully equip himself as much as possible and McDonagh went round all the Companies and addressed the men. Whilst he did not specifically say so, most of us inferred from all this that the hour was at hand.

On one occasion when leaving Dawson St. headquarters, Commandant McDonagh asked me to walk to the top of the street - our ways usually parting at the door - and after some parley he got to the subject which had evidently been discussed at a staff meeting. He asked me whether I would favour the landing of a German army corps or that they should supply us with munitions of war and a few technicians, thus leaving the rest to ourselves. I said the latter course by all means, at which he seemed greatly pleased, and then discussed the pros and cons at some length.

Casement Landing.

Some time after the previous event, Commandant McDonagh met me as I entered headquarters and sent me to Captain Weafer with word that a collapsible boat had come ashore on the Kerry coast. This information was communicated to him (Captain Weafer) in his parlour where he was seated at a table, from which he stood up with such violence as to upset the chair, and pacing the room, exclaimed: "Jesus Christ, is nothing ever going to go right in this unfortunate country?". When this storm had subsided, I returned to headquarters, resuming my work with the gratifying knowledge that zero hour was fast approaching.

About this time Connolly was giving a series of lectures on street fighting, which I was anxious to attend. I mentioned the matter to Commandant McDonagh, suggesting that I could get a substitute to conduct the class during my absence. He agreed with apparent pleasure, but, much to my annoyance on each occasion, of which there were several, at the last moment he found some trivial excuse to defeat my plan - he was one of those men who had the gift of doing this sort of thing and yet disarming resentment.

As previously arranged Commandant Thomas McDonagh and his brother, John, came to my home on the Easter Saturday evening. He at once sent me to a house in Clonskea with a message and, on my return, arrangements were made for the night, the Commandant retiring to his room; his brother John and I taking up our long night, armed vigil, at the front parlour window, then used as a wareroom.

With the morning came the countermanding order and the cancelling of the Battalion mobilisation, with instructions to stand by and await further orders. The other leaders had made similar arrangements in change of residence. A few trusted Volunteers established contacts, so messages were arriving and being dispatched during the course of the day and far into the night, with meetings in Liberty Hall. After a meeting at Liberty Hall on Monday morning, the Commandant returned and informed us that the rising was to take place at 12 o'clock noon. I then instructed my brother John, who was 1st Lieutenant of "C" Company, 2nd Battalion, to re-mobilise the Battalion for 10 o'clock in Beresford Place opposite Liberty Hall, return and get into uniform.

The Commandant then remarked not to bother about a full mobilisation as one hundred good men would accomplish our venture.

Here, permit me to digress. Some time earlier in this statement I referred to a strange dream, the first portion being fulfilled by the previous series of events; the second occurred in the closing scene of the 1939 emergency.

As the war clouds of 1939 gathered and the danger of being involved increased, a general call to arms was made. The pre-1916 Volunteers and their companions of the later I.R.A. volunteered and such of them who had not passed the age limit were formed into the 26th Battalion and the 5th Engineers; others joining the various activities of the period. After attestation training commenced - barrack square drill, field exercises, musketry and machine gun classes with an annual visit to Kilbride, rifle butts for ball firing tests, and a week at Gormanston Camp for practical demonstrations of our barrack theories; this was supplemented by occasional exercises in the Phoenix Park, thus keeping fit both mentally and physically for the call that, thank God, never came, and so till the immediate danger passed and our stand-down was decided on, leaving the younger generation to carry on.

The Sunday previous to the stand-down being set aside for the ceremonial rehearsal and after rifles had been drawn, I handed my rifle to a latecomer so that he could take part in it, intending to take part myself although unarmed, but when I paraded was told to fall out, leaving the ranks but taking my place as a spectator as I wished to be conversant with the duties of the ceremony,

but the decision to carry Company pennants I was recalled and placed at the head of the Company with that duty.

The morning of the final ceremony arrived and as a matter of routine I reported myself for the drawing of rifles, but, whether by accident or design, I was handed the Company pennant which I accepted under protest and much against my will found myself, if not in an important, certainly in a prominent position which fortunately I filled without adverse criticism. And now to resume:

Having completed arrangements, Commandant McDonagh, his brother John and myself proceeded to Liberty Hall and, on the completion of the mobilisation, marched at the head of the column via Eden Quay, Westmoreland St., Grafton St., to Stephen's Green W. where the final arrangements were made in an office over the Bijou Tobacconist shop, 131 Stephen's Green.

After the meeting Captain Thomas Weafer, the officer of one of our largest and best equipped Companies, mounted a bicycle and rode down Grafton Street, later to be killed defending an outpost of the G.P.O. covering the wireless station in Lower Abbey St. Another of the officers, Seumas Kavanagh, took a cab to Connaught St., the residence of our Brigade Quartermaster, M. O'Hanrahan, to collect some ammunition which he brought back and delivered to the College of Surgeons. Into another cab, maps, proclamations and some home-made grenades were placed from the office of which I was put in charge, with instructions to drive round to Peter St. and await instructions. Previous to this Major McBride arrived and being informed that the Rising was about to take place, sent home for his revolver, and during the week was with my brother on the second floor overlooking Bishop Street.

This position commanded Aungier Street corner.

The conveyance with our reserve ammunition from Battalion Headquarters, Father Mathew Park, was directed to the G.P.O. fearing its capture by enemy forces, leaving us with only such ammunition as we personally carried. This may have been the cause of the withdrawal of the Dolphin's Barn outpost through which a part of the British troops who landed at Kingstown passed on their way to the Old Men's house in Kilmainham, and later cut through our positions; also the non-occupation of other outposts. Dolphin's Barn, if occupied, could have been another Mount Street.

After some time I sent the cabman round to Bishop Street to see what was going on and, being informed that an entry had been made in Bishop Street, I compelled the cabman to drive round at the revolver point, as he did not seem willing to obey. The cab, contents and horse were driven in, remaining till the surrender.

In a conversation with Commandant Thomas McDonagh after preliminaries had been arranged, he mentioned that the blowing up of the Magazine in the Phoenix Park would start the insurrection. This zero hour was only partly successful. He mentioned also that Bulmer Hobson, about whom he and I had a previous dispute, was under arrest by Irish Volunteers' orders and, perhaps by this time, shot. Commandant McDonagh also mentioned that the progress of the fight would produce the military leaders (towards the end of the week). This prophecy was fulfilled afterwards when Soloheadbeg took place and the flying columns which made the final settlement almost a success.

The talk referred to above was in reference to a request for funds to purchase canvas to make biv. tents, a quantity of which was completed and sold and which I proposed should be accounted for before any further sums were advanced.

Another incident occurred in the Dawson St. H. Q. A room was set aside for the musketry and armourers' class, of which I had the key. A rifle disappeared from this room. On raising this matter with Commandant McDonagh, I was informed that a second key was in possession of Bulmer Hobson. I demanded the return of the gun or the acceptance of my key as I declined to be responsible for the charge of the room. The gun was returned.

The Cumann na mBan were busy arranging the culinary section of the Quartermaster's department. Having found the kitchen and with the assistance of a party who commandeered from the local butchers' and provision shops, the necessary ingredients for our bodily subsistence were provided, and their distribution amongst the garrison, also for the College of Surgeons garrison who were unprovided for in this respect.

On the occupation of the College of Surgeons a quantity of D.P. rifles and a quantity of ammunition was found, belonging to the G.Rs. of which we got a share. These rifles, with the assistance of some tools and a vice belonging to the firm, were put in working condition and did useful work during the week.

It was also decided to get some of the ovens working to provide bread for the garrison and its distribution in the neighbourhood, but before this could be fully accomplished the surrender came.

Early in the week an attempt was made by the British to force the Camden-George's Street route, but the element of surprise was defeated, as occurred at a later period by a premature shot. A publichouse at the corner of Bishop Street and Peter's Row (now part of Jacob's) was tunnelled, giving us the command of Redmond's Hill. There was also an outpost in a house facing Pleasants Street - Delahunt's publichouse.

A group of people collected at the Bishop Street-Redmond's Hill corner, amongst whom a Kevin St. policeman appeared from time to time, evidently collecting information. A woman from this group advanced to a position under one of the occupied windows, giving considerable trouble with her abusive conduct. On the second day of her appearance her conduct became more threatening, thus giving encouragement to the looters. One of our men fired a warning shot and a splinter of stone from where the bullet hit the road cut her on the wrist. She was taken at once to the Adelaide Hospital. The next day she returned, a totally changed woman, whether it was from the sobering effects of the night's rest or the influence of one of the Church St. priests, or both, and where there were curses before, blessings were now showered on us, during which time a messenger passing by with a basket of groceries and fruit halted, whereon she commandeered the contents, throwing them into the window, thus providing us with a welcome addition to our repast of plasmon biscuits. So that unnecessary wastage should not take place, an order was issued that only plasmon biscuits should be used and that no second tin should be opened until the previous tin was finished. There was also another reason. A Fianna boy, who was attached to H.Q. as orderly, discovered in a display case an extra rich cake which he disposed of with remarkable

speed and with dire results, but although very ill, he refused to go home.

This change of front was remarkable all over, as on the taking up of the position we had to clear the houses in the district and received our share of abuse and malediction, but on the surrender this was all changed and God and His Blessed Mother's protection was called down on us on all sides, with gifts of rosaries and scapulars - God only knows from where they were got - so that we knew even at that early date our efforts for Ireland's regeneration were bearing fruit, and such of us as went into temporary exile did so with light hearts - "The triumph of failure".

When the garrison was all in Commandant McDonagh instructed me to see that arrangements for its defence were carried out. Finding that the inter-departmental telephone arrangement had been put out of action, I ordered Lieutenant Liam Daly, the officer in charge of "C", II, Signallers, who was an electrician, to put them in order which, after some difficulty, he accomplished. This was done so that the main body could rest in the central position of the premises and could immediately be called to any portion of the building which might be attacked. The advantage of this arrangement was demonstrated when word came from a position overlooking St. Patrick's Park, under the command of Seumas Hughes, that the military were mobilising there. Orders were at once issued to reinforce the position which was consequently done, but unfortunately someone fired without orders, so that our attack was not as complete as it might have been; nevertheless we surprised them with considerable casualties to their forces.

On another occasion it was reported to me that it was possible to see Portobello Bridge from the tower overlooking Camden St. and that a soldier was on sentry on the bridge. I at once proceeded to the tower and, finding the information correct, sent for one of our first-class shots and a Thom's map of Dublin, and, with the assistance of it and a range-finder, which I carried, for the distance and picked off the sentry. Someone would never in this world hear that voice again - perhaps an Irish mother or wife. The following morning the bridge was sandbagged, but owing to the wind having shifted and a stack of chimneys coming in the line of fire, we were prevented from further action.

On another occasion it was reported to me that from a window overlooking the Castle Yard we had fine control of the tower there, the top of which was reached by an external staircase. This tower could be used by the enemy for a machine-gun emplacement. I consequently placed another first-class shot at this window with orders to shoot anyone attempting to use the staircase. Later in the day I again visited this position only to find that the men had left and that the staircase had been covered with canvas by the enemy, making its use possible for them without it being in our power to effectively prevent it. This could have been used with advantage when the attack on the Castle was made on the Monday by the Citizen Army. A rather humorous incident occurred here; a yard at the rere of the building was open to attack owing to an external wooden stairway which gave entrance to the building. The yard had been strewn with the trays from the ovens by order of Commandant Hunter. However, I thought it would be advisable to break down this stairway and so I sent two men to procure sledge hammers.

On their return with them we at once proceeded to destroy this means of entry to our position, but some of the immediate residents, hearing the noise, came to their windows and started a wordy battle, they being of different opinions as to our actions, so that the work had to be stopped, uncompleted, but sufficiently damaged to reduce the danger of its use.

During the height of the attack on the G.P.O. word came from our sentry on the tower that the flag on G.H.Q. had been shot or burned down, and the decision to put up a flag on Jacob's was made. It was then found that through some oversight no flag was available, so the old expedient, necessity, was invoked and a search for some suitable material started. After some time a quantity of bunting was found, some green and some white, but, curious to relate, no orange - (stalemate, but not defeat). A further search brought to hand a bundle of yellow glass cloths, and the work of putting together the flag was commenced. Three men were entrusted with this task: George Ward, who has answered the last call-in; Derry Connell, who is still with us, and myself. On the completion, it was discovered that the rope on the flag-pole had been removed, so that the flag had to be nailed to the pole, needless to say, at the risk of life. Nevertheless, it was accomplished, and, according to a little book by James Stephens, the author, on that memorable week, the flag was still flying long after the general surrender.

Another incident occurred at Seumas Hughes's post. An enemy sniper was giving a considerable amount of annoyance, so it was decided to make an opening in a wall commanding the direction of the annoyance. This being accomplished, a Fianna ^{boy} was posted to the position, but,

being unable to reach the aperture, a box was procured with the assistance of which he had command of the position, but just as he had things in order the Angelus rang out. He vacated his position on top of the box to kneel down, when a shot came in through the opening and ricocheted off the wall behind, thus saving his life.

It was decided on the suggestion of Major McBride that a quantity of empty biscuit tins should be scattered in the vicinity of vulnerable points so as to give warning of any attempt of a night attack by the enemy. This was done with the amazing result that without a sound the previous night every vestige of the time had disappeared.

When the surrender was decided on it fell to my duty to gather the men from the various positions into the main building. In one of the positions I came across a young Volunteer (later Commandant Thomas Burke of 2nd Battalion, Dublin Brigade) leaning on a shotgun and in floods of tears. Feeling that he required some heartening I spoke to him, and, much to my surprise, was turned on with the bitter retort: "I came out to fight, not to surrender".

The garrison being assembled, we formed up in Peter St., marched to Patrick St. and formally surrendered. Having armed and drilled as a military force we held military positions for at least three days and surrendered as an army. We established a claim for recognition when peace was proclaimed. In the last talk I had with Commandant Thomas McDonagh he mentioned that if the present leaders were removed there were up to six to succeed them.

While lying in Richmond Barracks awaiting "God knows what" an amusing incident occurred, if anything can be amusing at such a time. A single Volunteer was brought in under escort and, while awaiting the decision of his disposal, one of his escort who was examining the prisoner's rifle - a Martini Enfield - a weapon which was evidently new to him - the prisoner stepped coolly forward, took the rifle and demonstrated its working to his astonished escort, which proves that soldiers do not make wars, but munition makers and high finance do, the soldiers being made use of.

When the most prominent of the leaders had been picked out for trial the remainder were sent to English Prisons as internees, our temporary domicile being Knutsford Prison. We were the second to arrive there and thus escaped the regulation haircut. On our arrival our predecessors gave us a rousing cheer, thus the first prison regulation was broken.

Having missed the haircut which was more of a pulling than cutting operation, as the small stock of prison clippers were out of order, never being intended for a wholesale order as the present situation called for - however, we still had the bath. This was a stone receptacle, 2½' by 6', ankle deep, half filled with water. I was the lucky fourth. I declined the luxury, but my jailer insisted, it being a regulation. However, I compromised by stripping while stepping in, wetting my hand and wiping it in my hair, thus satisfying the regulation.

We then settled down to routine. For breakfast we had bread, marge, tea and skilly. For dinner, two ounces

potatoes, well-tunnelled by wire worms, some stewed meat and the water in which it was stewed. Then we had one hour's exercise marching round the prison yard at three yards interval, strict silence rigidly enforced but not always successfully. At 4.30 there was tea, marge and bread, and then we were locked in for the night till 6.30 or 7 o'clock next morning. After lock-up each evening some female sympathiser sang Irish songs outside the prison, and to a school a collie came and accompanied the children home with barks and shouts the only sign of life.

After the surrender a few good men who had escaped the firing party, the jails or the interment camp "manned the gap". These were added to from time to time till the general release, when the skeleton again took flesh, and each department resumed its various activities. Amongst others, the musketry class raised its head again.

Starting from scratch as before, with the advantage of previous experience and although under greater difficulties, good headway was made, passing through Company, Battalion and Brigade stages, thus then approaching national status, so that outlying districts could have all the advantages of the scheme. A series of articles on all branches of training were written for "An t-Óglach", the official journal, the musketry articles of which I was the author, being based on the lectures given by me in G.H.Q. These started in 1918 and continued till 1920.

In 1920 a series of lectures was arranged for provisional officers by G.H.Q., six of these to be given by me as the chief musketry instructor. Three of these had already been given when the series was cancelled owing

to increasing enemy activity. Still the work went on although heavily handicapped till mid-1921, when the Truce was arranged.

On my return from Ballykinlar in December, 1920, I was notified of a meeting of the I.R.B. at which the acceptance of the Treaty was put to a show of hands. I voted against its acceptance and this was the last meeting of which I was notified.

/Post-1916.

POST-1916.

On my brother John's release from Frongoch in July 1916, he received instructions from Cathal Brugha to re-organise 'C' company, 2nd Battalion, on a military basis, which up to then had been run as a Sinn Féin club. This, with a class on military engineering, which he conducted, was held in Clonliffe Hall. This hall was also the headquarters of the 2nd Battalion.

The engineering class attained considerable success in both demolitions and construction notwithstanding non-co-operation of the battalion council, till the appointment of an engineer officer by the council when the class faded out. One of the many suggestions of this officer was that the formula for an explosive charge suitable to all circumstances should be worked out.

In the January following my release in December 1916, my brother informed me that instructions had come from Cathal Brugha to reorganise the musketry classes, with a seat on the battalion council. With this object in view I at once started a class in 'C' Company in Tara Hall in Gloucester St. (now Cathal Brugha St.) followed immediately by battalion classes in Clonliffe Hall, Clonliffe Road. I also attended several battalion council meetings - incidentally having several I.R.B. members on it - but owing to its "mark time" policy and my increasing duties, having taken over my uncle's business (who had died shortly after the insurrection) I ceased attending the meetings. Another of my activities was the re-organising of a dramatic class which was in production before the Rising and which was the seed of the Irish Dramatic Union.

With the revival of the national spirit it was felt a definite urge should be given to young play-writers by a dramatic scheme giving encouragement especially as there was a definite indication of a return to the heroic period of the Fianna for inspiration and also as a weapon against the de-nationalising influence of the cinema then becoming a menace.

When forming the brigade class in 41 Parnell Square it was found necessary to find a substitute for the service rifle that was in use pre 1916. This difficulty was overcome by making a butt of rough deal with a gun-barrel fore-end slotted for a bolt which could be assembled for instructional purposes, also a set of British army charts, all of which could be contained in a short umbrella case for convenient transport. About this time Wm. Maher and myself were working on a silencer for the service rifle but after a number of experiments Wm. Maher was transferred to munitions and the trials ceased.

With equipment it was decided to resume the brigade musketry class in Parnell Square - I think No. 41. With the increase of enemy vigilance these classes were held in battalion areas. During the course of these classes an incident occurred. The man in charge of the guard on the premises reported soldiers in the district. He feared a raid and suggested withdrawing his men. I told him to report to his superior as I had no authority to dismiss the guard, but instructed him to place a man outside my door and another at the halldoor with instructions that if anything materialised to signal to the man on the landing who would join the class and the man on the door would get away, I having already appointed a Gaedilge teacher to take over the class for Irish if the raid developed. Later, it was discovered that the guard had been withdrawn notwithstanding that a Council meeting was being held, which, I afterwards discovered, but did not know at the time.

1918 and the conscription menace arrived, with instructions to prepare a leaflet on musketry for incoming recruits. Having prepared the draft and presented it to the council, a discussion took place on an old theme. (This pamphlet is in the 1916 collection. I have arranged that a copy be made and inserted here). The training of instructors in musketry and its tactical uses for country districts - during which I asked one of the council to demonstrate the pencil method of distance judging;

A member took a pencil and held it point upwards. I then asked him what happened when the pencil was shortened by paring, but none had any solution to offer, thus proving the necessity for practical instructors. I also suggested that recruits should not be detailed to companies till qualified.

It was also decided to prepare a series of articles for the official journal "An tOglach". These articles were handed in to M.W. O'Reilly, who had an insurance office at the corner of O'Connell Street and Bachelors Walk. On the appearance of the second article I raised the point of the non-appearance of the diagram and some inaccuracies in the script. When handing in one of the series M.W. O'Reilly asked me would I go to the country to hold classes. Consenting, I said it would have to be weekends as I had my business to attend to which, incidentally, had grown from one man in 1917 to three men and two women in 1920. When bringing in my next article he told me that the country scheme was off.

March 1919. About this time John (my brother) informed me that the battalion was to be mobilised for a ceremonial reception to de Valera at Mount St. I advised him to prepare for all eventualities and that I would come with him on the parade as I was sure there would be trouble with the British. However, saner counsels prevailed and the mobilisation was called off.

A course of instructions on all branches of military organisation for senior officers was decided on, at which Sean Treacy, Dan Breen and Commandant Tom Byrne amongst others attended, with Michael J. Lynch in charge of the course for which I received orders to prepare six lectures.

During the course of the third lecture a discussion occurred in reference to the "Ashtown" ambush between 'Boer' Byrne who had practical experience in the Boer War, and myself in reference to an alternative method of attack, in which the station and the lane leading to the main road would be covered by rifle fire

from rising ground inside the Phoenix Park. This discussion gave some uneasiness to the officer in charge - Michael J. Lynch - afterwards in charge of the Dublin Brigade. I do not know whether this incident had anything to do with the premature cancelling of the series.

All this time constructive work was becoming more difficult and movement without supervision became impossible. I got another order and, as it proved, a final one, to re-write my articles with additions for small arms for publication in book form.

In August-September 1920, I received orders through Brigadier Dick McKee to re-write my articles on musketry, adding instruction on the Colt and Smith and Wesson .45 revolvers. After submitting script of lectures to headquarters staff for approval and buying the necessary text books for the additions (and incidentally one of the textbooks contained a typewritten slip containing a threat to the police inserted by the C. na m. which I put in my pocket-book and which was later used by the military in my subsequent courtmartial in Aldboro Barracks), I took the whole lot in an attaché case to Killiney, where I was then camping with my brother, with the intention of proceeding with the work. On that night or the following morning the military raided the shore camp but somehow missed ours which was in the railway courtyard. Next day Dick McKee called to me for my script, again saying that Dick Mulcahy required to see it. I brought it in from Killiney and handed it over to Brigadier McKee, retaining the first page. The following morning, about 5 o'clock, the military again raided and this time picked on our camp in the courtyard. On hearing them I threw the attache case containing the material for the proposed brochure into a bank of nettles at the back of the tent, but this was apparently noticed by two soldiers posted on the railway line, who reported it to the officer in charge, who recovered it, brought it into the tent and asked who owned it.

On admitting ownership they continued the search of the camp. On returning when finished he told me to dress and prepare to come with them which, needless to say, I did. I was then ordered to get on back of a lorry containing bundles of hay and was taken to a Bray outpost. There I was handed over to an escort of soldiers in charge of an officer in a jeep and went careering over the mountains with the muzzle of a rifle stuck up against my stomach. The officer offered me his muffler, which I declined, but asked permission to smoke. Having passed round cigarettes, the soldier put his rifle between his knees and the journey proceeded on a more friendly basis.

On arrival at Enniskerry Police Barracks some little time before dinner hour, the police sergeant asked me would I like to see the cells and as anything was welcome to vary the monotony and as the curse of my disposition is that of an obliging nature, I consented. On looking into one of them he asked me would I like to go inside. On my complying he promptly locked me in, releasing me about an hour later when dinner was over, and I could return to the dayroom with safety. My thought naturally turned to a hungry man's solace - reading. Asking one of the constables if there were any books available, I was informed that there were none, and an attempt on my part to carry on a conversation on the only possible subject they seemed to know - barrack routine - evidently aroused their suspicion, with the result that they got in communication with the military, who came just about tea time, thus saving the depot two meals. I was removed through the Castle to Sháp St. barracks, where after an interview by Black and Tans I was placed in a cell off the military detention room, where I was fixed up for the night.

Two incident worth recording occurred here. First, the sergeant of the guard with the inevitable Irish wife came in to see me and, on asking was I one of the Sinn Féiners who were cutting off the girls' hair - one of our alleged atrocities - informed me that he had a wife in England whom he could not bring

over here. I told him that she was safer here than over there and that our fight would be his fight as soon as he returned to civilian life - the right to live in his own country, as we wished to live in ours. This apparently so impressed him that he got me a cup of tea and some biscuits, the first food I had since my arrest. The following morning I got a breakfast of liver and bacon, a mug of tea and some bread, which the orderly informed me was the sergeant's own breakfast. Having partaken of some of this repast I was again visited by the sergeant. I took the opportunity of thanking him for his hospitality and regretted depriving him of his meal which he said he would not have touched in any case having had a bad night (Saturday). Regretting that I could not accompany him, I asked him if he would have a drink at my expense, which he declined, returning my money, stating that he could get more than he wanted for nothing. He then left saying he would send the orderly with a towel and soap if I wished for a wash which, needless to say, I availed myself of, not alone because it was Sunday but also that I felt the need of it badly.

Now for the second and less pleasant incident. Off the guardroom was the detention room and off that again a cell from which for some reason or other the lock had been removed. I was taken through the outer room in which there were some five or six drunk defaulters and placed in the inner cell in which was a mattress and the usual blanket. Later, after some commotion in the guardroom, a rather noisy drunk was added to their number, on whose entry a council of war was held in an undertone, which put me on my guard, so, closing the door and placing the mattress against it, I lay down to await developments. Some time later the door was tried but, not opening to their pressure, they knocked and asked if I was awake. Needless to say, I did not answer. Another council was held, the import of which I could not catch; Another attempt to force the door and later the abandonment of the project, but, needless to say,

no sleep for me. The following morning, when availing myself of the sergeant's offer of a wash, my intended guests of the previous night, with their ring leader, the smallest Lancer (which I was informed he was) I ever saw, were in the washhouse. One of them remarked that I would have been a tough job, evidently their intentions were not of the friendly kind. After my return to the cell I was called into the guardroom and handed over to an officer and an armed escort, getting my first drive in an armoured car to Mountjoy, which gives the material for another episode.

On being officially handed over I was placed in one of the basement cells. Understanding that there was a hunger strike in sympathy with Terence McSwiney, then dying in Brixton, I did not touch food till removed to the portion of the jail set aside for the untried prisoners. A rather humorous incident of official bungling occurred just then which released a wanted man in mistake, and the job of the prisoners' commandant was thrust on me, much against my will. Two prisoners named Burke were in the section - one the stepfather of Liam Cosgrave, also a prisoner, and another (the prisoners' commandant) a man using the name Burke as a disguise. The first was removed to hospital a couple of days after I arrived and had been there only one day when an order came for his release. After 'lights out' the warder, whose duty it was to carry out the job, came to the landing and he opened the first door that had the name Burke on it, releasing the wrong man, thus getting me promotion and the innocent invalid nine months on a trumped-up charge. It was proposed that as senior officer I should assume responsibility, suggesting that they would tell me what to do. On pressure, I accepted, informing them that I, not they, would do the ordering.

Having started a hunger strike which did not materialise, my next move was to get a better class of food which

immediately started officialdom's fall back on a correspondence with the War Office and, for me, innumerable interviews with the Governor and medical officer in reference to the insufficiency and unsuitability of the food. Having already ordered the men to stop all food parcels from outside. One item of the menu - suet pudding (a concoction similar to dumplings, but more indigestible) constituted our dinner on two days a week and met with especial disfavour. Of this I was, however, promised immediate removal. On returning from one of the interviews with the Governor I found, however, that the promise had not been kept, so I passed the word round that nobody should touch their dinner, but put it aside and I would explain the reason at exercise after dinner hour. When the calls were opened and the necessary formalities gone through, I then had to face a hungry and angry command, but on the explanation of the plan of campaign to them, with that national adaptability they saw the humour of this operation, which was that all men should report sick and attend the doctor next morning, each bringing down and leaving on the medical officer's desk his portion of ferro-concrete (the name under which the suet pudding masqueraded) and refuse to take it back. The following morning as per routine the sick parade took place, and each man brought his complaint and donation. After the third man had come before the medical officer, he evidently suspected a trick and asked the warder in charge how many men were outside and, on being informed, came out and told them that the matter would be set right. The result was that at morning exercise the warder in charge informed me that a half-pint of milk had been substituted and asked me would I like it hot or cold, and as it would give extra trouble it was decided on the hot milk, and so the incident closed.

Another agitation at the time was prayers for the soul of Terence McSwiney, who was then dying of hunger strike in Brixton; these the prison chaplain refused to say as he held that

he was a suicide and consequently outside the Church. So we asked him to say them after Mass and on his non-compliance we decided to say them ourselves. Our plan of campaign was, when the Mass was over and the priest had left the altar, one of our fellow prisoners, previously arranged, should start the rosary and under no circumstances leave the chapel till we had it finished. Immediately after the priest had left, the prayers were started, and this was so successfully carried out that not alone the untried prisoners but the convicts who occupied the other side of the chapel, took part, along with the warders who, apparently, did not realise that a prison rule was being broken. The result of this manoeuvre was virtual mutiny amongst the convicts that night and several nights following till the manoeuvre was accomplished.

One of the convicts, a venerable old man nicknamed "St. Joseph" made balls of hair and canvas and threw them into our ring where we had liberty of action and where we usually kicked ball. I asked the warder what was his offence. He told me breaking Todd Burns' windows, which he did as soon as released, coming back each time to work at mattress making; thus the State provided him with a roof and food which his age denied him outside.

In the course of a week or so I was notified of my preliminary trial and was handed a summary of my charge and a day or so later was taken down to a room in the prison and brought before an officer who went through the form of taking evidence. It was then discovered that the two soldiers who were the principal witnesses had been sent away on a draft, and the case looked like falling through, but after some discussion I was sent back pending the arrival of a special service officer who arrived next day. I was again brought down and two soldiers who had apparently been coached in the meanwhile were produced, their evidence being incorrect in many points. I was asked did I wish

to cross-examine, which privilege I declined. I was then sent back to await my courtmartial which took place a week later in Marlboro Barracks, the main charge there being based on the aforesaid slip - a copy of the I.R.A. organisation and the first page of my articles on musketry - these and a number of army textbooks being in the attache case. On being charged with the lot being in the case and advancing to the table, I separated the slip and I.R.A. Constitution from the books and admitted the attache case and books. Incidentally, there were two officers on the raiding party - a regular and a secret service officer, the regular officer being on the courtmartial. On the question being put to him re contents of attache case he replied: "to the best of my belief". The question was again put to him, with the order for a "yes or no" answer. His reply was a repetition of his previous answer. The court adjourned, evidently for the attendance of the special service officer who was on the raid, but for some reason this officer was not called in evidence and I was again called before the court. When the President was striking out the count regarding slip, also the count regarding I.R.A. Constitution, he asked me if I was satisfied and, on my replying that the decision was for him and not for me, I was then discharged under escort at the barrack gate. An incident in connection with this is worth recording. These slips had been placed in military textbooks by Cumann na mBan and came into my possession when I purchased some books. They were in a black case in my coat which was hanging on the tent pole when the raid took place. When I was passing out from the courtmartial room after the first portion of the charge, the accusing officer mentioned that fact to two other officers in my hearing, adding that he came to Ireland as an officer, not as a policeman, this attitude of his saving me from a sentence. On my release, on the return of my script, I decided to proceed with the work, but circumstances forced me to relinquish my plan and I had to put the script in safe keeping; consequently, when 'Ginger' O'Connell called to get them again I was not in a position to hand them over.

History was by then pretty fast in the making; the attempted arrest of Treacy and Dan Breen, in which Breen was wounded and taken to the Mater Hospital was the cause of a meeting in the Republican Stores in Talbot St. at which Treacy was arranging a rescue party, the shop having all the appearance of preparing for a siege. Word was sent to my place to call round, but on my going it was discovered that it was my brother who was required. On his coming in to dinner I informed him of the matter and he at once went round. It transpired that Peadar Clancy required the addresses of the 'C', 2nd Battalion Active Service Unit squad to help in the release of Dan Breen from the Mater Hospital. Meanwhile, the neighbourhood was becoming alive with government agents, evidently some of the demobbed bantam regiment, to be followed at dusk by the attack on the Republican Stores and the shooting of Treacy. Another incident of note was Terence McSwiney's death, Kevin Barry's capture and execution; then Bloody Sunday and the murder of McKee and Clancy, followed by the general round-up.

One night after the family had retired for the night we heard the military in the street, and on going to the window saw their lorries holding up our section of the street in a house-to-house search, but for some unknown reason a whistle was blown and they moved to another sector higher up. Sitting round the fire later, my brothers and I were discussing the Killiney affair, when it was remembered that a green puttee had been thrown in a basement apartment, so we decided to destroy it fearing the return of the military. Imagine my surprise on going to get it to find a heavy parcel containing revolvers and ammunition which had been taken away for safety when I was arrested previously and which had been put in the apartment by the person who had taken them for safety, without my knowledge. Then a period of intense excitement started by dividing the parcel into smaller packets and secreting them in the flue of an old disused chimney, behind some ivy in the garden, and in underground passages. Then about 3 o'clock in the morning we went to bed.

Next day I had to collect them again, and under cover of goods being taken by a vest maker and machinist, they were taken to another house in the city outside the area that was being combed, and with some sense of security we waited the next night's happenings. We decided to stay sitting by the fire instead of going 'on the run' especially as my brother John (company officer in the I.R.A.) was after undergoing an operation and also wished to be available in the event of company requirements. However, a little after curfew, the raiding party again turned up, this time including our house. There was a period of suspense and then banging at the front door with rifle butts. On admission, we were ordered to put up our hands and the usual formalities were carried out. I suggested to the officer in charge that if he would permit me I would conduct him through the house and open any shut doors to facilitate their search. His consenting, more restraint was put on the soldiers, and after the initial damage no further destruction to property was done. On these raids there usually was a regular officer in charge of the party. On another secret service officer and a couple of D.M.P. having thoroughly searched the house, and satisfying themselves that there was nothing incriminating there, the irregular officer asked me to sign a paper, stating that nothing was taken or no damage done, and assured my people that we would not be taken away. On going into the hall, however, and apparently after some conversation with the D.M.P. men, they returned and ordered us to accompany them. We were placed in the wagon and the house-to-house search proceeded, additional prisoners being picked up as we went. On our journey to the North Dublin Union, our destination, I was able to dispose of an order I had on my person, but owing to circumstances was not able to get rid of, by tearing this note into small pieces and dropping the pieces out of the back of the lorry as it proceeded to our destination; thus the last shred of material evidence was destroyed.

Arriving at our destination somewhere about midnight, we met

some old friends and a few acquaintances, among them the man introduced to my musketry class in Dawson Street before 1916 by Commandant McDonagh as a man who might be useful as he stated he had attended the Hyde School of Musketry (which I rather doubted). Later on meeting the Commandant and referring to this man, he (the Commandant) said that they did not trust him and said he was to be kept under observation, later events proving this to be correct. However, here he was again and one of the first to tell me his tale of woe. He had been arrested and charged with being a musketry instructor for the 2nd Battalion, and was expecting to be sent to the Castle for examination, and after McKee's and Clancy's treatment he was afraid of what might happen. He asked my advice as to what he ought to do. I suggested that he should deny all knowledge of the charge, produce his British army papers and claim release. He then asked me if they dealt with me similarly what line would I take up, my answer being that that was another matter, and so closed the conversation. When preparing my bed for the night he moved his from where he was previously to a position next mine, and so another sleepless night for me. The following morning at breakfast two Auxies made their appearance, inquiring about the fresh arrivals and what was known about them. Shortly after my acquaintance of the previous night was taken out for examination, as he stated. Then anyone who wished to have a wash was to be taken out in parties of three under an armed escort. I took my place with the second party, being in the centre. On passing through the outer room I saw the two Auxies and my acquaintance in conversation and as I passed through all three looked at me. There were no more prisoners taken out. My acquaintance then returned. Later, he mentioned to me that they put him through a stiff examination and that he was afraid he was 'for it'. The day wore on, dinner came and went; then tea, and preparations for another night. An officer then came in with a list of transfers to Arbour Hill and, notwithstanding that we were the last in, our names were on it and so to our next destination. There

were three of us in one cell. Next morning we joined the other untried prisoners at recreation, discovering more trouble in the form of a search for possible Mount St. or other 'badly wanted' men. This was to be carried out by a parade past a window. This window was muffed with several spy holes through which the spotters would view the passing parade. Needless to say, this had to be resisted, so Paddy Daly, who had been previously arrested, addressed the men, advising them not to obey the military order, which instructions they promptly obeyed. This caused trouble and Paddy Daly was brought before the Governor so that he could state our case, a promise of being returned given. This promise was not kept, so the fight went on, to be called off later by the military as they were unable to force the parade. Meanwhile, my brother and I were getting anxious about John (the company officer) as the operation to his face required attention, and his appearance was anything but reassuring especially as nothing was being done by the prison medical officer.

The arrival of some of our companions from the North Dublin Union put us in possession of what happened after we had left. The Auxie returned about midnight looking for somebody who was not the battalion musketry instructor, as he came over later in another batch none the worse for his alleged examination and as thirsty for information as ever. A few days/^{later}after lock-up, a soldier came to our cell and took my brothers away and I did not see them again till my return from Ballykinlar in Dec. 1921.

Next morning I was moved to another cell to be shared with another acquaintance who was in possession of some incriminating records with which he apparently did not know what to do, and I again became father confessor. Advising him to destroy them when next at recreation. I tried to get a little sleep, but this was impossible as the record holder kept on worrying about the responsibility of his late company and the danger of the discovery of the documents, which God knows as I did not, how he got them

so far, till morning, and recreation time brought some relief, only to be renewed on lock-up as I discovered that he had not disposed of them, and so a second night worse than the first. Next evening we were paraded in the main hall and two lists were read out - one for release and a second for an unknown destination on which I was included. There was a march to the lorries at about 12 foot intervals under a strong searchlight, with the spotters again at work, and a drive through the deserted city to a gunboat at the North Wall, a sea trip on deck - the longest and coldest I ever experienced - to Belfast Lough where we got a hostile reception. We had a day's wait there, then another drive, handcuffed together and handcuffed in batches, to our temporary home - Ballykinlar. During my trip on the boat I made up my mind to make this internment an opportunity of effecting my oft interrupted efforts to acquire a speaking knowledge of Irish, but fate had decided otherwise for, on arrival, I found that the quartermaster staff was in the hands of a British sergeant and the camp bordering on civil war owing to his mismanagement. So again into harness, first to get rid of the alien influence and then to re-organise the working of the commissariat on an equitable basis, not an easy job by any means, and necessitating, I regret to say, a good deal of worry and trouble from the very people it was my desire to benefit, partly on their part by greed, but to a greater extent through fear and ignorance. This position as prisoners' quartermaster I held through all the camp changes for the thirteen months of our internment, being the last prisoners' officer to hand over to our guards.

One of the first incidents of note during my time of internment was the cooking of our Christmas dinner - a gift of turkeys and hams which were the gift of the Cumann na mBan. The first notice I received was when our camp commandant - Joe McGrath - asked me if I could manage to have them cooked. I replied "accept them and we will find a way". My next move was

an interview with the British Quartermaster and a request for stuffing ingredients for the turkeys, twelve loaves, the rations for twenty-four men, onions, sage, thyme, etc. Smiling, he asked if I knew where I was but made no promise. Two or three days later, when I had signed for the rations, he pointed to a sack in a corner saying "I think that is what you asked for, but you must return the loaves after "christmas". Thanking him I wished him a Happy Christmas.

My next difficulty was someone to dress the turkeys. Approaching a family of poultry merchants, they stated they were prisoners and therefore refused to work. On further inquiry I found a poulterer to do the job. This man remained with the cookhouse staff till the camp break-up and did good work when we got our Friday's herring ration. On meeting this man after the release he told me he had returned to his employment, evidently preferring to live in Ireland and not on it.

I requested the authorities to leave the cookhouse but open on the eve of Christmas, but this was refused, but they offered to allow the staff to stay in the cookhouse if they did not leave it till morning. This I promised to do. Having occasion to return to the hut before lock-up and on returning to the cookhouse, I found that the chief cook at the time had locked me out, consequently I spent the night "on the run" between the huts. This was the prelude to the swelling act:

"The purest stream that ever flowed left mud and weeds behind it".

However, the Christmas dinner was a great success. In proof of this a group of Longford men presented me with an address, unilluminated, and a couple of cigars. Retiring later to the hut I sat between two rolled mattresses, lit my cigar and allowed my mind to drift to the sound of surf on the shingled beach of Killiney, forgetting past troubles and future difficulties.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BURO STAIRS MILITARY 1913-21
I. O. W.S. 734

SIGNED Thos. J. Meldon
(Thos. J. Meldon)

WITNESS J. Kearns Comd't.
(J. Kearns). Comd't.

DATE 18 Sept 52.
18 Sept. 52.

C H A R G E S H E E T

First Charge
Reg. 27
R.O.I.R.

The Accused THOMAS J. MELDON of 45 Lower Gardiner Street, Dublin, a civilian is charged with:-

HAVING IN HIS POSSESSION WITHOUT LAWFUL AUTHORITY OR EXCUSE A DOCUMENT CONTAINING A STATEMENT THE PUBLICATION OF WHICH WOULD BE LIKELY TO PREJUDICE THE ADMINISTRATION OF A POLICE FORCE, THAT IS TO SAY, THE ROYAL IRISH CONSTABULARY, IN CONTRAVENTION OF REGULATION 27 OF THE RESTORATION OF ORDER IN IRELAND REGULATIONS

IN THAT HE

AT KILLINEY in the County of DUBLIN, on the 4th day of SEPTEMBER 1920, HAD IN HIS POSSESSION A DOCUMENT NAMELY A TYPE WRITTEN PAPER CONTAINING THE FOLLOWING PASSAGE:-

"WHY HAVE YOU BEEN GIVEN THIS BOOK?

THAT YOU MAY LEARN TO SHOOT DOWN IRISHMEN AND WOMEN AND CHILDREN.

YOU ARE NOT A POLICEMAN - YOU ARE A HIRED ASSASSIN- A FOOLED TOOL OF ENGLAND WHO WILL CAST YOU ASIDE TO ROT WHEN SHE IS DONE WITH YOU

POOR FOOL

A REVOLVER CANNOT MAKE A MAN OF YOU; THOUGH A MAN'S REVOLVER MAY SEND YOU TO HELL.

IF YOU SET YOURSELF AGAINST THE JUST CAUSE OF THE IRISH PEOPLE YOU MUST TAKE THE CONSEQUENCES AND YOU DESERVE YOUR FATE.

LEAVE THE R.I.C. AND BE A MAN"

2nd CHARGE
Reg. 79
R.O.I.R.

HAVING IN HIS POSSESSION A DOCUMENT PURPORTING TO RELATE TO THE AFFAIRS OF AN UNLAWFUL ASSOCIATION IN CONTRAVENTION OF REGULATION 79 OF THE RESTORATION OF ORDER IN IRELAND

REGULATIONS

IN THAT HE

AT KILLINEY in the County of DUBLIN on the 4th day
of SEPTEMBER 1920, HAD IN HIS POSSESSION A DOCUMENT
ENTITLED "AN INTRODUCTION FOR VOLUNTEER TRAINING"
PURPORTING TO RELATE TO THE AFFAIRS OF THE IRISH
VOLUNTEERS, AN UNLAWFUL ASSOCIATION WITHIN THE
MEANING OF SECTION 7 OF THE CRIMINAL LAW AND
PROCEDURE IRELAND ACT 1887.

L.P. Dorman *Libby* Colonel,
Commanding 2nd Bn. The Worcestershire
Regt.
Place *Dublin*
Date *18 Sept '20*

TO BE TRIED BY DISTRICT COURT MARTIAL

Sgd G.F. Boyd
Major-General,
Commanding Dublin District.

Lr. Castle Yard,
DUBLIN.

Date *20.9.20*

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
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SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE
IN THE CASE OF
THOMAS J. MELDON, Civilian.

First Witness
For Prosecution

Lieut. E.M. RAIKES, 1st Bn. Cheshire Regt.
having been duly sworn states:-

At Enniskerry on the night of
September 3/4, 1920, I was ordered to carry out
a raid on the camp at Killiney.

I and my party consisting of Military
and police arrived there about 5. a.m. I posted
men round the camp. Two being posted on a wall
by the railway overlooking the camp. In consequence
of statements made to me by them I found a despatch
case in some nettles. I opened it and found when
within the pamphlets produced (Exhibits number 1
to 11 inclusive). In consequence of statements
made to me by Pte. ^{Bell Lt.} Thompson and Pte. ^{Trickett} Greenish
I asked the two occupants of a tent who owned
the despatch case. One was the accused Meldon,
the other I do not know. At first both denied
any knowledge of the matter but subsequently the
accused claimed ownership. The accused and the
other man were searched in my presence and also
the tent they occupied. In the tent were found
more pamphlets among which is the one I produce
(Exhibit No. 12) I placed accused under arrest.

The Accused declines to cross examine this witness

Sgd. E.M. RAIKES Lt.
A. Coy. 1/Cheshire Regt.

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*The man who points out
attache case Blackman
despatch case taken away
and returned some time after
by one of the police
how many
when and in whose
presence.
Numbered at preliminary
not searched at all
did not cross till after arrest*

I CERTIFY that the evidence contained in this Summary of Evidence has been taken down by me at His Majesty's Prison, Mountjoy, this 16th day of September 1920, in accordance with the provisions of the Army Act and the Rules of Procedure made thereunder and that the requirements of Rule of Procedure 4. (c) (d) and (e) have been complied with.

Sgd. W.F. NEWBERRY
Captain,

For/ Courts Martial Officer,
H.Q. Dublin District.

Lr. Castle Yard,
DUBLIN.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21
No. W.S. 734



FURTHER SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE IN THE CASE OF
THOMAS MELDON, Civilian.

2nd Witness
For Prosecution

4114345 Pte. THOMPSON J. 1st Bn. Cheshire Regt.
having been duly sworn states:-

*did not look at me
in mounting
How dressed when first
seen.
d.c.b.*

Early on the morning of the 4th of this month I was one of a raiding party at Killiney Camp. I was stationed on railway embankment overlooking the camp and saw the accused whom I now identify here come out of a behl tent in the camp. He had a look round and after returning to the tent came out again carrying something which I saw him place among the nettles just to the right of his tent. He then went back into the tent. I reported this to an officer later and I also identified the man whom I had seen come out of the tent as the same man, that is now present here. I then took the officer to the nettles where I had seen the accused put something. I saw the officer pick up a small leather bag which I think had three initials on it.

The Accused declines to cross-examine this witness

Sgd. No. 4114345
Pte. J. Thompson
1st Cheshire Regt.

3rd Witness
For Prosecution

92326 Pte. GREENISH W. 1st Bn. The Cheshire Regt.
having been duly sworn states:-

On the morning of 4th September about 0600 hours I was on a railway embankment near Killiney camp when I saw the accused now present whom I identify come out of a small marquee in the camp, he stood just outside for two or three minutes and then went back

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into the tent, coming out again almost immediately with a small bag in his hand, which he threw into the nettles just on the right of the tent and he then went back into the tent again. Later I went with the Officer to the spot where I had seen the accused throw the bag and we there found the small bag which I had seen the accused throw there. I did not see the bag opened at any time.

The accused declines to cross examine this witness

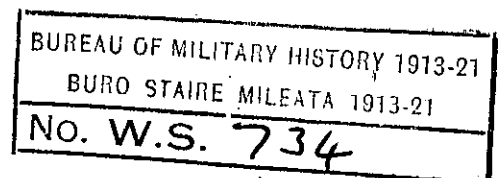
Sgd. Pte. W. GREENISH

The Accused declines to make a statement

I CERTIFY that the evidence contained in this further Summary of Evidence has been taken down by me at His Majesty's Prison, Mountjoy, this 17th day of September 1920, in accordance with the provisions of the Army Act and the Rules of Procedure made thereunder and that the requirements of Rule of Procedure 4. (c) (d) and (e) have been complied with.

Sgd. G.T. BAGGALLAY
Captain,
Asst/ Courts Martial Officer,
H.Q. Dublin District.

Lr. Castle Yard,
DUBLIN.



COURTS-MARTIAL.

THE DETAIL OF OFFICERS AS MENTIONED BELOW WILL ASSEMBLE AT

MARLBORO' BARRACKS

1030

..... DUBLIN AT HOURS ON THE

TWENTYFIRST SEPTEMBER

..... DAY OF 1920 FOR THE PURPOSE OF TRYING

BY DISTRICT COURT-MARTIAL

No. T. J. MELDON, Civilian.

No. PHILIP COLEMAN "

No. RICHARD TAYLOR "

No.

AND SUCH OTHER ACCUSED AS MAY BE BROUGHT BEFORE THEM.

P R E S I D E N T.

Major (Bt.Lt.Col.) W.J. WOODCOCK D.S.O, 1/Lancs.Fusiliers.

M E M B E R S.

Captain B.E.Floyd M.C. R.G.A.

A Subaltern 15th Hussars

THE OFFICER COMMANDING 15th The King's Hussars WILL PROVIDE

THE NECESSARY STATIONERY AND ACCOMMODATION AND DETAIL AN

ORDERLY TO THE COURT.

THE PROCEEDINGS WILL BE FORWARDED TO HEADQUARTERS, DUBLIN DISTRICT

~~THE OFFICER COMMANDING~~

~~AND~~ WILL EACH DETAIL A

~~SUBALTERN FOR INSTRUCTION.~~

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