ORIGINAL

ROINN COSANTA.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 739

Witness

Felix O'Doherty,
15 Shamrock Terrace,
Blarney,
Co. Cork.

Identity.

Member of Blarney Company Irish Vol's. 1913 - ;

Captain same Company, 1917 - .

Subject.

(a) National activities, Blarney, Co. Cork, 1911-1921;

(b) His views on the Rising of Easter Week, 1916.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil

File No. S.1396

Form B.S.M. 2

ORIGINAL

RECOLLECTIONS

BY

FELIX O'DOHERTY,
15, SHAMROCK TERRACE, BLARNEY, CO. CORK.
'B' (BLARNEY) COMPANY, 6TH BATTALION,
CORK 1 BRIGADE.

Early in the Summer of 1911 I was attracted by an advertisement which appeared in the Cork "Evening Echo". It was to the effect that anyone who desired to form a branch (Sluagh) of Na Fianna Eireann, Irish National Boy Scouts, could get all particulars if they called at An Dún, 19, Queen Street, Cork, on any Monday, Wednesday or Friday, between 8 p.m. and 10 p.m. Many of us, boys, had often discussed, amongst ourselves, the Boy Scout movement. However, the troops of Scouts that, from time to time, camped near our village, Blarney, did not appeal to us. There was something about the khaki shirt and hat that bore close resemblance to the Army of occupation. We knew, also, that the founder of these khaki clad scouts, Sir Robert Baden Powell, had fought against the Boers in the South African War.

Now, here at last was something that would appeal to an Irish boy, here was the opportunity he had been waiting for.

As I read the advertisement over and over, my young heart bounded with joy. Here was good news for my pals. They, too, were overjoyed when I told them. On the following evening, Wednesday, having obtained the fare from my Mother, I set off by train to the City. I had not much difficulty in finding the place - 19, Queen Street - for over the

entrance in large letters were the words An Dún. Being of a mild disposition I felt rather shy now that I had reached the entrance. I could hear the boyish voices singing "A Nation Once Again" upstairs. For a short time I stood in the little hallway or corridor that lead to the stairs. Then I heard heavy footsteps descending and I stood my ground. On looking up a man came into view. He was sturdy in build, with a moustache, gray cap and blue serge suit. He smiled as he came towards me. "Do you want to see somebody ?" he said in a pleasant voice. "Yes", I replied, "I am anxious to form a branch of the Fianna in my district". "Oh!", he explaimed, "Come with me". I followed him up the stairs and was introduced to Tomás MacCurtain, Seán O'Sullivan and Paddy Corkery. The man whom I met in the hallway and who introduced me was Martin Donovan, a man who took a prominent part in the fight for freedom. They are all departed this life: May they rest in peace. They were all very pleased with my visit and they introduced me to the Officers of the City Sluagh - C. Moynihan and W. O'Callaghan. Seán O'Sullivan wrote down my name and address and gave me some literature. They also told me that as the Sluagh had arranged to march to Clash on the following Sunday they would, therefore, march to Blarney on the Sunday week. Our boys were to travel to meet them. All the boys of the city Sluagh had uniform and equipment.

Having got the desired particulars in connection with the organisation and the assurance that the city Sluagh would march out to us on the Sunday week, I left An Dún well

satisfied with the evening's work. I did not sleep much that night, only thinking would morning ever come so that I could tell the joyful news to my pals. When the news did get around we were able to count on at least thirty-five boys anxious to join.

Then the great day came when we went to meet the City Fianna. How pleased we were when we saw the boys making the fires to cook their meals and how attentive we were to the explanations given to us by the Officers.

The uniform consisted of a green hat, with thin strap, bound with very thin brown leather and turned up at the left side; green tunic shirt and dark blue shorts. Equipment - Leather Belt, Haversack, Water-Bottle with sling, Mess-Tin, Knife and Fork, Whistle. Training - Irish History and Irish language and the support of home manufacture; Scouting; Signalling; Squad, Section and Company Drill; First Aid; Physical Drill; Marching; Topography; Map Reading, etc. The badge was designed thus - A sunburst through which was a croppy pike surrounded with the inscription in Irish "Remember Limerick and the treachery of the English". On joining, each boy made and signed a declaration "To work for the Independence of Ireland, never to join any of England's armed forces and to obey his superior officers".

Our first day with the Cork City Fianna was very beneficial as we saw a lot of practical work and got much information concerning uniform, equipment, etc. The officers were elected by the boys and in most cases this was uninamous.

Of course, any organisation that had for its object the independence of Ireland did not find favour with the British Government. The Fianna was no exception. The names of those who were prominent were carefully preserved in the local police barrack for future reference. Thus it was that anyone who was prominent in building these organisations stood a very poor chance if he fell into the hands of the enemy in the years that followed.

It did not take very long to equip the local Sluagh and there was a fine turn out for the procession in Cork City to commemorate the Manchester Martyrs in November, 1912. After the oration at the National Monument a conference was held at the Dún, 19, Queen Street, Cork. Those present were : Countess Markieviecz, Tomás MacCurtain, Bulmar Hobson, Seán O'Sullivan, Paddy Corkery, Martin Donovan, and the officers of the City and Blarney Fianna. The most important matter discussed was arms for the older boys and rifle practice. At this time the Officers of the Blarney Sluagh carried side arms, French Army sword bayonets. The City Sluagh got them also later. The R.I.C. eyed them suspiciously. The meeting was very enthusiastic and I can well remember the smile of satisfaction on Tomás MacCurtain's face during the discussion. I have often wondered, in view of this discussion and of what Liam Mellowes told me a few years later, would there have been a rising even if the Volunteers had not been formed.

As the months went by, the boys advanced in military matters and were gradually being moulded into a young Republican Army. An Irish-American, Gibbins by name, who had

served in the American Army, also helped.

During the Summer much field work was carried out.

On one occasion, at Ballincollig, the boys were preparing a meal after field exercises on what appeared to be a bit of waste ground. Suddenly, out from some trees that screened the place, came a man on horseback with hunting-crop and riding boots. He was typical of the tyrants of the land war days. "Who gave you permission to camp here ?" he said in a stern voice. Tomás MacCurtain, Bob Langford and Donal O'Callaghan, who were present, answered in the native tongue. It could easily be seen that he was hostile to everything Irish and the fact of being spoken to in the Irish Language was not in favour of a peaceful settlement. He threatened to call the police. This only brought more retorts in Irish, to our great delight. He was one of those who expected people to bow before him. He could not understand his orders being disobeyed, he, a Justice of the Peace. He did not know that a new spirit had been born and that the Irish nation had awakened from its slumber. Eventually, giving one anxious look around, he turned his horse and rode away.

About a month later, when camped near Blarney, we had a visit from two policemen who inspected our Camp, looking for arms, I suppose.

At that time little did we think that the man who took such a deep interest in the boys, their training and general welfare, would one day become Lord Mayor of Cork and die a martyr's death for Ireland. I had the honour of being a very close friend of his and he never failed to call on me

when some little thing was to be done. I think he knew the pleasure it gave me to serve him and on that account he asked me to do things. Of all his good qualities I took particular notice of one, and that was punctuality.

I remember one evening in the Summer of 1912, Seán O'Sullivan told me that I was to meet Tomás on the following Saturday evening at 8 o'clock. The appointment was to be at a certain cross-roads about two miles from the city. As I drew near the cross on the particular evening I glanced at my gun-metal watch. It was a few minutes short of 8 o'clock. At that moment Tomás arrived, accompanied by Paddy Corkery. I noticed that Tomás carried a square parcel. As was his usual way, he got to business. "These", he said, "are anti-recruiting posters. Put them up to-night around your district". Then he handed me the parcel. "We", he continued, "will put them up in the city to-night and the same will be done throughout the country. It's a National anti-recruiting drive". After a short discussion we parted. I was anxious to get home to open the parcel. When I did the first words that caught my eye were: "War, War, War" in heavy black type and then "England, Germany and Ireland". Then in smaller type - That the English army occupied our country, holding us in bondage, that a war with Germany was at hand, that the English Government would do its utmost to get Irishmen t o fight against the Germans with whom Ireland had no quarrel. Then followed an appeal to Irishmen not to join the British Army. That night my mother made some paste and, with my father's help, we put them up all over the place.

The posters caused a little sensation next day (Sunday). It was laughable to hear some of the Redmondites remark that such posters would spoil our chance of Home Rule. However, most of the people read them with interest. Late that evening an R.I.C. man read one of them and immediately returned to the barracks. Then they came forth to remove the offending posters. But the paste was good and it took them some time to remove them from the smooth walls, etc. They had no evidence but they must have had their suspicions. We took reprisals later by taking the recruiting notices from outside the barrack and throwing them into the river some distance away.

It is strange to say that some of our own Irish people were more hostile than the enemy. The slavish mind dominated them. It is easy to know who is right or who is wrong in Irish political life, because these slavish persons do not change, they are still hostile to national aspirations. These persons, supported by a few from whom you would expect better, did their best to place obstacles in the way of the Fianna and later the Volunteers.

At this period the paper "Irish Freedom" was a tower of strength to the cause of freedom. So as to increase circulation of this valuable journal, I put up posters in the district and distributed specimen copies. I remember some of the posters had the words "Be ready for the Word". This was my duty as an Irishman. It did not require thanks. Nevertheless, that noble-hearted man, Seán MacDermott, wrote to me and thanked me most sincerely for the work I was doing.

One night in the Autumn of 1913 a few of us sat in An Dún, Queen Street, discussing the possibility of joining the American National Guard for the purpose of getting trained.

Then came the great night in December, 1913, when the Meeting to form the Volunteers in Cork was held in the City Hall. On the platform that night were: Tomás MacCurtain, Roger Casement, J.J. Walsh, Martin Donovan, Seán O'Sullivan, Eoin MacNeill, M. O'Quill and, of course, the Fianna. In all my life I never saw a man so happy as Tomás was that night. As some of us, including Mick O'Shea and John Callanan, were signing the enrolment form before the Meeting in a room at the back, he came to us with a smile and said: "Recruiting already, Seán".

Just before the meeting opened someone was inclined to interrupt from the gallery. He was approached by Bob Langford while M. O'Quill shouted from the platform - "Throw him out, Riobaird". In spite of the fact that the Redmondites tried to upset the meeting, it was a great success.

Some weeks later, Michael O'Shea and myself attended a second meeting at An Dún, 19, Queen Street, Cork, on a Sunday at one o'clock. After this meeting we told J.J. Walsh, who presided, that we were anxious to form a Volunteer Company in our village. He said that on a later date the City Volunteers would march out and a meeting would be held in our district. A few Sundays later the City Volunteers marched out to Blarney where a meeting was held in the Square and was addressed by J.J. Walsh, Liam de Roiste and Simon Mahony, T.C. During the previous week, Seán O'Sullivan gave

me a number of enrolment forms and these I distributed. A meeting was held on the following Sunday in the Club Room, about a mile from the village. A Committee was elected and I was appointed Company Adjutant. About fifty had signed the forms: an instructor was appointed and parades were held.

At this time I was serving my apprenticeship at a Chemist's in Cork city. After work I had ample opportunity to see the City Volunteers training at the Cornmarket each evening under Instructors Goodwin, Donovan and Lane. About this time a National collection for the Defence of Ireland Fund was held. For this collection I was ordered to see the local P.P. (Canon Higgins, later Dean of Cloyne) to obtain permission to collect at the Church gates. On my way to his house I met him on the road and told him of the collection and the required permission. "What is the object of the Volunteers ?", he asked. "Well, Canon", I replied, "it's to drive the British out of Ireland". "Wouldn't it be great if we could do it", said he, "by all means hold the collection". He was one of the greatest Irishmen I had the honour of meeting. After the Rising of Easter Week, 1916, he called at our house, as he had seen my brother Liam's name on the paper as having been deported to Stafford Detention Barracks. He also said that "Sir Roger Casement is a great Irishman, but I suppose the English will hang him". Yes, Canon Higgins was one of those grand types who never change.

The collection was carried out and realised a good sum. Drilling, marching, etc., and physical culture took up much of the men's time in the evenings. And thus the months went by until that great day in July, 1914, when the guns were landed

at Howth. I give here a letter received from my brother on the day following (Monday) the landing :-

"I know you will be interested in to-day's doings. We marched to Howth - 9 miles from Dublin - and you can imagine our surprise when we got orders to "Double" across the Pier and there we found a cargo of rifles. You would think the fellows would go mad. They started wringing each other's hands and shouting - they were wild with delight. We marched home, every man with a rifle - about 1,500 in all - and we were told not to give them up to anybody, except the Provisional Committee. On our way back we were cheered on all sides. A priest - standing bareheaded on a tram-car - with tears in his eyes - shouted "Go on, now, I have given you an old man's blessing". Half-way back we were joined by a lot of R.I.C. and D.M.P. Peelers. At Clontarf our way was barred by the Scottish Borderers - a regiment of soldiers stationed here. I was about half-way in the Corps, so I did not see what happened in front, but we kept marching on. Suddenly, there was a wild stampede. We were forced back as the line of the Volunteers had given way. There was nobody to lead - Kettle was missing and the Commanders couldn't give instructions because they didn't know what to do. Thenshots rent the air - I believe they were only blank cartridges - but that served to frighten some of the men who fled in every direction. You will be delighted to hear that the only people who behaved splendidly were the Boy Scouts who were with us. One young fellow half-way up

a lamp-post shouted "Give me a rifle and I'll do for the whole of them". They behaved like heroes and stood their ground. Then one of the foremost Volunteers threw up his hands and shouted "I'm killed". His face was working like anything - he must be in great pain - he got a bayonet through the body. We were standing like fools at the back and although they had plenty ammunition they wouldn't give it out. In five minutes we would have shot or routed every soldier on the road. I heard the Peelers absolutely refused to do duty. In any case they stood lazily by the side and didn't move at any time. The great mistake was in the fact that no Commander had power to give orders. All the Officers were in Dublin holding a consultation with the Authorities A Volunteer named O'Doherty from the North of Ireland - he is in our Company - broke away and nearly killed a soldier with the butt end of his rifle. Another Volunteer had a revolver which he used mercilessly, unless he is a very bad shot he must have done some damage. It was a pity they didn't give us the ammunition as we would have given the soldiers and Dublin Castle a lesson they would never forget. In any case the majority of the rifles are safe. I must now say goodbye. Between running with the rifle and getting it into safe hands and walking, I have done about thirty miles to-day. About six Companies of us ran for about two hours through the fields, with our rifles, after doing eighteen miles walking. I tell you I'm tired now but I know you would be anxious to hear about to-day".

Some time after this I received a letter from The O'Rahilly (killed in action, Dublin, 1916) that rifles could be had from H.Q. at £1 each. At a meeting of our Company Committee held in the Reading Room (a local Hall) I strongly urged that we get the rifles but the Committee decided to buy equipment - haversacks, belts, etc., after which I resigned as Adjutant.

I was in Dublin on a visit to my brother when the war broke out in 1914. The day after England declared war on Germany I called to see Liam Mellows (taken out and shot while a prisoner in 1922) at his house, Mount Shannon Road. After some delay his brother answered my knock. I gave my name and said that I was anxious to see his brother, Liam, before I left Dublin. He showed me into a room. After a little further delay in came Liam and we shook hands. He apologised for the delay but he said that he was out most of the previous night getting stuff in and was not sure who the visitor might be In the course of the discussion he told me that plans had been made for the taking over of certain buildings, etc., in Dublin. This led me to the conclusion that things were more advanced than we anticipated. It was he who gave me my first lesson in the use of an automatic pistol .38.

He was anxious that I should see the Dublin Fianna on parade, but as I was to leave for the South early on the following morning this was not possible. As we shook hands on parting he said "Call for me in the morning and I will go to the station with you". I did not call him, however, as

the hour was early and I didn't wish to disturb him. Sometimes, when I look back on those days, my heart sinks in sorrow for those great men, no longer with us, and whom we were privileged to know.

The outbreak of the European War in 1914 made many changes. The Home Rule Bill, the fight for small nations, poor little Belgium, German cruelty, etc., fooled many. I would say that from the outbreak of War to the Rising of 1916 the national spirit had fallen very low. All the Irish members of the British Parliament had become recruiting officers for the British Army. However, there was that small band of patriotic men and women who rightly said that if Irishmen were to fight it would be in Ireland and for Ireland. In an effort to poison the minds of the people the British called them Pro-Germans and referred to German gold. Almost every day during lunch hour a recruiting meeting was held in Patrick Street. There was sometimes great fun at these meetings because a few of us would gather and interrupt, much to the annoyance of a Captain Phillips, the principal speaker. It was very amusing to see the headings on the newspapers at the time - "Allies still advancing. Germans driven back"; while on the recruiting posters you had the picture of a German soldier about to enter a cottage and the words - "It will be too late to fight when the enemy is at your door".

Eventually, matters came to a head and many of the leaders of the Volunteers broke away from the pro-British element and formed the Irish Volunteers. Up to this they

were known as the Irish National Volunteers. All those who believed in Ireland first, last and all the time, joined the Irish Volunteers. Our Company decided by a four to one majority to serve under the New Provisional Government.

For a time everything went well until the Company Officers advised at a meeting to disband the Company. They said that this was due to pressure from their employers. Bob Dooling is the only one whose name I remember. He was the Company Captain. I could not attend this meeting, which was held at 8 o'clock in the Club Room about a mile from the village. I could not get away from the business in time. The Company was disbanded. However, I made arrangements with T. MacCurtain and Seán O'Sullivan, with the result that several of us attended at the Volunteer Hall, Sheares Street, Cork, for training. The late Paddy Healy and Pat Higgins were our Instructors.

In the Summer of 1915 a big parade was held in Limerick. I walked into Cork City early that morning with rifle and equipment. I had Mass at Sunday's Well Church and then fell in with the Cork City Corps outside Sheares Street Hall. We then marched to the station to entrain for Limerick. John Callanan and Paddy O'Leary joined the train at Blarney, in Fianna uniform.

After the parade in Limerick we were ordered to hand up our rifles at H.Q. until the time came for our return. We walked around the city for some time, seeing historical places, etc., until we were ordered, by a Volunteer patrol, back to H.Q. On handing in our numbers we got back our rifles and were ordered to fall-in. All men with revolvers

were picked out. At that time I was lucky to have a Smith & Wesson revolver and twenty-five rounds. Our arms were inspected and I asked Seán O'Sullivan what was wrong. He told me that trouble was expected on the way to the station. An attempt was made by some people to attack us and some stones were thrown but nothing serious occurred. At that time, in Limerick, as elsewhere, there was a strong pro-British element; people who have been fooled by their M.Ps and by British propaganda. Those were the people who were very hostile to the Volunteers. In their ignorance of Irish History and blinded by the plausible talk of the Imperialists they could not understand why men should be loyal to Ireland.

However, the situation in Limerick that day was very dangerous. If we were seriously attacked by this pro-British mob it could be used as an excuse by Crown Forces to intervene so that the Volunteers would be bound to defend themselves and their arms.

One day in the Autumn of 1915, Seán O'Sullivan told me that I was to be at Blarney Railway Station on the following Sunday night, at 9 o'clock, where I would meet Tomás MacCurtain. When I arrived at the station that Sunday night, Tomás was walking up and down outside the station, his hands grasped behind him. When he saw me his face brightened up and as he clasped my outstretched hand he said "Good man". As we walked up and down he explained "There is a train due from Dublin in a little over an hour. Terry, who is travelling on it, will alight here with some 'stuff'. We will put it into this", indicating a pony and tub trap, "and drive to your house. You are to hold the 'stuff' until

you hear from me". How well I remember that night. When the train arrived Terry MacSwiney alighted and the 'stuff' was passed out, a large leathern case, with double handles, and a large square parcel. The case was very heavy and Tomas and I carried it from the platform while Terry carried the square parcel. The parcel was very conspicuous because it was wrapped in white paper. It was a rather bright night. Having deposited the case and parcel in the trap, Tomás and Terry got in, while I walked at the side. Tomás asked, as we proceeded slowly down the road, "What about the automatics ?" and Terry replied that there was some delay. Little did I imagine that night that my two companions would become Lord Mayors and Martyrs, whose names would be spoken and honoured throughout the world. When the 'stuff' was safely lodged in the house, the two drove away in the direction of the city. After they had gone I had a very uneasy feeling for the safety of the 'stuff'. Supposing some ill-disposed person had seen us, someone with imperial tendencies. Then there was the fact that at the local police barrack we were listed as hostile to the Crown. However, everything worked out well. Early in the following week I got word from Tomás that on the following Friday night a cart would be just outside the village at 8 o'clock on the Cork side. I was to have the 'stuff' at the spot. As there were Devotions at the local Church very few people were about. The man whom I asked to come and help didn't turn up so with my father's aid, with some difficulty, we got to the spot. Within two minutes the cart arrived. On it were: Con Delaney (later shot by Crown Forces, with his brother Jer. at their home (Dublin Hill), and Bob

Langford. In a few seconds the 'stuff' was put aboard and off they went.

At that time I was attached to the Cork City Corps and formed a link with the country. All despatches to and from Brigade Headquarters were sent by hand. There was a perfect line of communication. On receiving a despatch, the time, date and condition were usually entered in the dispatch book. This little book was passed along the line and back again. By this means it was possible to find where a delay or damage occurred.

In my opinion, the Volunteers were far better trained than the soldiers of the British Army. The reason for this was that the Volunteer Officer had a very good knowledge of military matters in general - Squad, Section, Company Drill, Military Engineering, Signalling - Morse and Semaphore; Explosives; Army - Rifles, Revolvers, Automatics, refilling of cartridges, making of bombs and many other things. Although every effort was made to get arms, still there was a great shortage.

It was a sad sight at this time to see, almost every evening, young men leaving the Cork Station, recruits for the British Army. One evening, while walking down the subway that led to the platform where the train was drawn up, I drew level with a young man who seemed to be in great trouble. "What's wrong ?" I asked. "I am from Co. Limerick" he replied, "I came to Cork yesterday on business. Having some time on hands I took more drink than was good for me.

When I came to my senses I found myself in the hands of the recruiting Sergeant. I had been trapped". We got into the same compartment and the Officer, with ribbons on the side of his cap, and who usually saw his dupes off, gave fierce glances at me. When the train moved out of the station I said to the young man: "Forget about the Army and go home to your people and tell them what occurred. Then go to some place where you are not known and keep out of the R.I.C. man's way". He shook my hand and thanked me and promised to do as I advised.

It was a sickening sight in those days for anyone who loved Ireland: the hoardings plastered with recruiting posters - "Your King and Country need you". "Join an Irish Regiment to-day". "Come, boy, and lend a hand". "You can be a rebel and still join in the fight". With the exception of the faithful few - the Irish Volunteers - the country was reeking with Imperialism. The majority were influenced by the crowd: they were too weak-willed to follow the dictates of their conscience.

One night the Volunteers held a parade in Cork to counter the British recruiting drive. A very fine parade it was; as far as I can remember every man had a rifle. The Corps left the Headquarters, Sheares Street, at 8 o'clock and marched into Patrick Stree t, up to Patrick's Bridge, wheeled and marched past the recruiting office. Later that night the windows were smashed and some recruiting officers came in for a rough handling. From about this time matters began to liven up. Training and arming went on and on St. Patrick's Day, 1916, big parades were held throughout

the country. There was a fine turn out in Cork. Some of the Companies were armed with croppy pikes. Many of the loyal element and the newspapers were surprised at the strength of the Sinn Fein Volunteers, as they called them. That day there was a rumour that an attempt would be made by the British Military to disarm the Volunteers. Precautionary measures were, however, taken so that if the attempt had been made it would be rather costly. On the same day a photo was taken of the Officers of the City Corps; in the centre of the group was Seán MacDermott. At this time I had a rifle, presented to me by my brother Liam, but I had no ammunition. A few weeks before the Easter Rising I told Tomás MacCurtain how I was situated. He told me to see C. O'Gorman and to get what I required. Some days later I met him outside St. Augustine's Church in Washington Street (at that time George's Street). On telling him what Tomás said about the ammunition: "Yes", he replied, "and by all accounts we will want it soon".

Before Easter, also, I received a number of despatches from Pat Higgins for various off icers in the county. I remember one was for Thomas Kent, Castlelyons. These were, of course, sent by hand. My sister, Ellie, was very helpful. Many of us Volunteers were not aware that anything serious was afoot. Personally, I didn't know of the parade of the Cork Volunteers until about 8 o'clock on Easter Saturday night. I was walking home from business when I met the late A. O'Keeffe about a mile from Blarney village. He had a bicycle. He told me of the parade and I said that "I suppose it was for a week-end training camp". I well remember the

evening because I had in my hand a book, bought that day, "The Sword Hand of Napoleon".

My brother, Liam, was home from Dublin for the week-end. We had heard of the car going into the sea on the Kerry coast. Of course, if there had been a general rising it would have been easy to link up. There seemed to be a lot of confusion and a lack of a proper system of mobilisation and at a time when every man counted. On Easter Sunday evening, four of us, old Fianna boys, John Callanan, Dom Lehane, Mick Burns and myself, went for a walk. Mick Burns said that on the previous day (Saturday) a City Volunteer told his sister that the Volunteers were told to go to Confession. This was the main topic of conversation during our walk. On Easter Monday evening, about 6.30, a signalman of the G.S. & W. Railway, who had come off duty, told me that something serious had happened up country. Shortly afterwards a man came from the city (E. O'Shea) and told me that there was a rising in Dublin and that all British soldiers had been recalled to Barracks in Cork. As I went homewards to tell the news, I met an Engineering student (M. O'Leary) and on telling him the news he asked if there were any explosives about, because, as he said, we could blow up the railway bridges between Cork and Blarney. Unfortunately, there was not one ounce of 'stuff' in the place. This student had never been a Volunteer but he was prepared to help in every way.

Next, I called in at home and told them of the rising. My brother, Liam, who was reading "The Sword Hand

of Napoleon", jumped up excitedly and said "Who told you ?". Then, with my two sisters, he went to the local Railway Station to enquire about trains, etc. In the meantime everything seemed to be normal and there was no activity on the part of the local police. When my brother returned from the station he said that the Stationmaster told him that there may be a train from Dublin on the following day. Let me here pay a tribute to my brother. From what I knew of him, what I saw of him, and from what I heard said of him, a more loyal, straightforward and manly person it would be difficult to find. He was a member of the Dublin Brigade of the Irish Volunteers: they were in action and he was determined to get to Dublin to take his part in the fight.

On the following morning I walked into the city to business and met Bob Langford. He told me that there was "nothing doing" so far but in the event of any important development he promised to send me word. All that morning I could give but little attention to business. My thoughts were with the men in Dublin. Were they standing alone ? Had other parts of the country risen ? What was wrong in Cork ? These were the questions I was asking myself. Later that morning my brother called to bid me good-bye. He was bound for Dublin in the only train that was attempting the journey. Before we parted he asked if Cork were going to make a move and I told him how matters stood as far as I knew. He did succeed in getting to Dublin, where he got to his lodgings, wrote a letter addressed to his mother and gave it to his landlady to be posted in the event of his death. Then, having taken his bearings, he succeeded in joining the garrison in the Four Courts under Commandant Ned Daly.

At lunch time the same day, Tuesday, I decided to see Jack Scanlon, an Officer in the City Volunteers. Again, I met Bob Langford and we walked up Princes Street and I told him that I was going to see Hack Scanlon. We parted, he entering O'Donovan & McCarthy's shop. I went through Patrick Street and near Blair's (Chemists) I met Christy O'Gorman (Officer in the City Corps). On telling him my object, he replied "Good" and continued: "tell him that I will see him at the Hall to-night". When I met Scanlon I immediately mentioned the big railway bridge between Blarney and Cork, that it was too late for action in the City, but that arms could be removed to the country, Courtbrack, for example, where a stand could be made, and when the rest of Munster heard that Cork were "out" they would also take action. "Yes"; he answered, "the rifles could be sent out in milk carts. I will place your suggestions before the meeting to-night". "Time is flying", I said as we parted. It is necessary to add here, judging from what was said afterwards, that during the week every officer and man I met were most enthusiastic. The only hope lay in the removal of the arms to the country and starting a guerilla war. To attempt to rise in Cork and hold the city would be foolish and would only invite disaster, if for no other reason than the fact that stocks of ammunition were very low.

Thus a week of agony passed. Yes, agony it was, because here were we standing idle while our comrades were being surrounded in Dublin.

I think it would be well at this point to review the position, to see what the chances of success were if the

whole country had risen. Many at that time condemned the rising, some because they regarded themselves as the "King's Irish", others because they thought there was not a chance of success. To give an example of the "King's Irish": I was in a tram-car one evening in Cork during Easter Week. Two men seated opposite me were discussing the news in the evening paper. "Yes", said one, "Casement was one of those captured on the Kerry coast". "Ah!", the other replied, "I would pull the rope to hang him". I gave him a look that checked further conversation in that line. Indeed, it was a week of agony for many of us, but there was worse to come in the weeks that followed.

For the benefit of those who do not know the position, perhaps the following short account will be of interest. It will help to prove that the chances were greatly in favour of success had the whole country risen. The leaders knew that good generalship is based on common-sense, so they planned and acted accordingly. Towards the end of that glorious week, Commandant General Pearse, in a message to the Nation, wrote: "I am satisfied that we should have accomplished more, that we should have accomplished the task of enthroning, as well as proclaiming, the Irish Republic as a Sovereign State had our arrangements for a simultaneous rising of the whole country, with a combined plan as sound as the Dublin plan has proved to be, been allowed to go through on Easter Sunday".

Let us examine then the evidence from a military point of view and see what were the chances of success.

On the outbreak of war in 1914, the British Expeditionary Force was sent to France. This force included almost all the available trained men of the British Army. The major ity of these troops were either killed, wounded or prisoners, so that in 1916 the English Government was dependent on an army of recruits trained mostly for trench warfare. At that particular time England was in great danger. At any moment, a break through by the German Army was expected. Men were so urgently needed that partially trained troops were being sent to the front.

At the Commission of Inquiry set up by the English Government after the Rising, Lord Wimborne stated that artillery was very badly needed at the front and that Lord Kitchener was surprised to hear that there were 18pounders in Ireland. He (Lord Wimborne) further stated that when he applied for a division of troops to be sent to Ireland, the reply of the War Office was that if troops were sent it would involve a delay of a fortnight in sending troops to the front. Major General Friend, G.O.C. the British troops in Ireland, stated: "I had to balance between the requirements in England, knowing they were pretty much in need of troops, or do the best I could with what troops I had". It will be seen, therefore, that the British were not in a position to deal with a general rising in Ireland.

The Irish Volunteers were a well-trained force and would have given a good account of themselves in the guerilla warfare that would undoubtedly have developed had the whole

country been up in arms.

Major Price, of the British Military Headquarters in Ireland, stated: "As to the Irish Volunteers, the work of organisation was very complete, and they had their members well trained. They practised rifle-shooting and drill and had Officers' training schools". All this goes to prove that the British dreaded a general rising. No large body of enemy troops could have concentrated at a particular point, as railways, bridges, roads and all means of communication would have been cut. In these circumstances, it would be very difficult for enemy troops to move, as they were bound to run into an ambush.

The Volunteers were well placed for such warfare. They were spread over the whole country; each Company was recruited locally; they knew every feature of their districts and every movement of the enemy would be known to them. Again, thousands of young men would have come forward to aid. For example, in one area the Volunteers numbered four hundred, but six hundred turned out, to show their readiness had the Rising been widespread. One Police Inspector (Gelston), giving evidence at the Inquiry after the Rising, stated: "My own opinion is that if they had had a Rising in Clare there would have been a great many more than four hundred - there would probably have been three times that number".

The unarmed sections could be used for trenching roads, destroying bridges, railways, etc., scouting, and these sections would be gradually armed. For instance, take

the fight at Ashbourne, where a Company of Volunteers attacked fifty armed R.I.C. and forced them to surrender, the Volunteers taking possession of their rifles.

Then take the effect abroad, particularly in America. Mr. Birrell, speaking in the House of Commons, said: "We were very anxious indeed, during these last few days, that news should not reach the neutral countries, particularly America".

There is no doubt that if there had been a simultaneous rising of the whole country, the chances of success were strongly in favour of the Volunteers. Dublin would not have been isolated as British troops would not be free to come from Belfast, Curragh, Athlone and Cork to surround the gallant band in Dublin.

As the week came to a close the usual proclamations were posted up, demanding the handing up of all arms, etc., and warning persons of the penalties if they failed to do so. None were handed up in the Blarney area, however. When I came home from business one evening I found that the police had paid us a visit during the day. I will never forget that period and especially the agony of the days that followed the rising. One felt ashamed to be free, to be walking around while comrades were dying and being thrown into prison for the old cause. Yes; they were awful days for anyone with an Irish heart. News of events in Dublin were lacking - only censored reports came through. But when the first news appeared in the morning papers - oh! what a shock, what a cruel blow to each of us who thought as they

thought, who saw as they saw: "Three signatories of the notice proclaiming the Irish Republic, P.H. Pearse, T. MacDonagh and T.J. Clarke, have been tried by Field General Courtmartial and sentenced to death; the sentence having been duly confirmed, the three above-mentioned men were shot this morning". As these cruel notices appeared morning after morning, with lists of those imprisoned and deported, the Irish people at last understood. The men now being shot were the flower of the Nation. They had taken up arms to free their country, and England, loudest in its cry for the freedom of small nations, was now shooting down those who stood out for the freedom of a small nation. The mask was off and England stood there convicted by her own treachery. But oh! what a change. The Irish Nation was now on its feet and stood facing its enemy.

Many of us still had our rifles and revolvers and this in itself gave some satisfaction. Our hearts were sore at the lost opportunity as we felt that freedom could be won in a short time, with little cost, and that such a great opportunity would never come again.

I may record here that I had the honour of being acquainted with many of the Volunteer Officers and men throughout the country at the time. As in Dublin, they were men of noble character, great men with pure souls, worthy to serve a pure and holy cause. After the Rising, I received from Dublin a typed copy of a letter written by Thomas MacDonagh to his wife before his execution. With the object of having it published in the "Cork Free Press" I

called into the office of that paper to see Tadgh Barry (later shot by a British soldier while interned), who was on the staff. When I gave him the letter, and having read it, he said "This is great". I still have the cutting from the "Free Press". He then led me to a room in which was seated a tall, military looking man, with, I think, a small dark moustache. Tadgh introduced me as 'one of the boys', but I didn't catch the name of our friend and I didn't like to ask. When Tadgh was gone to see about the publication of the letter, the tall man remarked, after a little discussion, "In Dublin we had every man worth his salt worked into the movement". This man was a grand type and I would indeed be glad to have known his name. Although I met Tadgh many times after, it never occurred to me to ask who he was.

On one occasion Tadgh told me of the following incident:- "When he was a boy he walked into Blarney on a Sunday morning with a pal. On passing the Church they went in to say a prayer. Tadgh, who was leading, had just entered when he received a box on the ear which almost sent him to the floor. On looking upward he saw the local P.P. standing over him. It was Canon Lynch, and as there was a class for Catechism every Sunday morning for boys and girls attending the local schools, he thought Tadgh was a local boy late for the class. Of course, the Canon apologised for his hasty action. Canon Lynch was a good Irishman", he concluded. Tadgh was able to see the humorous side of a situation.

Shortly after Easter Week the Volunteers began to reform, but drilling, etc., was for the time being more or less private. This went on for some time until Headquarters ordered a general parade, with equipment, in each area.

At the beginning of 1917 I was elected Captain of the Blarney Company, Frank Busteed was 1st Lieutenant and Dan Dooling, son of the original Company Captain, was 2nd Lieutenant. The Blarney Company, that I had the honour of commanding, marched to Ahadillane on the day appointed. Every man on the Company roll turned out, some 25 to 30. Not only was this general parade a blow at the British Government but it also tested the men. Each man knew that it could have meant a long term of imprisonment but no one wavered. From that day forward the Volunteers settled down to drilling, arming, etc. Nothing of importance occurred until 1918 when the British Government threatened to conscript the young men of Ireland. About this time something over a hundred men joined the Company. Most of these men hadn't even an elementary knowledge of drill or things military. In a little over a month, however, I would back them against any Company in Ireland, or elsewhere for that matter. They were like all Irishmen, quick to learn - Company drill, engineering, scouting, signalling, field work, attack and defence, etc. During this time we had a practice mobilisation at one o'clock in the morning. It was very successful. Many of the men brought rations, as the most of them thought that they were going on active

service. At this time, also, Tomás MacCurtain told me to get croppy pikes made as they would be useful in the hands of determined men. We got some made and had them ready if required. An order came from Headquarters that Officers were not to sleep at home. This was a precaution in case the enemy would make a swoop and arrest the Officers. Indeed, this was a very busy time, and, as I was whole-time, there was little time for rest. Books I found very useful at this time were: "Handbook for Company Officers", "Field Service Pocket Book", "Night Operations" and "Military Engineering". At this time, also, I attended an Officers' Class where, amongst other things, we were taught how to make bombs out of empty tins, broken metal and a stick of gelignite. What a pleasure it was in those days to do things voluntarily and sometimes I feel sad when I see the people of the present day who will do nothing except for personal gain.

I must here pay tribute to my dear parents who supported me during all those years, who entertained, at all hours, men passing through the area, etc., and who helped in so many ways, in ways I will not now mention. They bore their burden without complaint. May they rest in peace.

About 8 o'clock one evening in June, 1918, a man jumped from his bicycle as I was leaving my home: "Could you tell me where O'Dohertys are living ?", he asked. "That is my name", I replied, "perhaps you have a message". "I know your face", he said, "but I wasn't sure". He gave me three despatches; one for the Brigade, one for Cumann na mBan and one for Mr. Osborne. These were from Tomás MacCurtain and were urgent. I was to bring replies to him who, at the

time, was staying at a house far out in the country. In a few minutes I was on my way to the city and as I knew all the Officers of the City Volunteers this was of great assistance to me. The despatches delivered, I had to wait for replies. A meeting of the Staff was held and I was handed the reply and also one from the Cumann na mBhan. The lady was rather doubtful: "Are you sure that you will see Tomás ?", she asked. "Yes", I replied sharply as I walked from the room. In the hallway I met Jack Scanlon as the lady hurried after me and gave me the dispatch. On the following morning I was on the road at 7 o'clock and as I drew near my destination I saw my friend (McCarthy),who had brought the despatches the previous evening, leading a horse. Together we walked to a house on a little hill. A woman appeared at the door as we approached. McCarthy introduced me and I was invited inside. After a little delay Tomás MacCurtain entered, followed by Pat Higgins. Both of them greeted me cordially and Tomás complimented me on the speedy delivery. I also delivered a verbal message given me by Paddy Corkery to the effect that poor Bill Horan was very ill and not expected to recover. Tomás pressed me to remain and have something to eat but I told him that Denis Murray (Courtbrack) was to meet me in Blarney at 11.30 that morning. When I met him he told me to scout around and keep an eye on the local police while they were carting a quantity of petrol to Courtbrack.

On that particular day I overheard one of the local policemen (Curran) say to the local Postmaster that at a meeting held the previous day it was decided, in the event of Conscription being enforced, that each Constable was to leave

his barrack and go home. I knew from the tone of his voice and his glances that the statement was for my ears also. However, I wasn't interested as I knew that these men were prepared to shoot us down in their loyalty to their imperial masters.

On the following Sunday, a Battalion Council Meeting was held at 6 o'clock in the evening in a field near Firmount. Tomás MacCurtain presided. At this meeting each Officer was ordered to get a pocket book with carbon so that an entry could be made and receipt given for any goods, etc., required. Each Company Captain was told to be ready when the order came to cut roads, railways, bridges, capture the police barrack in his area and to see that all intoxicating liquor be destroyed except a little for medical purposes. Before the meeting ended Tomás told me to leave one road open from the city to Donoughmore until I got orders to close it. He also told me to select a suitable house in the Company district as Brigade Headquarters. He was very pleased some days later when I gave him a map of the Company area with breadth, depth and other particulars of rivers, bridges and roads. Also particulars of the food supply, the amount of flour and petrol stored and the plan I had in mind for the capture of the local barrack. The garrison consisted of a Sergeant and four men, all armed with rifles and revolvers. Our Company arms consisted of one Howth rifle, three revolvers, some shot-guns, a number of croppy pikes and three bayonets. Of course, in the event of action, we would have at least twenty more shot-guns, with cartridges. We had called on each person who had a gun in the area and told them to keep any arms in a safe

place so that the enemy couldn't get them.

As regards the barrack, it was my intention to adopt one of two plans, according to the time the order came for action. One was, if the order came at day-time, that three of us, armed with revolvers, would walk into the barrack and hold up the police while some more men, armed with shot-guns, would follow up. The three for the attack were to be - Frank Busteed, Jim O'Leary and myself. The second plan was at night to cover both front and rear doors of the barrack with shot-guns and to place obstacles at each. Then to smash some of the slates on the roof on the Courthouse side; to call on the police to surrender, and, if they refused, to set the roof on fire by means of rounds of cotton waste soaked in petrol or oil. Although I was only a Company Captain I felt the responsibility greatly. I slept little at the time as there was so much to do, so much to think of. For example, one night I had just retired to bed in the house of a friend when, a little after midnight, a despatch came from the Brigade O.C. for the Battalion O.C.; I was soon on the road heading out into the country. But, in spite of the inconvenience, if I may use the word, there was a pleasure in doing things. Yes, they were great times.

I remember at one Battalion Council Meeting, at which Tomás presided, one of the Officers said he heard so and so. Tomás asked for the source of the information and the Officer said "such a person told it to another person and that person told it to his sister and she told it to me". Tomás gave a sharp look at him: "Nonsense", he said, then speaking in Irish he continued: "A woman said to me that a woman said to her". He was not in the best of humour that night so each

of us got our share of what was going.

At this time I noticed a great change in him. When I first met him and during those early years he was more boyish in his ways, more disposed to laugh and talk with us and take part in our discussions. Now he wore that stern look, spoke sharply and appeared to be more distant in manner. This, of course, was necessary if discipline was to be maintained.

As the fear of Conscription began to wane, the Company was reduced to thirty and when the war came to an end towards the close of 1918 it was further reduced to twenty-five men. However, we kept going with our parades in the fields at night and I must say that they were good men. Amongst them were - Frank Busteed, Dan Buckley, Ned Walsh, Jack McAuliffe. Frank Busteed, who at that time held the rank of 1st Lieutenant, didn't know what fear meant, and could be depended on to carry out an order, no matter what the risk. Even in the early days I had a high opinion of him as a soldier, and in the fight that followed he proved himself to be a fearless soldier.

Early in 1919 we decided to raid a certain farmhouse in the district for arms. We carried out the raid at 11.45 a.m. on a Sunday. We got no arms but it helped to prepare the men for the future. After this raid a few of us got a visit from the police, who asked us to account for our movements between 11 o'clock and 12 noon. Of course, we were dumb and they returned to the barrack somewhat bewildered.

One evening Tomás MacCurtain arrived at our house on a bicycle from the city. "Take charge of this bicycle", he said to me, "and to-morrow take it into my house; now, you must escort me to the railway station". We walked the mile to the station and he told me that he was going to Dublin on important business and he was not sure of the date of his return. As he shook my hand, I thought that he had a sad expression. Having seen him board the train I returned. On the following day I went to the city with the bicycle. Arriving outside the store in Thomas Davis Street where Tomás carried on business, and where he was later shot dead by a police gang in the dead of night, I left the bicycle outside and entered. Mrs. MacCurtain was inside the counter, while a tall broad-shouldered man in a grey suit and gray cap stood talking to her. He moved a little to one side as I entered. I kept back, however, as I could see, as it were, the letters R.I.C. written all over him. He held a little meal or something in his hand as if sampling it. I remember he said something about being related to Tomás. Mrs. MacCurtain smiled after which he left. "That man is an R.I.C. Sergeant", she said, "he is trying to find out where Tomás is gone". Having put the bicycle inside, I walked home. About a week later Tomás returned and called at our house about 8 o'clock one evening. He had got off the train at Blarney Station and was anxious that I should accompany him to the city. As there was a Company parade that evening, I was not at home, so my two sisters escorted him to the city.

At this time the spirit was not very high in the district so we decided to have a church gate collection in aid of the Prisoners' Dependents' Fund and to defy the police

in every way. It happened thus: We picked two men for each gate. Each man was to stand with a collection box outside each of the three gates and if the police approached they were to ignore them. They were, of course, to resist arrest. I cannot really say what happened at the other gates, but when a Sergeant and Constable approached us - Frank Busteed and myself - the Sergeant asked "Where is your permit ?" We acted as if he hadn't spoken. "Give me your name and address", he said, addressing me. No reply. Then he asked my companion, with the same result. "Come", he continued, "if you don't give your names and addresses we will arrest you". Both of us laughed. They got somewhat wild at this and were inclined to lay hands on us but we didn't shrink. The Sergeant looked around him but as the third Constable (Dwyer), who was standing some distance away, didn't move, they walked away, the Sergeant saying "This is trouble". A few weeks later each of us got a summons to appear before the local Court and answer charges under "Defence of the Realm". Of course, none of us attended the Court. Result - 40/- fine, or, in default, one month in prison. We decided to disappoint them when they came for us.

It was in August, 1919, that we did a very foolish thing. As we did not like to disturb people, we prepared a bed in the open field. We placed some sheaves of corn on the ground as a mattress and with two blankets covering us, although the night was cold, we slowly fell asleep. I awoke about 5 o'clock and found the outer blanket wet from the heavy dew, as was my face and hair. My comrades were still asleep and as I looked on the row of faces, very white in the

morning light, I thought were it not for the breathing I could have been looking on the faces of the dead. For some minutes I lay there considering the position. I made up my mind that, in future, we would sleep under a roof; that sleeping in the open was courting trouble; that in any case we would have to seek shelter if rain came. Even for the one night sleeping out of doors, one man spent weeks in hospital. We obtained sleeping quarters at the houses of friends for some time, until one day a young lady sent a message that she wished to see me that evening at 8 o'clock at a certain spot. When I met her she told me that in a certain house where she was, there were arms, maps, etc. She also said that she would leave the back door open on the following night and that we should, on leaving, damage the lock to make it appear like a forced entrance. The raid, we arranged, would be carried out at 12 o'clock midnight. She was a great girl and if she should happen to read these lines I trust she will accept our very deep appreciation of an act that was a credit to herself and her country. We were there at the appointed time and everything worked out as arranged. We got two revolvers, one automatic pistol, some military maps and a little instrument in connection with range-finding. As we crossed a road on our way back we saw a light moving along the road about two hundred yards away. We heard afterwards that it was police going to the house of the man who had gone to hospital. We went on our way through the fields and as it was then about 1.30 in the morning and as we did not wish to disturb people at that hour we decided to chance it and sleep at home. Frank Busteed decided to sleep at J. McAuliffe's house as he didn't

wish to disturb his mother. I got to bed without disturbing the house and went to sleep immediately.

I was awakened about 2.30 by a loud knocking at the door, and a voice calling to open the door in the King's name. As I got out of bed I heard my father and sister answer defiantly. When I had dressed and descended the stairs I found several policemen in the kitchen. I was in a very bad humour and shouted "No" when asked by the Sergeant if I would pay the fine. In a short time I was ready and walked between them to the local barrack where I was placed in the lock-up. While they were taking me to the barrack my sister ran to McAuliffe's house to give the alarm so that Frank Busteed and J. McAuliffe just got away. Within a short time three others were brought in - Dan Buckley, John Callanan and Paddy O'Leary. At 10 o'clock that morning a lorry arrived from Ballincollig with several armed police and we were conveyed to Cork Gaol. We sang National songs all the way. As we finished "Who fears to speak of 98", a young fair-haired constable, whom I noticed giving rather sympathetic glances at us, asked the Sergeant, "Have you a warrant for their arrest ?". The answer I did not hear but the constable muttered his disgust.

We were placed in separate cells on arrival and later we got a sample of prison diet. This, for my part anyway, was left untouched. I was very tired and in spite of the plank bed I lay down to rest at about 7.30 that evening and slept soundly 'til 8 o'clock the following morning. Later the prison doctor came and examined us and shortly afterwards we were out at exercise. We were just talking to a fellow

prisoner, O'Mahony from Tralee, when a voice hailed me from the window of a ground floor cell. As I drew near I saw it was Fred Murray who, at the time, was awaiting trial in connection with a shooting incident in which police were involved. Having exchanged a few complimentary remarks he told me that there was a strike on, that several men were in another wing in solitary confinement and he hoped we would join them. "We certainly will", I replied, so Fred said to tell the warder that we wished to join the men on strike and that would fix it. When we told the warder he said he would convey our message. A few minutes later the Chief Warder came to us, saying, "I understand some of you are too hot in your blood, so come with me". We were led away to another wing up to the top floor and placed in separate cells. Those of us on strike were not allowed newspapers, cigarettes, exercise, letters or visits. We were locked in our cells all the time except half an hour for Mass on Sundays. In spite of all, Our O.C., M. Crowe, passed around a few cigarettes and matches. The matches we split in two so that two became four. Each day every cell door would be opened in turn while a convict prisoner cleaned each cell. Then the door was locked again and the next one opened and so on. During one of those visits the warder returned to me while the convict was cleaning up next door. "Do you know such a person"?, he said, giving the name of a man I knew very well . I didn't reply as I wasn't sure of his purpose. "He called to see you", he continued, "and as we are old friends and no visits allowed he gave me these for you". He produced four large packets of cigarettes. I thanked him and he said "If you are caught

with these don't say where you got them". I assured him by saying that I wouldn't be in here if I was that sort. I kept one packet and gave the others to our O.C., M. Crowe, for distribution amongst our comrades.

One day the Chief Warden walked into the cell, saying, "Doherty, any complaints ?". I didn't answer him so he repeated his query. No reply. Turning to the warder who accompanied him, he asked, "Isn't Doherty his name ?". "No", I replied, "my name's O'Doherty". He gave a grunt and left the cell. It is strange but, nevertheless, true that a man deprived of his liberty for any length of time is prepared to take any action to restore it. I have always been rather mild in disposition, but after a week in solitary confinement I was a changed man. At last the day came when we were to be released. For my part, anyway, I was sorry, sorry because we were leaving our comrades - splendid men whom it was an honour to know and difficult to equal. As we were passing the cell of Gearoid O'Sullivan on our way out he called me. Speaking through the gas chamber, that is to say, the place where the gas jet is confined, he asked me to see Tomás MacCurtain and to tell him to get public bodies to pass resolutions against the treatment of prisoners. I assured him that I would do so on the following day.

There was a great demonstration that night to welcome us home, organised by our two comrades, Frank Busteed and Jack McAuliffe. Our plan had worked well: the spirit of the people was at last aroused. But things had been happening while we were away. After we were arrested, Frank Bustee d and Jack McAuliffe were "on the run". One

day as they were standing in the village, two policemen, Dwyer and Quill, approached. As they advanced to arrest them, Frank Busteed drew an automatic pistol and covered them. The two pals then backed away and escaped. A few weeks later they were arrested and conveyed to Cork Gaol. A day or two afterwards I was told that Frank Busteed had been placed in a cell awaiting trial. When I heard this I made up my mind: if Frank Busteed was charged and convicted in connection with the pistol affair, then we would take reprisals in the form of an attack on the local barrack by carrying out the plans as would have been used in the event of conscription. Although not by nature a man who seeks trouble, I was fully determined on this. However, when the time came, the police didn't give the required evidence and the case fell through. In the meantime, Jack McAuliffe was removed with the other prisoners to Mountjoy Prison and took part in the trouble there which forced their release.

As regards the message of Gearoid O'Sullivan to get resolutions passed by public bodies, I went to see Tomás the day after release. Knowing that he detested resolutions, I knew what he would say. Having greeted each other warmly, I told him my errand. "Oh!" he said, "resolutions are of no use whatever but I will do as you ask". After these events the spirit became very strong in the district and there was marked hostility towards things English.

Nothing of importance occurred for some time until a raid for arms was carried out on a house about fifty yards from the barrack. Frank Busteed took charge of the party raiding the house, while I was in charge of the three men - J. O'Leary, P. O'Leary and W. Walsh - who waited outside the

barrack, ready to open fire should the police attempt to leave. A whistle was to be sounded when the raid was over. Let me state here that the three men were as cool as if they were just on ordinary business. During the time we were there a local man came and stood in a very awkward place. I walked over to him and told him to move off; whether he recognised me or not in the dark, or saw the revolver in my hand, in any case he made a hurried exit. In about twenty minutes we heard the whistle and, after waiting a few minutes longer to make sure, we slowly retired to join our comrades. The raid, though fruitless, was a bit of a shock to the enemy, carried out, as it was, at the very doorstep of its agents, the R.I.C.

On the day following this raid it was disgusting to hear a few of the "King's Irish" condemn the raid. These persons were more English than the English themselves, who thought it a great thing to drop the "O" in their names and who accepted the whip of their Imperial masters as a compliment. Several would pass me in the street as if I were something evil, while one went so far as to abuse me in the public street. In fact, a few are still hostile to me. Well, thank God, I have, to the best of my ability, in all my thoughts, words and actions, acted as a Christian and bear no ill-will. I know that I have been slandered, that false complexions have been put on my deeds, etc., that some people seem to delight if they can blacken you in the eyes of others. I regret to have to dwell on such a matter but it is necessary and may, in a small way, help to kill the spirit of jealousy and uncharitableness which seems to grip certain people.

Next of note was the guarding of Dripsey Mills. When Dripsey police barrack had been evacuated the Crown Forces stated that if the barrack was burnt down they would burn Dripsey Mills as a reprisal. At this period Jackie O'Leary was Battalion Commandant and Frank Busteed Vice-Commandant. On the night the barrack was to be burned men from each Company were mobilised for the defence of the Mills should an attempt be made to destroy them. From our Company were selected - Bob Linehan, Dan Buckley and myself. As the distance was great we were driven part of the way by Buck Lee in a pony and trap. Before we left we went to say a prayer for the soul of our late teacher who had died that day. When we left the trap we saw that a car, with bright lights, was stopped outside a public-house some distance away. In case it may be an enemy vehicle we decided that Bob Linehan should scout ahead, leaving his arms with us, and then report back. On his return he said that it was a motor car that was going to Coachford with a Mr. O'Callaghan. We hurried forward and were told that we were very welcome to a lift to Dripsey. The night was dark and as we neared our destination we were halted. We were very lucky that we were not riddled as our men didn't expect us in a car and they thought we were the enemy. We were lucky, also, that it was Frank Busteed was in charge, as an excitable Officer may have fired first and asked questions afterwards. As the barrack was to be burned that night, we immediately took up duty until the following morning. During the day we were billeted in various houses in the vicinity. This went on for several nights but the enemy didn't show up. For a few nights before we withdrew, the three of us were put on outpost duty near Ring's farmhouse.

Next of note was the ambush at Inniscarra. We took up position early that morning on the main road between Ballincollig Military Barracks and Macroom. After we were there some time a lorry of military passed in the Macroom direction but, as preparations were not completed, they were allowed to pass. In the afternoon a man came cycling along the road. As he neared our position (a narrow wall of earth and stone about two and a half feet high was between us and the road) the O.C. shouted "Halt that man". A few of us jumped over the wall and brought him and his bicycle back under cover behind the wall. It seems he was a policeman, in civilian clothes, whom the O.C., J. O'Leary, recognised. I was ordered to move him down to the bank of the Lee which flowed about thirty feet below us. "I know what it is", he said, "its an ambush". "We are not here for fun", I replied: "A still tongue shows a wise head". He then spoke of something that was in the papers at the time about a statue that a boy was supposed to see bleeding. Then the scouts reported a lorry of military approaching from the Macroom side. I told the policeman to lie flat. When the lorry had almost reached the centre of our position the command "Heave" rang out and the obstacle that was to block the road was thrown from a position above and at the opposite side to where we were posted. In the meantime, fire had been opened from rifle, shotgun and revolver. They were about seven feet from us when the first shot was fired. The obstacle did not fall as required and the driver, seeing the position, put on speed and went round a bend. Bob Linehan's hat was shot off by a bullet. It was now no time for delay as the Military Barracks at Ballincollig were not far away. I ran down for my prisoner, the policeman, and brought him up to the road

which I found deserted. There I stood, with an automatic in my hand, until the O.C's voice called from the wooded part above "Come on and leave the prisoner go in the Macroom direction". Having rejoined my comrades, we set out across the fields back to our own areas. The members of our Company had two escapes on our way back. As we came to a cross an old man with a donkey and cart told us that two lorries of military had just passed, that they questioned him and were in a bit of a rage. About two miles further on we had to cross a road while military were holding up people a little distance away. We got through safely, however, and arrived home tired and hungry. That night the enemy took reprisals by partly wrecking a public house in the vicinity of the ambush and holding up people and giving them a rough handling.

On one occasion I received an order from the Brigade - that a certain farmer in my area had not complied with an order in connection with export of meat to England. In consequence of this, a number of cattle was to be driven off his lands into the next Battalion area many miles away and they, in turn, were to drive them on deep into a wild part of the country. It was an ideal night for the job, fine and not too dark. Four of us were armed with revolvers. We hadn't much difficulty in getting the cattle from the field to the road, in spite of the fact that we had to drive them over a few obstacles. At 10 o'clock we started on our journey and we arrived back home at 5.30 in the morning. For the last few miles of the return journey we were too tired to speak. I must say that in all my life I never felt more fatigued. At about 11 o'clock that Sunday morning the

police became very active, scouring the country on bicycles. On Monday morning one of the newspapers carried the heading - "Lawless Spirit Rampant" - "Cattle Drive near Blarney".

I was very proud of the Company on such occasions - to mention only a few: Frank Busteed, J. McAuliffe, D. Dooling, D. Buckley and Ned Walsh and later Bob Linehan, Joe Nagle, Pat O'Leary and John O'Leary. If I were asked to name the bravest men ever attached to the Company I would answer Frank Busteed and Joe Murphy.

I may state here that in February, 1920, I resigned my rank as Captain, 'B' Company, 6th Battalion, for two reasons. (1) Because I was not very "tough" by nature, getting colds and coughs and chest trouble very often. A Company Captain had to cycle long distances to Battalion Council meetings, etc., in all kinds of weather. In short, he had to "rough it" a good deal and for this work a "tough" man was necessary. (2) I could foresee that certain necessary things would have to be done, and life taken in certain circumstances, and as some of us had trouble of conscience in such matters, I took the proper course. Frank Busteed then became Captain and I continued in the active service unit. In a short time he became Battalion Vice-Commandant and D. Buckley became Company O.C. Later, when he was arrested, Bob Linehan became Captain.

One night, about 7 o'clock, with Ned Walsh (a man whom I liked very much) we went by bicycle to a certain military town for the purpose of meeting a soldier to buy arms.

The soldier belonged to the Ordnance Corps. We met him in a public house in a room off the bar. There were about twelve soldiers drinking at the bar; as a matter of fact, we two were the only civilians present. Our friend had a revolver and some ammunition for us. He said, "If caught, mum's the word, I wont give you away and I'm sure you wont give me away". We reassured him. He also gave us a mental picture of the interior of the Barracks, the position of the guard room, sentries, etc. He was under the impression that the Barracks could be taken by a number of men in British uniform. We passed on the information. A row started at the bar between two soldiers and our friend went to aid one of them, a pal of his. The situation was rather awkward but peace was restored. We had brought our bikes inside and as the freewheel of my borrowed machine was out of order, our friend got a soldier to fix it. (The bicycle belonged to D. Dooling of our Company). The position was funny to an extent. The night was dark and we got back without incident.

The Blarney Barracks was attacked on the 1st of June, 1920. The charge was laid in the adjoining hotel and the explosion destroyed about half the Barracks and a part of the hotel. The police defended the remaining half. The attack began at 9.45 p.m. and firing went on for some time. Many of our Company were on duty about a mile from the village, where we blocked the roads and then went on outpost duty on the Ballincollig side. The police evacuated next day and our Company burnt the

Barracks and destroyed the Courthouse that night. Frank Busteed had a narrow escape that night. He was cycling through the village, about one hundred yards from the Barracks, when a bullet fired by the police hit the down bar of the front brake and knocked the machine from under him.

One evening as J. O'Connor, a member of our Company, and I were standing in the village street, a stranger passed us going in the direction of the railway station. We followed and questioned him. He was on his way to attend a race meeting on the following day. When we told him to go he thanked us and giving the name of a horse told us to back him next day. The horse won at 5 to 1. On another occasion J. O'Connor, who was employed on the railway, sent word that a detective had got off a Dublin train and was walking towards the village. A girl was with him. Joe Nagle, P. O'Leary (medical student) and I followed and held him up and searched him at Blarney Castle. He was released later, however, as he wasn't hostile to the I.R.A. The girl was from Australia.

On another evening about this period, July, 1920, P. O'Leary and I were bringing an ammunition mould from Rathdull to Blarney in a horse and trap. We had turned from the main Mallow road into a bye road when several lorries passed in the Cork direction.

After raiding our homes many times the military and police gave it up. I expect they knew by then that we wouldn't be "at home". One morning, about 10 o'clock, I was having my breakfast at home after returning from the house in which I was sleeping when a girl rushed in saying "Fly, fly,

the military are surrounding the village". Snatching my coat, I ran into the local mills. I was there about half an hour when I got word that the military had ordered the mills to stop work and had ordered all the workers to the Square in the village. I picked up another man, Buck Lee, and together we went to a part of the mills where we could view the outside. We were watching a sentry pacing up and down when we heard footsteps in the department just behind us. We had only time to rush to a big bag of wool that was near the wall. Lee threw himself flat between the wall and the bag and I threw myself on top of him. My boots were slightly in view but there wasn't time to rectify this. I could see the tops of the rifles and the trench helmets as they passed with one of the Directors.

Denis Horgan and I were going one night to a farm-house about a mile from the village. I had a .38 automatic in my pocket. Out of the darkness, about twenty yards ahead, a cockney voice said, "You want to get a new car", followed by laughter. Then there was the sound of a hammer on metal. We pressed flat against a wall and edged slowly away. When they were gone we went to where they had stopped in the centre of the village and found some bills posted up. By the light of a match we read "that anyone who wished to give information should write to the following address". An address in London was given and I think the name given was "Ross".

The massacre of the poor lads by Tans at Ballycannon shocked every decent minded person. They had come to our house

many times and talked around the fire with my parents and sisters. They usually left their guns outside. On the Sunday morning before they were done to death they had breakfast at our house. The night before a man named Sheehan and a suspected spy had been shot up their way - at Clogheen on the outskirts of Cork City. They said they were going back to Clogheen for a look round. We tried to persuade them not to go, especially after what happened the night before. All our family strongly pleaded with them but it was useless. Their answer was that they would go for a look round and promised to come back that evening and to stay in our area for a time. That was the last we saw of the poor fellows. On the morning of their deaths a sister of one of the murdered boys and another girl called at our house at about 9 o'clock. They said it was rumoured that one or two of the boys had got away wounded and may be lying in the woods near the scene of the tragedy. Two of us, J. O'Connor and I, went immediately to Ballycannon and searched everywhere, only to be sadly disappointed.

Of the seven killed I can only remember five names - William Deasy, Jerh. Mullane, Tommy O'Sullivan Dennehy, and young Crowley. It was in Holy Week, 1921, they were killed. Their resting place on the night was O'Keeffe's farmhouse on the Kerry Pike at Ballycannon. They were taken by surprise by a raiding party of Tans with one regular R.I.C. man as a guide. They were butchered in the house where they were caught unarmed. They had hidden their arms - revolvers - outside. They belonged to one of the City Battalions and used come to the Blarney area at night as being quieter than the northern suburbs.

A Brigade Council meeting was held in the vicinity of Blarney about this time. A few of us were told off to stand guard, with rifles, so that should the enemy come he was to be held back until we were ordered to retire. On one occasion, about this time also, many of us were very lucky. One night all the Company were out trenching roads. About four o'clock in the morning our section were returning to the village. When about a quarter of a mile away we came to a sudden halt as we heard some rifle shots from the direction of the village. We stood for a time on the road listening. Then we advanced cautiously to within a hundred yards to the entrance. Denis Horgan then went a little further ahead scouting. A few more shots rang out and we heard an English voice. We went back and got into a wood where we were joined later by D. Buckley and Jim Horgan. The others went further on but the three of us, D. Buckley, Jim Horgan and I, went to a spot near the road until a passing postman told us that the military had gone with a number of prisoners. The most of these were later released, but those caught with crowbars, etc., were held. It is possible that the wanted men would have been captured that night were it not for the road trenching. I think the idea was to surround the village, search every house and bring most of the young men to Ballincollig Barracks for identification. My sister Ellie, who was O.C. of the local branch of Cumann na mBan, gave a welcome cup of tea to the prisoners and took some verbal messages from them.

On a Saturday evening in April, 1921, a few of us were in a local shop. The Vice-Commandant, Frank Busteed,

was there. A tall man walked in and asked for a large packet of cigarettes and the "Daily Independent". He wore a dark grey hat, grey coat, fawn pants, long grey stockings, turned down at the top, and shoes. One could easily see that he was an army man. He went in the direction of the Railway Station. Under our Vice-Commandant's orders, three of us, Frank Busteed, E.J. Murphy and I, hurried along a road running parallel with the station road. We crossed a river and wood about half a mile further on; this brought us to the station road some little distance ahead of our man. We had no arms. We kept walking on slowly and when he drew almost level with us the Vice-Commandant shouted "Hands up". The order having been complied with, he was searched. On being asked who he was, he replied, "Major Compton Smyth, you will see the badge of the regiment on the cigarette case". On his person were - Musketry Instruction Book, Postal Order, return half of railway ticket, cigarette case, the "Independent" and packet of Players' cigarettes that he had purchased in the local shop, and some loose change. We, of course, returned everything except the little book. On being told by the Vice-Commandant that he was a prisoner he made no reply. As he was being searched on the road a young local lad (W. O'Connell), with his mother, came on the scene. The boy was going to the station to entrain for Cove on his way to America. We shook hands with him and wished him well. It was an unusual scene; the man in the middle of the road with his hands up and we in turn shaking hands with the

little lad. He, the Officer, Compton Smyth, wouldn't give his word, when asked, that he wouldn't try to escape. He also said that he knew he had put his foot in it when he came into the shop. We took him through the fields to a disused farmhouse. When the Vice-Commandant had gone to get us relieved and to make arrangements for his removal, I told the prisoner that he would be well-treated while in our charge and if he required anything to let us know. He thanked us and said that we would be justified in shooting him "because we shoot your men". "Why not Ireland and England be friends", he continued, "like Australia and Africa". I tried to explain that if Germany won the war (1914-1918) and if German armed forces occupied England, would he, as an Englishman, accept the Germans as lawful rulers of his country. "That is the position here in Ireland, the English forces occupy our country and we, as Irishmen, are fighting for our freedon". He replied, "My country, right or wrong". Then he continued, "The military will be all over the place in a day or two looking for me. Keep out of their hands for a few months more and you will have Dominion Home Rule". I replied that nothing less than a Republic would satisfy us. The relief guard then arrived. T. O'Halloran (Battalion I.O.) also came and interrogated the prisoner.

While sleeping in a cottage about half a mile from the village with my companion, Denis Horgan, I got a very bad cold with a racking cough. One Friday morning the man of the house advised me to remain in bed but I replied that I would prefer to be up and about. I was rather lucky.

At about 3 o'clock that evening a mixed party of military and police passed through the village and raided the cottage. Frank Busteed, D. Buckley and I were standing at the old Muskerry Station, and, thinking it was a general raid or round up, ran into Blarney Castle grounds. The people in the cottage had no one in the I.R.A. but were very sympathetic. The Officer made some significant remark. He said, "The birds have flown". Then he threw a glove on the table and, leaving it there, said, "We'll call here again". I remember that one night before this raid we stopped on our way and listened as we thought we heard a sound behind us. From what I heard afterwards we were very lucky for more reasons than one, for apparently we were being followed.

I think why the enemy were so hostile to me was not for anything outstanding in the military sphere but my father had been connected with the Land League and with that patriotic priest, Father Kennedy, also with the I.R.B., and had formed the first branch of Sinn Fein in Blarney in the early days and was President of it. His name was also at the local Barracks as a disloyal subject. For my part I had started the Fianna and Volunteers in the district, and many prominent men connected with the Fianna, Volunteers, I.R.A. and I.R.B. had come to our house from time to time. All this, I suppose, was recorded in the local R.I.C. diary.

One evening we lay in waiting for a motor car in the Castle grounds, D. Buckley, Bob Linehan, Ned Walsh, Andy O'Keeffe (to drive the car) and I. We waited until

the car returned after landing its solitary passenger at his house. We jumped out with revolvers and halted the car. D. Buckley accidentally fired a shot. On being told we required the car, the driver said were we mad; that the village was full of military. Thinking that it was a dodge to release the car, we drove down the avenue. It was a real Wild West picture. We were standing on the running board of the car, with revolvers in our hands, and B. Linehan wore a mask. The gate was closed and as Ned Walsh went ahead to open it he suddenly turned and ran back saying that the place was full of soldiers. We got off the car and crossed a stream and through some wooded land, followed by several bur sts of machine gun fire.

A very important part was the tapping of the telephone wires between Cork and Dublin. I had a short spell at this work. The hours were from 5 o'clock in the morning to 11 p.m., when others came on duty. Paddy O'Leary was on duty with me. I can recall two messages going through. One was from a British Officer in Cork speaking to his H.Q., Dublin. He said that there was a hunger strike at Spike Island and that an Irishman, a Dr. Russell, had refu sed to do duty and what was to be done in the matter. He was told in reply to do nothing for the present. Later, when Mr. de Valera went to meet Lloyd George in connection with the negotiations, an Officer (British), speaking from Dublin to an Officer in Cork, asked what he thought of the truce, etc. "I think", was the reply, "that de Valera is only pulling Lloyd George's leg".

There are many things one could record - getting the people to sign their names for self-determination for Ireland in connection with the Peace Conference after the war ended in 1918. The Dail Eireann Loan. Collecting the levy from the farmers, etc., for the I.R.A. My meetings with Countess Markieviecz, that great figure in the struggle for freedom, and William Partridge, who was sentenced to fifteen years' penal servitude after the Rising. I met him at the Transport Workers' Rooms, then at Oliver Plunkett Street, where he was organising branches where possible. I gave him what help I could.

I trust that anyone who reads these recollections will do so in the spirit in which they were written.

I must apologise for the use of the personal pronoun but I found that, no matter what way I tried to avoid it, I couldn't do so. I further apologise to the other members of the Company whose names I have not mentioned but this was impossible as I have kept to the events in which I was directly or indirectly concerned. Again I must state that I haven't written this for the purpose of boasting, I was often tempted during the preparation to throw the MSS in the fire rather than use the "I".

I will conclude by stating that a few weeks before the Truce, 11th July, 1921, I got a very bad nervous breakdown from which I have never recovered. For a long time I was under the care of the late Dr. Pat O'Sullivan. A few months ago I got a thorough examination from another medical man and was

again told that my nerves were very bad.

May God bless and save Ireland and may He grant e ternal rest to those who have gone before us.

SIGNED: F. O'Doherty
(F. O'Doherty)

WITNESSED: [signature] LIEUT. COLONEL.
(C. Saurin)

DATE: 18th October, 1952.