

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
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NO. W.S. 765

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COSANTA.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 765

Witness

Seumas O Goibin
(James A. Gubbins),

"Gleann Oisin",
South Circular Road,
Limerick.

Identity.

Lieut. Limerick City Regiment, 1916;
Adjutant, Limerick City Battalion, 1921;
Adjutant, Mid-Limerick Brigade, 1921.

Subject.

- (a) Irish Volunteers, Limerick, 1913-1916;
- (b) Inquiry into action of Limerick's Volunteers,
Easter 1916;
- (c) Journey by car, Limerick-Kerry (Ballykissane)
Good Friday, 1916.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil

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APPENDIX.

Motor driver's narrative of journey
to Co. Kerry, Easter 1916.

ORIGINAL

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Statement by Seumas Ó Góibín (James A. Gubbins),
"Gleann Oisín", South Circular Road, Limerick.

I was born in Limerick City in 1891; my parents were National School teachers. My father was a strong Nationalist and I was much influenced by the opinions of an elder brother - who later emigrated to the U.S.A. He was a member of the Young Ireland Society which was comprised of the extreme elements in the city in the early years of this century. I joined the Gaelic League when I was thirteen years old. I was active in this organisation, learned the Irish language, taught Irish classes and served for some time as treasurer of the Limerick Branch. My father died when I was sixteen years old. My formal schooling ended on the death of my father. I entered the firm of John R. Tinsly, Salt Merchants, as a junior clerk and after four years in the office was appointed as commercial traveller. I still represent the same firm in the same capacity. I joined the G.A.A. and hurled with the Claughaun team. I was for some time president of the Limerick County Board, G.A.A., and represented the county for some years on the Munster Council. I joined the Irish Volunteers at the inaugural meeting, which I attended as one of the Gaelic League representatives. I was a participant in all the events narrated in my paper "Limerick in 1916". I was Adjutant of Limerick City Battalion Mid Limerick Brigade at the truce in 1921. From that time until the Civil War I acted as Adjutant Mid Limerick Brigade. Meanwhile I had become acquainted with Wormwood Scrubbs, Brixton, Limerick and Cork gaols..

I had returned to civilian employment at the outbreak of Civil War but joined the National Army for a short period of organisation at the request of General Eoin O'Duffy. Táim ag claofí anois leis an abair is fearr atá ar eolas agam (I am now keeping to the work I know best).

What follows after this paragraph comprises a paper ("Limerick in 1916") read by me to a recent meeting of the Old Limerick Society. To this paper I have added a reply to some criticisms of a few points in that paper and - as an appendix - a narrative by the driver of one of the two cars despatched by the Volunteers from Limerick to Co. Kerry on Good Friday, 1916, a journey that had a tragic sequel when one of the cars over-ran the pier at Ballykissane. There is nothing of great importance in that narrative, but as it was written by one of the actual participants in the episode soon after the event, it has a certain historical value in itself and also it reflects fairly well the general background of Volunteer activities at the time. Although the narrative is marked "Copy", it is original in the sense that it bears the actual signature of the narrator, duly witnessed. Various typing errors appear in it, but in no way do these obscure the meaning. It was given to me by the narrator, Sam Windrim.

Early days of Volunteer movement in Limerick:

"They marched and they paraded and then their laurels faded". This old rhyme referring to Grattan's Volunteers of 1782 probably sums up the ideas of the average citizen with regard to the part played by Limerick in the movement which culminated in the 1916 insurrection in Dublin. I propose to give an account of the movement in Limerick, of some of the men engaged in it, and of how they were deflected by the Finger of the Almighty from participation in the Insurrection.

The Irish Volunteer Movement, which had been started in 1913 without the support or concurrence of the Irish Parliamentary Party, had spread like a ^{PRAIRIE} ~~prairie~~ fire. Powerless to check its growth, and fearful of the potential threat to his political supremacy, John Redmond determined to control it. He compulsorily imposed 25 of his own nominees on the Headquarters committee, who submitted in the hope of saving the movement from destruction. This "shotgun marriage", however, proved to be unhappy from the start, and became more unhappy still as Redmond proceeded to divert the movement from its original policy to that of supporting the allies in the great war. The breaking point came when he declared in a speech in Co. Wicklow that it would be a disgrace to Ireland if Irishmen "refrained from fighting, wherever the fighting extends, in defence of right, freedom and religion". The original Committee thereupon announced the exclusion of Redmond's nominees, and the issue was put to the test throughout the country. In Limerick over 1,000 elected to follow Redmond, and about 250 decided to adhere to

the policy of the original Headquarters Committee. Of the Limerick Committee only two supported Redmond, and they both joined the British Army. One, Charlie Close, a Gaelic Leaguer and an Irish Industrial Revivalist, was killed in France. Although their loyalties were diverted to another cause, they are entitled to the tribute due to brave men, who acted as their conscience dictated.

The 250 men who paraded on that Sunday in October 1914 were a typical cross section of the inhabitants, such as could be found in any urban area. Tradesmen, clerks, shopkeepers, teachers, shop assistants and labourers were all represented. The Gaelic League, as might be expected, supplied many of its members, as did the Sinn Féin organisation (weak at this period) past members of Fianna Éireann (the national Boy Scouts) and the A.O.H.

The City Rugby Clubs proved a large contingent. Players and former players of the game contributed to the ranks of each of the four companies, in particular to A Coy., where they provided more than half the personnel. At the start, three of the four Companies had Rugby men as Captains. A photograph recently published of the crew of the Athlunkard Boat Club, which won the "Irish Union Cup", the blue riband of Irish rowing, in 1913, is of interest, as showing that three of the crew were members of the Battalion, while a fourth was closely associated with it.

The G.A.A. representation was relatively weak. Indeed, it was not until the conscription crisis of 1918 that this organisation gave its powerful support to the movement, when it made striking amends for its

earlier apathy.

Many others, who had been exponents of extreme national sentiments, and who were active and vigorous enough to be in the ranks, were surprisingly absent. On the other hand, the rank and file included elderly men, or men of delicate physique, about 10 per cent of the total, whose soldierly qualities were not in proportion to their patriotic spirit, but who took part in most of the parades and exercises, and in the final march to Killonan in 1916.

Many who attended the inaugural parade did not stay the course. This was not surprising, some were teachers or Civil Servants, whose livelihood would have been jeopardised, had they continued in the movement. Employers at the time wielded a most potent weapon, in a manner which would not be tolerated to-day, the weapon of economic pressure, or to use a cruder phrase, the threat of starvation, and there were some who did not hesitate to use it. One member of the Committee, a married man with a family, was confronted with the blunt choice, "The Volunteers or your job". Who could blame him for choosing his job?

After the first parade, the Headquarters of the Battalion was transferred to the Fianna Hall, situated in a cul de sac off Barrington St. It had been built some short time previously by John Daly and a few friends for the use of Fianna Éireann. It was capable of accommodating a couple of hundred people, while the yard outside could hold about the same number. It was ideally suitable for its new purpose,

and here for the next eighteen months, the training and direction of the Battalion was mainly carried out. The inspiration and the driving force of the Volunteers in Limerick may be said to have been mainly concentrated in three men, James Ledden, Michael Colivet and Seoirse Clancy:

Local Leaders:

Jim Ledden, Honorary Colonel, was affectionately known as the father of the Battalion. He was a tall, whitehaired, simple-mannered man, fond of attending a race meeting, a hurling or a football match. Elderly by comparison with his colleagues - he was fifty years old at this time - and unfitted by nature to be a soldier, he was impelled by his principles, and by the failure of constitutional methods, as practised by the Irish Parliamentary, to be an extremist in politics. He was a member of the I.R.B. He conducted an upholstery business in Thomas Street, which from 1914 to 1916, became the unofficial meeting place of the movement in Limerick. He was continually beset by callers, some with important business and some with no business at all. To his shop, at one time or another, came most of those whose names became prominent in the history of the period. In retrospect, the wonder is, how, between them all, he was able to earn as much as kept body and soul together. He never complained, and met everybody, those who had business, and those who had no business, with the same gentle courtesy and good humour.

He was elected to Dáil Éireann by a huge vote following the Treaty, and remained a T.D. until his death in 1927.

Michael Colvet is, happily, still living. He was Commandant of the Brigade which comprised the whole of the City and County Limerick, Clare, Mitchelstown, and some adjoining districts of Tipperary. He had not the extremist background of Ledden and Clancy, and did not become a member of the I.R.B. until sworn in by Seán McDermott in December 1915, when events were reaching a climax. He had been a member of the A.O.H., a politico friendly society, supporting the Irish Parliamentary Party. He joined the Volunteers in 1913 to offset Carson's activities, and to defend Home Rule. His mother was a fiery patriot, who often recalled to her children that an ancestor of hers had been hanged in 1798. He had a deep detestation of British misrule, and eagerly prepared himself for the chance to destroy it, should opportunity occur. He was returned unopposed at the General Election of 1918 which marked the virtual extinction of the Irish Parliamentary Party, and was re-elected at the 1921 election. He opposed the Treaty.

Seoirse Clancy was Vice Commandant of the Battalion. Born in Grange Co. Limerick, of Fenian stock, he went to Dublin 1899, entered the Royal University and graduated in 1904. A scholar and an athlete, his knowledge of Literature, particularly Irish and French Literature, was extensive. He was a fine hurler, and was Captain of the Confederate Club when resident in Dublin. He fell ill while working as a language teacher in Clongowes and came home to Grange. He was appointed as Irish teacher in Limerick in 1908, and lived here until his murder by British Auxiliaries in 1921, three months after his election

as Mayor. He was a member of the I.R.B.

Of all the national, cultural and military personalities of the period, there was scarcely one in whom nature and grace combined so generously to make an ideal Irishman. No one possessed the privilege of his friendship who was not the better of it; no one more inspiring in leadership, more tolerant of differences of opinion, more willing to extend help to those who needed it, more contemptuous of the personal advantages to which his abilities might have entitled him. No one more willing to expend himself in his country's service, and to offer in her cause the ultimate sacrifice of his life. No one since Patrick Sarsfield, save John Daly and Dr. O'Dwyer, made such an impact on the imagination of his fellow citizens. At midnight of March 6th 1921 he was reading Keating's "Defence of the Mass" in Irish. Two hours later he had fallen to the bullet of the assassin. Then, in truth his comrades might have said with the poet:

"He is dead, the beautiful youth

The heart of honour and the tongue of truth
He the life and the light of us all;

Whose voice was as blithe as a bugle call,
Whom all eyes honoured with one consent,

The cheer of whose laugh and whose pleasant smile
Hushed all murmur of discontent".

Situation after the Volunteer Split:

Writing of the Limerick Battalion and its officers on February 15th 1915, Pearse declared, "Is dóigh le'n a lán gurab é cath Luimnighe an cath is treise dá bhfuil againn. Tá fir maithe in a gceannas, fir nach

bhfuil a sárugad in Éireann, ar dilseacht, nár ar calmacht, nár ar stuaim". "There are many who think that the Limerick Battalion is the best we have. There are good men in command; more whose loyalty, courage and determination are not surpassed in Ireland".

The Irish Volunteers were not popular in the city. They could be described as a beleaguered garrison, encompassed by the bleak disapproval of the majority of the citizens, and the active hostility of the mob. A Limerick recruiting officer for the British Army voiced the prevailing opinion, when he declared that the young men in the Volunteers were hypnotised and carried away from the path of their fathers by ingenious individuals for the lure of lusty gold. Later, he informed his audiences that the Sinn Féiners passed a resolution congratulating Germany on what they called a glorious achievement, the sinking of the 'Lusitania'; that the curse of many murdered Irishmen would light on the head of those false leaders who put these young men on the road to destruction for them and for Ireland.

This and other diatribes of a similar character had their inevitable effect. Little girls paused in their skipping to chant "No room for the Sinn Sinn Féiners" to the tune of "Oro, se do bheatha abhaile", the marching song of the Battalion, with words by Pearse, as the Battalion went by. One of the hostile onlookers standing on the steps of the Transport Hall in O'Connell Street, caused much hilarity amongst his companions by shouting derisively "And in the Rebellion he carried a pike", as a section armed with these weapons appeared in the 1915 St. Patrick's Day parade. On another

occasion as they were passing the Clare Street Temperance Hall, on a Sunday evening, during a snow storm, after a route march of 20 miles or so, they were assailed by a storm of hisses from the occupants of the Hall, who had rushed from a comfortable fire, eager to demonstrate their hostility. Ernest Blythe, who was engaged with success in the organisation of Companies and sections through the country, was turned out of the Commercial Room of a hotel in Newcastle West, at the instance of a Redmondite commercial traveller. All this was galling to the more excitable of the men, who would have wished to try conclusions with their tormentors, but were held in rigid restraint by their officers, who were inflexible in their determination not to engage in squabbles with Irishmen no matter how serious the provocation.

In fairness, however, it must be recorded that the atmosphere was completely changed in these quarters from 1918 onwards. In 1921 the Headquarters of the I.R.A. was in the Transport Hall, a fact well known to the scores of workers who frequented it. Although raided by the enemy, it was evident that no hint had reached them of the activities being carried on in a top attic of the building. The poorly paid caretaker cheerfully carried his life in his hands, knowing full well that if the least hint of these activities reached the British authorities, he would have been subjected to the unbridled ferocity of the Auxiliaries. He is still caretaker of the premises and as a reward for his fidelity and courage, receives a pension of less than £10 per annum from a grateful country.

Whit Sunday Riot:

The hostility to the Irish Volunteers reached its climax on Whit Sunday 1915. On that day a parade of Volunteers was arranged which included Units from Dublin, Cork, East and West Limerick and Mitchelstown. The large Dublin contingent included Pearse, Tom Clarke, Cathal Brugha, Ned Daly, and many others whose names are now enshrined in Irish history. The route traversed was the traditional one used for civil processions. I shall now turn to a report of the proceedings published by a local paper of 23rd May 1915:

"The parade of Sinn Féin Volunteers in Limerick yesterday was marked by noisy scenes for which women were mainly responsible. Companies of Irish Volunteers arrived in the city about noon and were met at the terminus by the Limerick City Battalion. The Brigade, many Companies of which were armed, having formed up in Percy Square, marched through various thoroughfares in the city and were subjected to a lively time when passing through the Irishtown. At Mungret Street they were met by a fusilade of stones, jampots, bits of lead etc. from the women of the district. The Companies, however, continued their march and all along the way the women from the windows of the houses kept peppering away at them with various sorts of missiles. When the Sinn Féin party arrived at Thomondgate, they had a very hostile reception, being groaned and jeered at, at various points of the march. They halted at the strand and then marched again to the Fianna hall, where the dismiss was given. During the evening

isolated attacks were made on members of the body as they made their appearance on the streets and many men bearing arms were pursued by women bearing aprons of stones, which they flung on the unhappy Volunteers. One Company of the Limerick Volunteers had to march with fixed bayonets to the rescue of a Dublin Officer who had taken refuge in a public house in Davis Street. The excursionists had a hot time at the terminus prior to their departure in the evening and the police had a busy time trying to keep order. There was a big crowd outside the Railway Station and the Sinn Féin contingents as they passed had a very hostile reception".

The leading article in the same paper, dealing with the disturbances read (in part) as follows:

Sunday

"The disturbances in Limerick last/.... were most regrettable. Violence of any kind is to be deprecated, but under the circumstances the outburst of popular feeling was inevitable..... Many are inclined to the belief that, as in the case of the Unionist meeting held some few years ago, the object of the conveners was to court hostility. Limerick Sinn Féiners have worn their hearts on their sleeves. They made no secret of their delight at every German success... pro Germans in the city have publicly exulted at reported reverses of the Allies. Was it not sheer madness to order a march through the Irishtown of men known to be in sympathy with the slayers of many a breadwinner? Would anyone out of Bedlam - unless they were seeking trouble - give notice two days in advance that this pronouncedly pro-German body of men would march through an

out of the way working class quarter as a taunt.... to the wives and widows of men whose defeat, involving death, was the object of frequently expressed delight by Sinn Féin folk. Lives would have been lost but for the intervention of Fr. O'Connor and Fr. Mangan, to whom those responsible for the mad (or villainous) programme, may be grateful for their escape from blood guiltiness".

Not one word of condemnation of the scandalous conduct which disgraced the city; not one word of recognition of the exemplary discipline of the Volunteers in the face of such extreme provocation. Such was the temper of the times. Limerick went to bed a little ashamed of itself that night, and on the following day, which was a public holiday, uniformed visitors, who had waited over, walked the streets without further molestation.

Prominent amongst the attackers on that Whit Sunday was a powerfully built amazon, who seemed to have inherited in ample measure, the fighting characteristics of the women of Limerick, even if she was lacking somewhat in the more engaging feminine qualities. Where the disturbance was fiercest, this indomitable female, like a modern heroine of Ross - if not in so good a cause, nor in so worthy a manner - her hair flying, and her apron full of missiles, frenziedly rallied the mob to renewed excesses of stonethrowing, varied by attempts to snatch the rifles from the parading Volunteers. Some time later, as a result of an altercation with a female acquaintance who lost her life, she found herself incarcerated in Mountjoy Gaol, whither the Countess Markievicz was sent for a while before being

transferred on sentence to Aylesbury Prison in England. On seeing the Countess's poor condition her springs of womanly tenderness gushed forth. Compassionately she devoted herself to the Countess, doing all in her power to alleviate the conditions of her prison existence. One of the first acts of the Countess on visiting Limerick after her release, was to call down to the Irishtown to visit her benefactor. She entertained her at Daly's house, where she was staying, showed her gratitude in various other practical ways, and when the Limerick woman died, sent a wreath and was represented at her funeral.

The beleaguered garrison of the Irish Volunteers had strong outposts who helped them to endure the rigours of the moral siege. At the inaugural parade in the Cornmarket, a tall, strikingly handsome clergyman of splendid physique, attended to give support to the proceedings. Father Hennessy O.S.A. was then unknown to the majority of those present, but in a short time, as he identified himself more prominently with the movement, he was appointed on the Committee of Management. He was to prove himself a source of moral and spiritual help in the anxious days that followed.

Michael O'Callaghan, the only city merchant who identified himself with the movement, was also appointed on the Committee of management. Of frail physique, he was compensated by his Creator with an extraordinary brilliance of intellect. At the meetings and lectures which he attended, he invariably contributed an address of illuminating and epigrammatic quality, which served to compensate for much of the oratorical dreariness common on such proceedings. He too, made the ultimate

sacrifice, as he was murdered on the same night as his friend and colleague - Seoirse Clancy. Canon Tom Wall, now parish priest of Ballingarry, and the late Fr. Michael Hayes kept the flag flying in the county. It was a letter from General Maxwell, after the insurrection, complaining of the activities of these two priests, which drew from Dr. O'Dwyer, Bishop of Limerick, the trenchant reply which breathed new life into a prostrate nation. The late Father John Kelly, at that time a curate in Newcastle West, was equally active with the two other priests; the wonder is that he was not included in Maxwell's letter of complaint. There were many others, of whom I shall mention but one, an Englishman, Mr. Ernest Stephenson, of the Co-operative Wholesale Agency. He was unobtrusively friendly, rendered many services, and was in the confidence of the leaders. At a later time he gave shelter and hospitality to men on the run.

Training and Arms:

At the Fianna Hall the training of the Battalion was carried out with great energy. A welcome accession of strength had arrived in the person of Capt. Robert Monteith. He had served in the British Army and had been active in the Volunteers in Dublin, so active that he had been served with an order requiring him to leave that city. He took charge of training and soon put things humming. Company parades were held on several nights a week. Officers classes were formed, the lessons of which were put to the test during the Sunday route marches and field exercises. He formed a special section composed of the younger and more active men of each Company - irreverently nicknamed "Monty's Pets" by the others - to whom he gave a special course of instruction

in signalling and field work. The Sunday parades were invariably accompanied by "G" men (plain clothes R.I.C. men). These men were ordinarily employed in the detection of crime, but as there was no major crime in the country, the authorities employed them at this work. Curiously enough, their presence evoked but little resentment; occasionally a rough shout of banter would evoke an embarrassed acknowledgement.

Before the split a considerable sum of money which had been made available through public collections, members subscriptions, contributions from Cumann na mBan etc., had been spent on the purchase of arms and equipment. Small lots of rifles were procured direct from Birmingham. Later, John Grant, an active Volunteer, had been sent there to make further purchases. He managed to secure a fair parcel of Lee Enfields and Martinis, mostly Lee Enfields, at a price of £6 and £3 each respectively, together with 20,000 rounds of .303 and 10,000 rounds of Morris tube ammunition. An arms embargo was announced before they could be despatched, and it looked as if the mission would fail. Grant conceived the idea of dismantling the rifles and sending them by parcel post. It worked: the rifles were delivered. He practically accompanied the .303 ammunition which was packed in boxes of 1,000 each, and which also got through, but the Morris tube ammunition was seized in Dublin. The .303, on arrival, was deposited at the Shannon Foundry, but was removed almost immediately to a safer place. It was well, as the Foundry was raided by the R.I.C. the same evening. As the great majority of the Committee had not supported Redmond, these arms fell to the Irish Volunteers. They

were made available at a price for the Lee Enfields of £5 each to those, who, it was considered, could afford that sum; to those who could not afford a payment, they were given free. Some shot guns were also distributed. Possibly about 150 men were armed in this way. The loss of the Morris tube ammunition was sorely felt as it meant that firing practice was practically non-existent. Owing to its comparative scarcity, the firing of live ammunition was discouraged. Only once was it allowed during training, when three rounds per man were fired at targets at the old military rifle range at Ballycannon. The work of organisation was now carried on unceasingly. Ernest Blythe was continuously active, and the results of his efforts soon became apparent. Companies and sections appeared in nearly every parish in the county. Seán Ó Murthuile, later Quartermaster General of the National Army, was also active. He was an important member of the I.R.B. and spent a good deal of time in Limerick, including the period immediately before and during Easter Week, when he took part in all the meetings. Monteith conducted officers classes in the South East of the county. A note in the "Irish Volunteer" about this time remarked "The Limerick Regiment has struck a recent visitor from Headquarters as perhaps the most efficient in Ireland. In some respects it leads Dublin".

Expansion of the Movement:

The wind of popular favour now commenced to veer slightly in the direction of the Volunteers. New recruits came in. Groups of citizens used to wait at the city outskirts to welcome the men on their return from route marches and accompany them to the Fianna Hall.

The lectures and social functions organised by Cumann na mBan were patronised by increasing numbers. On the other hand the National (Redmondite) Volunteers languished, until, about the end of 1915, they almost ceased to exist. Cumann na mBan had a strong and active organisation. They organised céilis, dances and lectures, the proceeds of which materially benefitted the arms fund. Of the money spent in the purchase of arms prior to the split, £250 had been contributed by them. Men prominent in the movement including Pearse, McDermott and McCullagh gave lectures at their invitation - lectures which left no doubt in the minds of their hearers as to the direction in which the movement was heading. Miss Madge Daly was president, and the doors of the Daly house in Barrington Street were always open to show hospitality to the visitors. They organised first aid classes, and as the date of the Rising approached, they were constantly engaged in the manufacture of field dressings.

This activity caused apprehension in the minds of the authorities and steps were taken to check it. Late in 1915, James Dalton, organising secretary of the Battalion, was charged at Foynes with having declared in a speech made in the district that "those who volunteered or would volunteer in the fight for England were only cowards, traitors and prostitutes". He was defended by the late Mr. Hugh O'Brien Moran. Mr. James Gaffney, Crown Solicitor, who conducted the prosecution, said that a serious view of the case was taken by the authorities. The police evidence was contradicted by a large number of witnesses. In particular it was denied that the phrase "cowards, traitors and prostitutes" was used. The case was dismissed, the Chairman saying "The majority

of the bench are not satisfied beyond reasonable doubt that the words relied on in the summons were used".

Towards the end of August 1915, the men discovered that Monteith was gone - to Kilkenny it was said. No hint had been allowed to reach them of his intention to leave and they regretted his departure deeply. During his nine months stay he had performed trojan work and his personality and his ability had won their genuine regard. His destination was Germany via the U.S.A. His return to his native land was by way of Banna Strand on Good Friday 1916. He shall appear later in this narrative.

Activities prior to Easter Week:

Early in 1916 the word went around that the Germans were coming. This was the flood tide of enthusiasm in the ranks. Gone for ever were the desperate deeds of desperate men, such as Emmet's two hour rebellion or the debacle at Ballingarry, contemptuously derided by the English press as the "rebellion in a cabbage patch". They pictured in their imagination a campaign in which the manhood of the country, fully armed and trained, side by side with European soldiers and officers, would engage on equal terms with the ancient enemy. It was an exhilarating dream. Training was intensified, mobilisations at short notice were tested, long route marches on the Sundays were carried out, in one of these the distance covered was 34 miles.

Three weeks before Easter, Colivet was advised by Headquarters that events were reaching a climax. He speeded up his plans and completed his Battalion and Brigade organisation. His task in the event of hostilities was to hold the line Limerick/Killaloe and

also Limerick City if possible. As the British forces based on the city consisted of 800 infantry, a battery of artillery and about 100 constabulary, against whom he could only hope to muster about 200 armed men, he planned to hold the North shore of the Shannon at the city, including the bridges, with the intention of retiring into Clare should the necessity arise. The Castleconnell men were to man the Limerick/Killaloe line and to conform to the movements of the City Battalion. The Galtee Battalion was to make the Galtee mountains the base of its operations, the West Limerick Battalion to fight on its own ground and the Clare men to form a base for the City Battalion.

On the Tuesday of Holy Week, Seán Fitzgibbon of the Volunteer executive arrived with the news that arms were to be landed in Kerry within a week and instructed Colivet to receive them at Abbeyfeale, take his own requirements and send the rest to Galway. This was to be the signal for insurrection. Colivet pointed out that this was at variance with his previous plans and was advised by Fitzgibbon to go at once to Headquarters and get instructions which would be clear and definite. Colivet did so, and met Pearse on Wednesday, who instructed him to cancel all other plans. He was to take charge of the arms at Abbeyfeale and transport them to Crusheen. The arms were to be sent by rail, a train crew having been provided who would undertake the job. Pearse also instructed that action was to be started at 7 p.m. on Sunday. Colivet found him surprisingly reticent as to the amount of help expected from abroad. Closely questioned, he would neither confirm nor deny that an expeditionary force was to be expected. The ultimate impression left on Colivet's mind, was that men were coming but that

Pearse was precluded by some agreement from saying so. He was told he might expect to meet an old friend and took this to refer to Monteith. He returned to Limerick and gave an account of his visit to Clancy, Ledden and Grant who were in his confidence. He recast his plans, in accordance with his new instructions.

At the parade on Holy Thursday night, Colivet gave his instructions for the following Easter Sunday's mobilisation. The Battalion was to march to Killonan for exercises which would continue on Monday. Every available man was to parade, carrying arms and ammunition and two days rations. Any man unable to parade was to hand over his rifle to his Company officer. He earnestly exhorted those present to exert themselves to mobilise every available man. He instructed the Battalion officers to remain behind after the dismiss and to them he gave the news. It was not entirely unexpected, as the I.R.B. members of the Battalion had known for some time what was going on, and hints had reached the Battalion officers. On Thursday night also the ammunition was removed from the cache in Pennywell.

And now began the bitter sequence of disasters. On Good Friday, two Limerick men, Tommy McInerney and Sam Windrim, were detailed to take cars to Killarney. They were to reach there at 8 p.m., pick up five men who were coming from Dublin by rail and convey them to Caherciveen. They contacted their men, three of whom, including Con Keating, the wireless expert, sat in the second car. During the night drive Tommy McInerney lost sight of the tail light of the first car, missed the turn and plunged over the pier into the sea at Ballykissane. The three passengers were drowned but McInerney escaped

only to be arrested later. He later lost his life in a firearms accident.

Missions to Dublin for orders:

On Saturday morning the news was received in Limerick of the blowing up of the German Ship "The Aud" off Queenstown, of the landing of three men from a boat in Kerry and the arrest of one of them, of the loss of the car at Killorglin, of the arrest of Stack, the Kerry Commandant. Fitzgibbon hurried to Dublin for instructions, having arranged to send a code message saying if the Rising was "on" or "off". Lieutenant Paddy Whelan was dispatched to Tralee to find out what he could of the position there. Colivet anxiously waited all day for some word from Headquarters and receiving none, sent dispatches cancelling all arrangements in his command. By an afternoon train Lieutenant J. Gubbins was sent to Dublin to convey what information was available and to ask for instructions in the light of the existing situation. To outwit the "G" men who were stationed at the entrance to the passenger platform, he joined the train through the goods yard. Arrived in Dublin he tried to contact Eoin McNeill, but failed, and after considerable delay contacted Seán McDermott at the house where he was staying.

The place was a hive of activity. Many men were present and others were constantly arriving; stands of rifles were arranged along the walls. It seemed as if everyone in Dublin must know that an insurrection was due to take place on the morrow. Cumann na mBan girls were serving teas in an atmosphere of cheerfulness and good humour. McDermott, debonair as usual,

exchanged pleasantries with those present. The scene resembled more the preparation for a picnic rather than that of preparation for the grim business of war. Gubbins delivered his message and was informed confidently by McDermott that the Rising would take place, that the lost German ship was only one of many such expeditions. He also strongly recommended that Limerick Officers should resist arrest, should such be attempted, as such resistance would strengthen the morale of Volunteers elsewhere.

The code telegram "the books have arrived" meaning "the rebellion is on" was accordingly sent to Limerick. Gubbins then asked that as he could not now hope to reach Limerick in time for the insurrection that he should be assigned to a Dublin unit. McDermott replied that his place was in Limerick and that a lorry was about to leave Dublin for that city. (Colivet had asked for a couple of lorries through Fitzgibbon). A Volunteer conveyed him to the spot from which the lorry was to start. After some delay two lorries arrived, and with a driver and another companion he set out. The slow moving vehicles did not arrive until late on Sunday morning and he reported to Colivet.

Colivet had dispatched another officer, Capt. Liam Forde, to Dublin by a later train. His report shall appear later.

Conflicting Orders:

Late on Saturday night Colivet received news from Tralee confirming the loss of the arms, but on Saturday night also he received a message through Miss Laura Daly that "everything was all right" that "there were men

and officers coming" that "we had received the Papal blessing" and that "McNeill was splendid". No word came from Fitzgibbon. On Easter Sunday morning, The O'Rahilly arrived with orders from McNeill which read - "Volunteers completely deceived, all orders for to-morrow Sunday are entirely cancelled". He also gave news of a cleavage at Headquarters, but said a meeting had been held at which it was decided to cancel arrangements.

The Sunday Independent on Easter Sunday morning contained a notice from McNeill cancelling all parades and marches.

Meantime Whelan had returned from Kerry, where he had not been lucky. He had contacted Vice Commandant Cahill (Stack having been arrested) who would not give him any information. The situation, naturally, was confused in Kerry, and Cahill, not having known Whelan previously, may have been suspicious of his bona fides. In any case Whelan had to be content with unofficial rumours which were floating around Tralee. Arrived in Limerick he was immediately dispatched to Tralee again with the countermanding order.

Whelan's bona fides being established, Cahill was more friendly, and told him that a friend was anxious to meet him. He conducted him to "The Rink", a large building packed with armed men, amongst whom he was astonished to see the unmistakably military figure of Monteith. Glad to meet Whelan, he embarked on an account of his recent adventures, and confirmed the arrest of Casement. He spoke with great bitterness of the Germans who, he said, were out for cheap Irish blood. He said no men were coming, and that the cargo consisted of obsolete Russian rifles and machine guns. He advised

against a Rising, and recommended Colivet to try and bluff through. He was especially virulent regarding Von Papen, who had been Germany Military Attaché in the United States. Von Papen was incapable of understanding the meaning of the Irish struggle, and looked on the whole affair as a civil war, rather than the uprising of a separate nation, seeking to rid itself of foreign domination. Whelan returned and reported.

Although the plans for a Rising were cancelled, and the various units through the country scattered, it was decided to proceed with a week-end parade of the Battalion, which mustered about 140 men, much fewer than had been expected. McNeill's public notice probably accounted for some defections. Many familiar faces were missing. Forde was in Dublin, Whelan in Tralee, Jimmy McInerney had been assigned to Newcastle-West to take charge of operations there. John Grant, riding a motor cycle, was acting as communications officer between the various units in the county. And so the column set out, their shadows, the "G" men, in faithful attendance. We know that five hours previously the intention had been that they were not to return. Many, particularly the members of the I.R.B., knew of the intention to rise, and many others had a shrewd idea that dramatic events were imminent. Arrived at Killonan leave was generously granted with the result that only some 80 to 100 men billeted for the night in the friendly precincts of Batt. Laffan's farm. A feeling of anti-climax pervaded the proceedings, as the officers, of course, knew of the countermanding order.

Another mission to Dublin:

On Sunday night came the message from Fitzgibbon, saying the Rising was "off". On Sunday midnight Forde reported. He had left Limerick for Dublin by a train which started at about 4.30 p.m. via the Limerick Junction, having purchased a ticket to the Junction only, and was seen off by two "G" men who accompanied him to the carriage door. Knowing that their colleagues at the Junction would be notified and furnished with his description, he left the carriage in which he was travelling, at Dromkeen, and got into one in which there was only one occupant, who proved to be a soldier home from the front. They got into chat, and presently Forde explained that he was in some kind of political trouble, and asked the other if he would mind changing his hat, coat and scarf with him. The soldier readily consented and the change was made, with the result that the "G" men were completely put off the track, and he was able to continue his journey to Dublin undetected.

Having been in Dublin on a demolition course a few months earlier, he had no difficulty in locating McDermott at his lodgings, to whom he confided his latest news and the suggestion that the Rising should be postponed. From the outbreak of the European war McDermott's life had been dedicated to the cause of an Irish Insurrection. Physically frail, he had been working on his nerves during the previous week. Any suggestion that the Rising should be postponed was intolerable to him. He burst out that the Rising would take place, even if they had only sticks and stones to fight with, adding bitterly that there were too many philosophers in the country. In the intensity of his

feelings he became physically sick. Forde slept in the house that night. Before he was dressed on the following (Easter Sunday) morning, McDermott was shown McNeill's countermanding order, published in the "Sunday Independent", which drove him frantic. He rent the coat of his pyjamas to shreds, crying inconsolably that we were betrayed again. He dressed and walked to Liberty Hall accompanied by Forde. In calmer mood now, he argued that they should rise, if only with pikes and bayonets; even though defeated their blood would regenerate the nation. Arrived at Liberty Hall, he disappeared into one of the various rooms. Forde had breakfast with Clarke, Connolly and Ceannt, and was waited on by the Countess Markievicz. The other three left after breakfast to attend a meeting which lasted throughout the day, until about 4 p.m. Then Pearse emerged, and placing his arm affectionately around Forde's shoulder, he told him everything was off for the present, but "hold yourself in readiness for further orders". He provided a motor car for Forde as far as Cashel, in order that he would convey his message to Pierce McCann at Cashel. Forde did so, hired another car at Cashel and reported at Killonan at midnight.

Order from P.H. Pearse:

On Monday about 2 p.m. as the men were preparing for the return to the city, Miss Nora Daly arrived with the dispatch which was to place upon the shoulders of Colivet and the Battalion staff such a terrible responsibility. It read "The Dublin Brigade goes into action at noon to-day (Monday). Carry out your orders.

(Signed) P.H. Pearse". This was a bombshell which created a most confused and impossible situation, uncomprehensible to the ordinary intelligence.

The orders dealt with a cargo of arms which were known to have gone to the bottom of the sea on Good Friday. It was known amongst other things that Casement's purpose in coming was to stop all action as the Germans were sending no men, and only 20,000 rifles and a few machine guns.

Colivet and the Battalion staff wondered if Pearse had received the exact information which had been sent to Dublin regarding the fate of the arms ship. They even wondered if there would be another ship at some other part of the coast. If so, they had received neither orders nor information concerning it. None of the things they had planned could be carried out in the absence of the expected arms. There were fewer than 150 rifles in the City Battalion, and the outside units were poorly equipped, and were absolutely depending on the expected arms. No plans existed for other than arms reception, transport and distribution. Subsequent action was entirely contingent on the reception of the arms. Having regard to McNeill's dispatch, with its reference to the Volunteers being deceived, and to the whisperings of friction in Dublin, it appeared as if some persons in Dublin might have kicked over the traces. If that was the case, it was clearly Colivet's duty loyally to obey the orders of McNeill, who was Chief of Staff. The unanimous decision of the Battalion Staff was that Pearse's dispatch could not be acted upon. The Battalion officers were made aware of developments, and the return to the city ordered.

Under dripping skies, which seemed to mourn with them the destruction of their hopes, the column returned, fully expecting to be attacked before reaching the city. They were joined occasionally by men on leave and by others who had not paraded on the day before, who hurried to join their comrades, on hearing that fighting had broken out in Dublin. The faithful Fr. Hennessy drove in a sidecar to meet them, and to impart spiritual consolation. Wet to the skin they reached an apparently deserted city. The Battalion band struck up a march when passing through O'Connell St., the dismiss was given at the Fianna Hall without further incident, and each man carried his equipment home with him.

The British military forces, which now consisted of 2,000 infantry, two batteries of artillery, and smaller units took over complete control of the city. They held all the roads, and erected and manned barricades at the bridges. No attempt was made to arrest any of the Volunteer officers.

The outcome in Limerick:

The utter misery of the men during the following week as their hopes were destroyed in the flames of the Dublin insurrection, can scarcely be imagined. Many were anxious for an uprising, even then, to aid the Volunteers fighting in Dublin; many were severely critical of the action of the leaders in starting a fight which could hold no prospect of military success. Officers from other areas, including Tomás McCurtain of Cork, and Eamon O'Dwyer of Tipperary, came to take counsel ^{so} with the local leaders. All agreed there was

nothing to be done. A meeting of the Battalion council, the Board of Management, and most of the officers who had knowledge of previous events, was held on the Tuesday night, at which it was decided by a majority of ten to six, not to rise. During the week the Mayor, Councillor Sir Stephen B. Quinn, conveyed a demand from Colonel Sir Anthony Weldon, in command of British forces, for a surrender of arms. The demand was rejected. The citizens, most of whom were openly hostile, became alarmed at the prospect of bloodshed in the city and intense pressure was exerted by the Mayor, by the Bishop, Dr. O'Dwyer, by the clergy and others, to have the arms surrendered.

Tribute is due to Weldon for his tact and patience during this time. A less humane man, confident of his overwhelming strength, might have precipitated bloodshed by raiding for the arms, as the Volunteers had orders to resist, and many desperate men would undoubtedly have done so. An Irishman and a Home Ruler, he stated later that there was danger of his supercession at this time. Colivet held out until the Friday following Easter Week, during which time the surrender in Dublin, Cork and other places had taken place. It then became evident to Colivet that Weldon would raid for arms, and he held a final meeting which decided to surrender the arms, not to the British military, but to the Mayor. This decision was taken, not without opposition, but no counter proposal was put to the meeting, and no vote was taken. When the result was conveyed to the Mayor, he suggested that the Battalion should march to the surrender under a white flag, or that a white flag should be attached to each rifle; a suggestion which was

peremptorily rejected.

And so, on the 5th May 1916, the surrender took place. A dark evening; R.I.C. men posted singly in the streets adjacent to the Town Hall; curiously silent knots of onlookers stood at corners. British military patrols were posted outside and inside the building. The men arrived singly or in small groups. They had been instructed to render the arms useless, and this order was effectively carried out. The rifle bolts were missing in most cases; corrosive acid had been poured down the barrels, some of the barrels were bent into half hoops; some were so thoroughly destroyed that they had to be surrendered in haversacks. Each man handed his rifle to Colivet, who then laid it before the Mayor. He in turn handed it to the officer in charge of the British military.

A tense situation developed at one stage. The Mayor left the Council Chamber temporarily, and a British officer took his place. Colivet at once stopped the proceedings and declined to hand over any more arms. The tension was relieved by the return of the Mayor, and the proceedings continued.

A few days later most of the Battalion officers were arrested, but were released after a few days, a further example of Weldon's magnanimity.

So ends the true inner story of Easter Week in Limerick, recorded as a tribute to the courage and loyalty of the Limerick Battalion. They were ready and willing to do their part, and if they did not go into action, the fault was not theirs.

Enquiry into Limerick's action:

Some time in 1917 a committee was appointed by the Executive of the Volunteers to inquire into the action of Limerick, Kerry and Cork during Easter Week, who submitted the following report in March 1918:

"We regret delay in completing the investigation re action of Cork, Kerry and Limerick during Easter Week 1916. This delay was unavoidable. Our decision regarding Cork is that, owing to conflicting orders, no blame can be attached to them for their inaction. Against Kerry no charges have been made; consequently their action through the whole matter was, we consider, justifiable. With respect to Limerick, we have read statements from all the principal men concerned. We have also investigated the dispatches alleged to have been received by them from Dublin and Kerry. Some of these dispatches they did not, in our opinion, receive at all, and those they did receive were so conflicting that we are satisfied no blame whatsoever rests on the officers and men of Limerick. With regard to the surrender of arms, it is to be deprecated that at any time arms should be given up by a body of men without a fight. But we do not see that any good purpose will be served by any further discussion on this matter as far as 1916 is concerned. This opinion will, we hope, be weighed should any similar circumstances arise in the future".

This report was accepted and ratified by the Irish Volunteers' Executive at a meeting on March 10th 1918. Colivet was profoundly dissatisfied with the part of the report dealing with the surrender of arms.

He demanded not merely a pious wish on the part of the Headquarters Executive but a definite verdict as to whether or not, the surrender of arms in Limerick in the circumstances prevailing there at the time was justifiable. He was also aware that he had detractors, and demanded that their charges should be brought into the light of day, so that he could deal with them. His representations elicited the following reply:

"The Irish Volunteers,
General Headquarters,
Dublin.

17th September, 1918.

Statement by
Irish Volunteer Executive regarding report issued
March 1918 by Committee of Enquiry into affairs of
Easter 1916.

Commandant Colivet of Battalion 1 Limerick City has on behalf of self and said Battalion objected to above report out of grounds (1) that he was not furnished with particulars of evidence tendered to the Committee so as to enable him to meet any adverse evidence or charges, (2) that in consequence of (1) the report has, in his opinion, pronounced unjustifiable the surrender of arms by the Battalion at the period mentioned.

The Executive have considered the matter and desire to say in regard to No. 1 as the report has not condemned Commandant Colivet it was not necessary to furnish him with evidence. In regard to No. 2 the report made no pronouncement on this head. This statement is being circulated to those persons to whom the original report was circulated.

Signed for and on behalf of I.V. Executive

(Signed) Cathal Brugha".

This ended the matter as far as Headquarters was concerned, although the echoes of the controversy which followed, and which wrought enormous damage to the subsequent movement, are still faintly to be heard in the city.

By way of postscript let me refer to an article criticising certain minor points in my paper "Limerick in 1916" which were published in the "Limerick Leader" on August 25th 1952, and upon which I propose to comment briefly:

(1) The statement that Most Rev. Dr. O'Dwyer was amongst those who exerted pressure to have the arms surrendered was contradicted. In support of that statement I quote from Colivet's personal narrative of the events of the period. "It was impossible" (he writes) "for the men to secure either arms or ammunition in their usual cachés, and existing orders were to the effect that attempts to disarm them were to be resisted by force. It was evident that this meant either a piecemeal surrender or a piecemeal butchery, for anything like an armed mobilisation was impossible at the time. Feeling amongst the citizens was very tense, and anxious representations were made by the clergy, by the Mayor and by the Bishop (Dr. O'Dwyer) to avoid bloodshed in the City".

(2) The statement that the I.R.B. members of the Battalion had known for some time what was going on was contradicted. I did not intend to suggest that

the plans were known to the members of the I.R.B. - Colivet himself did not know of the plans until the Tuesday of Holy Week. I do maintain, however, and I am sustained in my opinion by the testimony of I.R.B. men whom I have consulted since the article was written, that they were much closer to the central current of events than the other members of the Battalion, possibly by reason of their association with Jim Ledden.

(3) The statement that the woman who befriended the Countess was the same person who rioted on Whit Sunday, 1915, was contradicted. Enquiries have led me to accept the correction. I believe the two were near relatives, how near I cannot say. The members of the family will cheerfully admit manslaughter, but not to having stoned P.H. Pearse.

Signed:

Seamus O Goibin

(Seamus O Goibin)

Date:

8 Mí na Nollag 1952

8 Mí na Nollag, 1952

Witness:

Fiontan O Colmain

Fiontan O Colmain.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21

No. W.S. 765

Copy

Appendix
Page 1.

GOOD-FRIDAY 1916
REPORT.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BURO STAIRE MILITA 1913-21

No. W.S. 765

From the driver of No. 2 Car. (Sam Windrim)

At 12 O'Clock mid-day, Good-Friday, in Tommy McInerney's garage Catherine Street, Limerick, in the presence of J. Ledden C. Collins, J. Quilty and T. McInerney I (Sam Windrim) was asked if I would drive a motor on a very important mission, I said "yes", without even asking what the mission was. I then took an oath of secrecy (I.R.B.)

I was given practically no information only that my mission was a life and death one. I was then asked if I had any arms and in reply stated I had only a revolver. I was then ordered to be back in the garage at 2.0'Clock when I would receive from Tommy McInerney all particulars in connection with the business we were about to undertake. As arranged I met Tommy at the appointed hour and he had his own Maxwell Car all ready for the road with all the necessary spare parts including a large supply of petrol in tins.

I was ordered by Tommy to sit into his Car; having started the engin we drove to J. Quilty's house in Rosbrine where we were met by him. He had a New Brisco Car in his gagare all ready for the road. Tommy then took over the New Brisco Car of J. Quilty's and I took over Tommy's Maxwell; having started the cars Tommy suggested that he would lead the way. As the cars moved off J. Quilty wished us good luck and we were on the road to Kerry at 2.15 p.m.

The day was fine but had all appearences of turning bad, the cars were going well and after we had passed the village of Parrick's Well, we stopped the cars and I received full instructions from Tommy regarding the whole business.

He informed me that we were giong on a gun-running expedition and that we were to meet a party of men at 8 p.m. at Killarney Station. We were to make ourselves known to them by a pass-word and counter-sign, the pass-word being "ARE YOU FROM MICHAEL." The reply was "YES;" Who are you "I AN FROM WILLIAM" was to be their reply, followed up by us producing a fist of grass. I was further instructed by Tommy that once we had picked up our men, we were, if necessary, to shoot our way through.

I passed the remark to Tommy what was the object in giving such a lot of time to do the journey, namely six hours, which at the most was a twon and a half hour run. Tommy replied that in the event of punctures or engin trouble we would have ample time at our disposal to carry out repairs and that we would have no excuse but to be Killarney Station at 8 O' Clock. Stressing at the same time that everything depended on the landing of the arms that probably before we got back to Limerick the Country would be up.

He also mentioned that in the event of being challanged by the

R.I.C. as to our movements both of us should be on the one word and state; "we were going to Killarney to pick up a Colonel Warrick and his party."

After this conversation we started up the cars; driving at a very moderate speed we reached Newcastle West at about 8.30 p.m. On entering the town we were surprised at the large number of R.I.C. forming a cordon right across the road all armed with rifles and shouting at us to halt. They then ordered us out of the cars and began searching them thoroughly but never searched our person. They then asked us for our driving licence and to explain the errand we were on and what was the necessity for all the spare tins of petrol and why my licence was out of date. Tommy explained the position as follows:- "The two cars had been hired by wire for the Easter Holidays and he did not know where the tour would take him and in all probability he would be away from petrol supplies. Regarding my out-of-date licence he pointed out that I was not an ordinary motor driver and had asked me to help him out not knowing that my licence was out-of-date." This explanation went down with the R.I.C. so we were allowed to pass.

We drove on Tommy's car still leading. I naturally began to wonder at this display of military activities so early in the day and what was the reason for it. My mind for the moment became confused and from now on I had a feeling over me that the powers that be had some knowledge of the attempt at landing arms.

After leaving Newcastle West about two miles behind, I began to sound the car horn continuously as arranged with Tommy for the purpose of drawing his attention to stop the cars.

My object in stopping the two cars was to bring to Tommy's notice the similarity of the two cars numbers, which on examination showed my car (the Maxwell) to be 1724, and on his (the Brisco) I.K. 1742. I suggested to Tommy that to my mind the numbers were too near in the series since his car was practically new and the Maxwell was well over a year old, however, we could do nothing regarding the alterations in the number plate since the police had already taken note of them and particulars of the cars so that any adjustment now would in all probability lead to our arrest.

The weather was still holding good and the cars going well, we next passed through the town of Abbeyfeal, which appeared to be quiet and showed no signs of police activities of any kind. This was a bit of a tonic to me since I had not quite got over from the Newcastle West experience. After covering about ten miles of the road from Abbeyfeal we came to a sharp turn on the road. Tommy took this turn a bit on the fast side shooting past an armed patrol of two R.I.C. who were evidently taken by surprise. As he rounded the corner they dismounted to let him pass but they intercepted my car as I had to ease down in order to avoid colliding with the first car. I recognized one of the police to be a Sargent Kennedy (who at the time was over the weights and measures in Limerick.) He knew me at once, and after questioning me about my licence being out-of-date and I having given the same reply as was given to the police in Newcastle West he allowed me to pass,

at the same time he informed me that he recognized Tommy McInerney in the first car (Tommy's people and my own being publicans brought us into contact with Sargent Kennedy in the ordinary course of his duties while in Limerick.) However, as I drove away he expressed a wish to be remembered to both our mothers. Seeing him inclined to be friendly I just halted the car for a few moments and tried to ward off suspicion by asking him to use his influence with the police in Newcastle West not to press the summons for my licence with being out-of-date. He looked at me very hard and passed some remark to the effect that he hoped I would be lucky.

I then drove the car a bit faster for the purpose of overhauling Tommy who by this time had gone a few miles along the road. At about 6 p.m. we passed through Sastleisland and not seeing any R.I.C. in the village I came to the conclusion that they were all out on patrol work. We were now about thirteen miles from Killarney and then we had two hours to spare we drove slowly along until we reached an elevated position on the road. We could from this point see Killarney which I estimated to be about three miles. Tommy suggested this place would as good as any to get our hands full of grass (which I mentioned was required for identification purposes). We also divided our revolver ammunition. I received two boxes of .50. We were now beginning to get extra cautious and before moving off we took a good look around to make sure we were not under observation. I noticed two men on the hillside between us and Killarney. Pointing them out to Tommy I remarked that they looked like police men owing to their dark cloths and being stationary; to this he remarked that he would not be at all surprised, however, we decided to drive on as fast as possible so as to pass them before they came off the hill. This we succeeded in doing. We eventually arrived in Killarney at about 7,15 p.m. three quarters of an hour before the appointed time.

The weather had now changed; it became dark and misty and had all the appearance of continuing so for the night. Having had nothing to eat since we left Limerick we pulled up the car outside a public house which appeared to be the only one that had a light in it. On entering this house we called for two glasses of wine and enquired of the owner what time the next train would arrive. She informed us about 8 p.m. but they never arrived up to time.

Having finished our drinks we decided to leave the cars outside this house while we went to the Station for the purpose of examining the ground with a view to a quick get away if necessary after picking up our men. Having examined the ground round the Station, we returned to our cars; it was now raining hard and a few minutes to 8 O' Clock. Starting up the cars we drove to the Station, Tommy leading. On arriving at the Station gate our headlights showed up a sign post (which we had not heretofore observed) with a hand pointing to our right to the station entrance Tommy apparently mistook the sign as it was pointing to our right he turning to the right accordingly passed the entrance. I having recognized the station gate entered the yard and placed my car in

a position which allowed it to get away quickly. Tommy having discovered his mistake turned back, entered the station yard taking up his position behind me THUS LEAVING ME THE LEADING CAR.

I had not up to Tommy's arrival left the car. On placing his car in a position he immediately dismounted and was there and then approached by a man who spoke to him. I then got out of my car and joined the other two. The man gave the pass-word which was alright, we then hesitated and I asked him for their answer and was there anything else. He replying I should have it in my hand, I then produced the handful of grass.

This man was now about to talk a bit freely and loud, when I noticed a railway porter who was apparently attending to a lamp and at the same time watching us. At this time I asked Tommy over to see my car to listen to the engine running. I used this as an excuse to bring our men a reasonable distance away from the porter so that our conversation would not be heard. He informed Tommy that we were to take him a distance outside the town where he would bring us in touch with the rest of the party. He also suggested that in the event of being stopped by the police while going through to town he was to inform the police that he was Mike Warton's son from Waterville and we were taking the new car to sell it to his father and the second car was to take us home should the sale come off. We agreed to this with the greatest reluctance, as we thought that the changing of the story from Colonel Warrick one would be lead to confusion, as we were of the opinion that the police in Newcastle West has already phoned on the Warrick storey ahead of us.

This man insisted on having his way on this point, we now began to feel that we were instantly under his orders and had no alternative but to carry out his instructions, so we left the matters absolutely in his hands.

We then boarded the cars, he getting in with me as I was the leading car. When we were driving out of the station through the town I remarked to him that it was strange we did not see a policeman in Killarney considering their activities all along the road from Limerick.

That night had turned very murky and when we were once of the town this man began to study a map with the aid of a flash-lamp. I remarked to him what was this about, he replied that he wanted to locate the position of his men. I began to feel that this man had a very poor knowledge of the locality seeing that he should have to recourse to a map and we only about a half mile outside of the town.

I kept my eyes glued on the road watching all the time. After covering about two miles I noticed some men carrying suit-cases walking on the left-hand side of the road. I came to the conclusion that these were our men and as we approached them my man asked me to stop the car; having done so, I next found Tommy pulling up abreast of me. Two of the men got into the back of my car, the

other two going into Tommy's. Before making the next move I asked the newcomers if any of them could show me the road without the aid of a map and flashlamp. One spoke up and said that he could take me blindfolded; at the same time he ordered the man sitting beside me since we left Killarney to go over into the other car. This left me with two men and Tommy with three making a party all told, of seven men Tommy and myself included.

Before the cars moved off I shouted to Tommy which of us would lead but before I got a reply, the man who first said he knew the road ordered me to lead.

I then started off. Tommy followed close behind. The time being about 8.15 p.m. I asked my new leader if he could give me any idea of the distance we had to cover and the time allowed for doing it. The reply he made was that the rendezvous was in CAHER-SIVEEN and we should be there about mid-night. I suggested to him that I would drive slowly as I had been doing all day. He said no, but to drive on and we could wait outside Cahersiveen for the other car. I then started to drive on and we the time would now be about 9 p.m. Before reaching Killorglin my guide gave me a choice of roads. Up to this point on the road I could see clearly the head-lights of Tommy's car behind us; we were now about three miles from Killorglin. I decided on making a de-tour to the left on order to avoid the hilly section of the road. The road I was travelling on was fairly level but narrow. I now lost sight of the head-lights of the other car. On reaching Killorglin I drove up through the village square. Passing out what appeared to me to be a police barracks on our left hand side. There was two police-men standing at the door, one of whom made a move to stop us. The car was now gathering speed so I managed to top the hill and shot round the corner before the police reached the car thus getting clear away. I now let the car run for all it was worth.

This incident made all in the car feel, that should Tommy's car be still behind us it would in all probability be held up. At this time I was in doubt as to whether he was now leading me or still behind. as I was not in a position to judge if I had gained any time on him by making the de-tour or lost it; thus giving him the lead.

The time would now be close on 9;15 p.m. as we passed through Killorglin. The attitude of the police we were after passing naturally put us on the alert so we made up our minds to dash for it through the village of Glenbeigh which was about seven miles further on. I noticed as we passed along the road a number of common farm carts loaded with what appeared to me to be cabbage plants drawn up on the side of the road at different points. I suggested to my men, are they to be used for the purpose of barricading the road in the event of being pursued. To this question they made no reply. Having passed through the village of Glenbeigh without being stopped I began to feel that all was well for the balance of the journey. We were now about fifteen miles from Cahersiveen and having a few hours to spare I drove the car at a very moderate speed. The night was very black and it looked as if we were going

to have a down-pour of rain at any moment. Within a few miles of Cahersiveen and having a few moments to spare we decided to pull up the car. The time would now be about 10.30 p.m. and since we were not due in Cahersiveen until mid-night and being only a few miles from our destination, it was decided to wait up to the last minuet for the second car, as by this time we had come to the conclusion that we were still leading. On getting out I lifted the bonnet so as to have a ready excuse and to ward off suspicion in the event of being questioned by anyone. In the meantime my two men started whiling away the time with a small rope made up in the form of a lasso.

Although we were about an hour and a half at this point I had practically no conversation with the two men, and naturally I was made to feel that they had no confidence in me when they did not disclose their plans. On the other hand I did not question them since I felt it was up to them to put their cards on the table as we were all in the one boat.

It was now nearing mid-night and the other car not putting in its appearance we decided to carry on and make for Cahersiveen. AS soon as my men entered the car they asked me for two well known Limerick names and two streets there. I gave them Ryan and O'Brien Robert Street, and Carr Street. I then asked them what they required these names for. I was informed that they intended to use them should they be held up in Cahersiveen. I again reminded them that I had been held up already several times and that it was only reasonable to think that all particulars of the empty cars including their names and numbers have been wired on to the different police barracks. Nevertheless they decided to drive on and chance it.

We had not gone very far along the road when a whistle was sounded in front of us, several times. I then observed two R.I.C. in a crouching position on the road with revolvers pointing at us. I immediately put the question to my men, what was it. Drive on or stop. To which they replied stop. One of the police approached me and asked for my licence and also to let him know to where I was going. I gave him my licence and one of the men said we were going to Waterville. We were then ordered to get out of the car; as the two men went in front of the car with the police I remarked to them that I was to have a look at the tail lights and remained at the rear of the car while the police were taking the names and addresses of my two men by the light of the car head-lights. I heard one of them remark, "It is late ye are coming on the road" One of the men replied that we were in company with another car which was due to overhull us but not having turned we decided to drive on without them.

The police did not search the cars or even the suit-cases of the men. I then started up the engine and drove on, in about five minutes we were passing through the village of Cahersiveen, I then began to wonder where the rendezvouse was and all the men we were to meet. Cahersiveen was as deserted as a graveyard and not a soul

in sight in the place.

I heard something dropping from the car on to the road and at the sametime one of the men passed the remark IT WAS ALL UP. I could see now that the expected help in Cahersiveen had upset their plans.. I then asked them if they were dumping their gear and if so why not wait until we got outside the town and I would stop the car at a suitable place. To this they agreed. I then pulled up the car about a half a mile along the road, and they began to empty their contents of their suitcases over the ditch on the road on the right hand side. I noticed among the material they carried and were dumping a large axe and several coils of wire.

We now drove on, and I asked them what was the next move. They said to go on to Waterville. I remarked you have already informed the police that that place was our destination and as we have no particular business there it was a most likely the police would detain us there on our arrival.

I then suggested that it would be better if we could break back inland as we now appeared to be in a bit of a trap. One of the men proposed that we would go back through Killarney. I said I would provided it was a different road to the one we were after passing over.. The eldest of the two men who was acting as spokesman said he did know of another road back, but he thought it would be difficult for a motor car to travel over it. I remarked that if it was anykind of a reasonable road I would manage it. The fore-going conversation took place while we were still travelling towards Waterville. Having passed the road on our right hand side leading to Valincia. I was directed to continue straight on; having now covered a few miles I was ordered to take the first turn on the left I was then informed that we were on the road to Killarney. After travelling a short distance along this road I observed under the glare of the head-lights a man wearing leggings, jump the ditch to our right. He turned to look at us as we passed; he appeared to be very scared and had a scared look on his face. The thought struck me that he might have been one of the men who should have met us at the rendezvous in Cahersiveen. My men made no comment on this incident although I noticed that they were taking as much interest in this man as I was.

After covering several miles along this road it was suggested to me that we should stop and wait for break of day as the road was now becoming dangerous owing to the darkness. It was blowing and raining hard and as I had no knowledge of the road I stopped the car.

It would be now about 2 O'Clock on Easter Saturday morning. We sat in the car and no conversation took place between us either the men nor myself spoke. As daylight broke I was told to move ahead cautiously.

Our journey appeared to be up-hill with a sheer drop on our left side with a hill towering above us on the right. Suddenly we came on a smooth rocky surface of the road on which the car wheels would not grip. The car now began to drop back the brakes

refusing to hold her. As the car was now sliding down the road I observed a quarry on the hillside into which I backed her as I had no other alternative. On getting out to survey the ground we found our back wheels had come to rest within a foot of a large hole. Had the car backed any further I am of the opinion that not one of us would be alive to-day to tell what happened.

After seeing this I felt that sick feeling come over me and judging by the appearance of the other two they did not look so well at all. I suppose like myself they realised that it was a very narrow escape.

We then walked back up the road to examine the ground to see if it was possible to get the car over this bad patch. I decided to try, getting the other two and getting into the car and with their assistance by pushing we succeeded in getting the car over this difficult piece of ground.

After driving the car a short distance along this mountain road and on a bit of a short run then a turn to our right and I was then faced with a steep descent and in spite of all I could do I lost control of the car which started rushing down the road at a speed that made my hair stand on end. At the bottom of this road was an arched culvert which the car hit with such force that it jumped the ground for nearly fourteen feet and landing with a crash which compelled me to pull up as it was now possible to do so. On getting out of the car we found the right front spring broken.

I immediately set to work and carried out a temporary repair with the aid of the tyre levers and the short piece of rope which the men had been playing with the night before. I was now compelled to drive very slowly to the town owing to the nature of the repairs. Having arrived within a half of a mile of Killarney, the two men got out of the car and informed me that if they did not return within half an hour they were not coming back to the car. I was then handed two pounds by one of them before they left the car. After which I saw no more of them. Having waited for the specified time I decided to drive into Killarney on my own, and on arrival there at about 7.45 a.m. I pulled up the car outside the first shop I saw open, which happened to be a public house. I asked the man inside the counter if he could give me some breakfast; he asked me what I would like and I replied bacon and eggs. While these were being got ready I asked for a bottle of stout and a package of cigarettes as I had nothing to eat since I left Limerick. While waiting for my breakfast a sergeant came into the bar he was of the R.I.C. and he asked me for my driving licence. I showed it to him he remarked that it was out of date and I informed him that I had already been questioned about it the day before by the police near Newcastle West. He then asked me where I dropped the night before and where I was going to. I said Limerick. He then asked me what road I intended going by and I said via Tralee; he then left me and the shop.

During all this the shop owner informed me that two cars

loads of police had followed us out of the town the night before. I did not converse with him but I now began to feel that this man suspected me of being one of the drivers of the cars that passed through Killarney the night before. I did not enter the conversation with him but simply remarked after having drunk my bottle of stout that I now felt that fresh enough to continue my journey without the breakfast. I then left the shop and drove for Limerick not as I had informed the police but instead I took the road for Castleisland and I drove along I felt the car gradually getting more and more difficult to steer, therefore I made up my mind on nearing Castleisland, as soon as possible I should put up in the first available place in the town. I had not gone very far when up in one of the streets I notice a Hotel (Knights). The yard was open I drove right in and found to the back of the buildings where I left the car. I then entered the Hotel through the back door, ordered my breakfast and I then walked down a bit of the town to see if I could get any material to carry out a temporary repair on the car. After failing to get the necessary materials I returned to the Hotel and had my breakfast and enquired from the proprietor what was the earliest train I could get to Limerick. He suggested that I would get a train at Abbeyfeale if I would manage to drive there; it was now about 9.30 a.m. I informed him that owing to the condition of the car I could not get there.

I then discovered that I could get a train to Tralee where I would get a connection for Limerick. I then asked him to hold the car for a day or two when I would return for it with the necessary parts. This he agreed to do. I then made my way to the station and got the train for Tralee. On passing through Farranfore junction I noticed another train there with a carriage full of R.I.C. and a man with a long beard in amongst them. On arriving at Tralee Station I remained in the same carriage. I was then approached by a young Railway Clerk whom I happened to know. He asked me if I heard anything about the car that had gone into the sea the night before. I said no, he then told me that the whole incident is reported on the Cork Examiner. I then asked him to get one while he was doing so and R.I.C. constable got into the carriage and seated himself opposite me. I just received the paper from this chap when the train moved directly away. I immediately started to read the paper and continued to do so until the policeman left the carriage a few stations up the line. I now had the carriage to myself until I got to Limerick.

On my arrival at the station the first man I met was Dan Bourke whom I knew to be in the movement. I asked him if there were any G men at the platform gates. He said no, he did not see any. He then asked me what was I afraid of. I then told him the job that Tommy and I were on the night before and that I thought the whole thing a failure and from the account in the Cork Examiner that morning it would appear to me that it was Tommy's car that had gone into the sea at Killorglin. This I made as short as possible. Dan then suggested that I would wait with him for the Cork train to arrive and then he would leave the station with me. I then told him what had happened and then in as brief a manner as possible I

instructed him to go to Tommy's brother Jim and let him know how thing were.

After the arrival of the train I passed out of the Station with Dan without being held up. I then asked him to go at once to Jimmy McInerney and bring him here to me while I remained in a shop by the name of O'Dwyer's. Dan Bourke returned and informed me that Jimmy would not come to see me as he preferred to see me in his shop in Roches Street. When I arrived at the shop I found Jimmy very excited over a wire he had just received supposed to have been sent by Tommy. On reading it I remarked that Tommy would never send that wire and that it was a trap. The wire read as follows:- "Car Gone, Passangers Drowned Tommy Safe." Signed McInerney. Jimmy then asked me what I thought of it and why I thought it was a trap. I remarked that he would not word the wire in that way and then sign it McInerney. While we were discussing this matter I saw a well known detective (Mahony) peeping at us over the curtain of a window in a public house (O'Meally's) directly opposite us. I drew Jimmy's attention to this but he said let him go to hell.

I then left the shop with Jimmy and we made our way to the Volunteers Hall in Little Barrington Strsst. On our arrival there we found Jim Ledden and Sean O'Murthuille. They both started questioning me. I then gave them an account of my experience including what had happened with the booking clerk in Tralee station and how he had told me about the collapsable boat landing the men from the Submarine.

I then asked them what they would suggest that I should do; was I to avoid arrest or stay at home and await developments. They advised me to stand my ground and if again questioned by the police to repeat the Colonel Warrick story as arranged by Tommy and myself.

Then I returned home and after having something to eat I had a visit from detective O'Mahony at about 3.30 p.m. He inquired for my younger brother who had also a motor licence. I then questioned O'Mahony as to why he wanted my brother for and he replied that it was only a small matter in connection with someone driving in Kerry the previous day. I then informed him that I was driving in Kerry the day before, and what about it. I told him that I was asked by Tommy McInerney if I would help him out of a corner by driving his car for a week end as he had got a job for two cars. I agreed to drive his car for him. He then asked me to go to Killarney with him while he drove J. Quilty's New Brisco, I was to take his car. We were to pick up a party. I then repeated the whole of the Warrick story to him. G man O'Mahony appeared satisfied then he left me and as I thought satisfied. At about 11 p.m. that night I had another visitor he came again and this time he had another G man by name O'Sullivan with him. I was asked to repeat the statement which I had made to O'Mahony that G man O'Sullivan would like to hear it. After repeating the story they both left.

That night I did not sleep very well because the confusion of

the past two days was like a night-mare to me. The following morning (Easter Sunday) after attending 12 O'Clock mass I met Michael Guerin and he informed me that J. J. Quilty wished to see me and that if I would wait a few minuets he would be here. On his arrival the first news he had for me was that Tommy was arrested in Killorglan yesterday. He then asked me to go to his house and let him know all that happened since we parted on Good-Friday. We then took a rather circular route to his house in order to avoid as much as possible police and public. On my arrival there I met related to himself and Mick Guerin all that had happened to my car. I remained in Quilty's house until about 11 O'Clock that night. This was to avoid being seen coming out. In the meantime we discussed matters in connection with Tommy's car and also my experience of the map reading with the torch that night before. We came to the conclusion that Tommy was misdirected on the road. J. J. Quilty then suggested to me that we should show no intimacy in the event of being questioned by the police. On my way home along the quay's that night with Mick Guerin we turned up Cecil Street in order to get some cigarets. When Mick came out of the shop I drew his attention to G man O'Mahony standing at the corner of O'Connell Street and Cecil Street so Mick and I decided to separate.

I continued on up Cecil Street and passed O'Mahony on my way home. It was now nearing 11.30 p.m. and as I arrived within view of my house I was surprised to find the shop fully lighted since it was well after closing time. I met my brother who asked me where I was all day. I spoke to him in an undertone and asked him to shut up as I was under the impression G man O'Mahony was walking behind me. I also pointed out to him that owing to the shop being lit up at this hour that the police were surely on the premises and I expected to be arrested at any time as I had heard that Tommy McInerney was arrested early yesterday. I opened the Hall door with my latch key and fetired up stairs and after a moment or two I heard my Uncle calling out if that was Sam and on replying, he said to come down as that there was some men to see me. I shouted down to send them up as I got a bit of a wetting while coming in from the country. It would appear that the men were not anxious to come up, so eventually they decided to come up to my room. This time it was G man Walsh and G man O'Sullivan. On entering my bedroom Walsh informed me that I was under arrest under some section of the Defence of the Realm Act for aiding and abetting gun-runners in the Counties of Kerry and Limerick and that the arrest has been ordered by the Naval Officer Commanding Queens-town. Walsh then asked me to go with him quietly and he would tell my mother that I was asked to go to William Street Barracks to be interviewed. I asked him if he would give me a chance to change my wet clothes. He suggested that my Uncle would come down with me and bring any clothes that I might require. On my arrival at William Street Barracks I began to change my clothes and while doing so I was subject to a continuous run of questions relating to my movements on Good-Friday and Saturday. Walsh said to me that Tommy McInerney knew all about Good-Friday's business. I replied

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that if he did I was not aware of it. I was then put into a cell for the night. A friendly police gave me a few side-car cushions to sleep on for the night.

Early next morning I received my breakfast from home. It was hinted to me that I would probably be tried that evening so I made arrangements to get a solicitor. A few hours later I was visited by O Beian Moran (solicitor) in my cell. I gave him all particulars relating to what actually happened; and fearing that anyone of the police were listening to our conversation I spoke in a very low tone repeating the Warrick story. I then advised him to go at once and see Jimmy McInerney that he would probably give him more particulars than I could.

The court was held in the office and my statement read out by G man Walsh and when he had come to the part referring to what Tommy knew he left out the word "IF" so that my statement read that Tommy knew all about the Good-Friday business and that I did not. I therefore objected at once to my statement being altered by Walsh and repeated to the Court what I said to him viz. "If Tommy knew all about it, I was not aware of it." The District Inspector allowed the point and had the if inserted.

I was then remained for eight days and sent to Limerick County Gaol to await a further trial.

Signed

Sam W. Windrim
Witness *William Windrim*

