

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BURO STAIRE MILITA 1913-21
No. W.S. 789

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 789

Witness

Denny Mullane,
Ballybahallow,
Freemount,
Charleville,
Co. Cork.

Identity.

Member of Irish Volunteers - John's Bridge
(Co. Cork) Coy. 1914 - ;
Second-Lt. Freemount/Tullylease Company,
Newmarket Battalion;
Captain Freemount Company and A.S.U. 2nd Batt'n.
Subject. Cork IV Brigade.

Activities of Irish Volunteers, North Cork,
1917-1921.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil

File No. S.2061

Form B.S.M. 2

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STATEMENT

BY

DENNY MULLANE,

BALLYBAHALLOW, FREEMOUNT, CHARLEVILLE.

O/C., 'B' (FREEMOUNT) COMPANY, 2ND (NEWMARKET)
BATTALION AND A.S.U., CORK IV BRIGADE.

Sometime towards the end of 1917 a Sinn Féin Club was formed in Freemount by Michael McAuliffe, who was Secretary to the North Cork Executive. He was accompanied by Seán Moylan, who made a very "blood-thirsty" speech to a small handful of us on the necessity of fighting for a Republic.

On the 13th December, 1917, De Valera had a big meeting in Kanturk. We marched and drilled there. We had Volunteers at John's Bridge in 1914, and we disbanded at the "split".

Later on in December of 1917 Seán Moylan formed a Company of Volunteers in Freemount and Tullylease. Tom Morton, Kilberrinert, was appointed Company Captain of the amalgamated Company of Freemount and Tullylease. Jer. Denis Collins of Tullylease was elected 1st Lieut., D. Mullane, Freemount, 2nd Lieut., I cannot remember who in Tullylease was elected Adjutant. Bill Dwyer was Company Adjutant, but, I think, at a later date.

At this time I was aged 28 years; the ages of the other members ranged about 20 years. We were all members of the local hurling club and Tom Morton was our Captain. Some of the Tullylease men were joined since 1914. They mobilised for the 1916 Rising at Barley Hill, near Newmarket,

where they waited all day for the German rifles. There were two in particular - Patrick P. Murphy, R.I.P., who was then Vice Battalion O.C. of the Newmarket Battalion, and Johnny Linehan, R.I.P., who was later Battalion I.O. At this time County Cork was known as the Cork Brigade and Newmarket Battalion as the 19th Battalion.

The Newmarket Battalion was the old 19th Battalion, a unit of the Cork Brigade. After the Convention in Dromahane, November 22nd, 1919, it was the 6th Battalion, Cork 11 Brigade, and shortly before the Truce the 2nd Battalion, Cork IV Brigade.

It may be interesting at this stage to put on record the names of the men who first joined Freemount Half Company and who made the Battalion and Brigade organisation possible. The following are the names :

Tom Morton.	Michael Madden (R.I.P.)
Robert Keane.	Denis Noonan (R.I.P.)
Wm. O'Dwyer.	Michael Collins.
Seán Noonan (R.I.P.)	Jer. Brennan.
Denis Rahilly.	Richard Collins (R.I.P.)
John Sheahan.	Michael Noonan (R.I.P.)
Simon Browne (R.I.P.)	John Brennan.
John Costello.	D. Mullane.
Patrick McCarthy (R.I.P.)	

In March, 1918, an order was issued to all Companies to make a collection of arms and ammunition in their areas. Tullylease and Freemount got no such order, but it was

decided to make a collection of all arms, etc., on April 19th. The men who took part were :

John Brennan.	Mr. Barry.
Tom Morton.	Seán Noonan (R.I.P.)
William Dwyer.	R. Keane.
Denis Noonan (R.I.P.)	Patrick McCarthy (R.I.P.)
D. Rahilly.	D. Mullane.

The Captain of Liscarroll Company - Tom Kelleher (R.I.P.) - used stay with me to evade arrest. The last night he stayed at my house - April 15th, 1918 - he gave me to understand that all Company Officers were notified to go "on the run". I passed on the information to the Company Captain, Tom Morton, but, owing to some misunderstanding, that order did not come to our Company, with the result that on the morning of May 8th, at 5 a.m., Seán Noonan, R.I.P., Paddy McCarthy, R.I.P., and Pad Murphy, R.I.P., were arrested. Tom Morton escaped as he slept away from home. Sixteen soldiers and one R.I.C. travelled on each lorry to the wanted men's houses. The party in each lorry was guided by a member of the R.I.C. from Freemount R.I.C. Barracks. Paddy McCarthy was arrested in Matt Fitzpatrick's house in Commons, Freemount. His aunt, Mrs. Matt Fitzpatrick, told the military "No wonder ye couldn't beat the Germans when it took sixteen of ye to arrest a gorsoon".

On the 20th February, 1918, Sir Bryan Mahon had prohibited the carrying of arms. Then came the arrests, which were carried out under Lord French's regime. It was the first time military were sent to help the R.I.C.

to make arrests. Actually no warrants were produced when they came looking for me.

My house was raided by a party of R.I.C. and military. The R.I.C. were in charge of Sergeant Dennehy, Kanturk R.I.C. Barracks, Constable Mick Murphy, Freemount R.I.C. Barracks, was there to identify me. There were five other unidentified R.I.C. and one who wore a blue uniform with red seams on his trousers. The search inside and outside the house lasted for almost two hours. Sergeant Dennehy guided a party of military from Kanturk to the house of Jack Connell, Derrygalun, Kanturk, on August 16th, 1920. Jack Connell and Paddy Clancy were captured and shot out of hand. Both men were Kanturk Battalion Officers.

The R.I.C. Barracks in Freemount was occupied by Sergeant Donoghue, Constables Mick Murphy, "Mac" Murphy, Woodbourne, McDermott and Reilly.

On the evening of the arrests all the shops in the village of Freemount were visited by Captain T. Morton and orders given that nothing was to be sold to the R.I.C. The barrack woman was also ordered out. The shopkeepers obeyed the order and the food, etc., was brought in from the D.I.'s headquarters in Charleville. Captain T. Morton also had scouts out, two during the night to keep the R.I.C. under observation, and one during the day to see that there would be no intercourse with the R.I.C. We had occasion to hold only one courtmartial on one man.

Seán Noonan got twelve months. The R.I.C. witness could not prove whether the arms he was carrying on the 19th April was a shot-gun or a wooden gun. Paddy McCarthy got eighteen months and Pad Murphy nineteen months, as he seemed to be in charge of the party. Pad Murphy was released from prison in poor health when he had nine months served. (The 'flu was raging at the time). Seán Noonan served his full time in Belfast and Paddy McCarthy was deported with Austin Stack and four more from Belfast to Manchester from where he escaped October 25th, 1919. Paddy McCarthy escaped from Manchester with Austin Stack, Fionáin Lynch, C. Connolly, Doran (about whom the big jail strike was carried out in Belfast for political treatment); Cassidy, Lyons, Duggan, Keating and Gaffney.

The President of the Court held at the Victoria Barracks, Cork, was Major Whittaker (King's); Lieut. Gover prosecuted.

The following may be of interest:-

SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE IN THE CASE OF
PATRICK MURPHY.

FIRST WITNESS: No. 67842 Const. Thomas McDermoth, R.I.C. Freemount, states:-

"On 19th April, 1918, about 3½ p.m. I was standing at the door of the R.I.C. Barracks, Freemount, I saw a party of 12 men in military formation in the street about 25 yards from the Barracks.

FIRST WITNESS.
(Contd.)

Patrick Murphy, now present, was in command of the party. John Noonan and Patrick McCarthy were in the ranks. Dennis Mullane and Thomas Morton came out of Sheehan's publichouse, one of them carrying a double-barrelled shot-gun. He went up to Patrick McCarthy and handed the gun to him, also something which I took to be cartridges. McCarthy loaded both barrels of the gun. Morton and Mullane fell-in the ranks. Murphy gave the command - "Company, Right Turn", "By the right, Quick March". The party marched a few yards to the next publichouse - Taylors, where Murphy gave the command - "Left Turn", "Halt". Morton and Mullane left the party and entered Taylor's house, and, after a few minutes, came out again and joined the party. Murphy then gave the command, "Right Turn", "Right Wheel", "Quick March". The party marched to Barry's house where Murphy gave "Mark Time". Morton and Mullane went to Barry's door and had a conversation with Richard Barry and, after a few minutes, rejoined the party. Murphy moved the party to the Creamery, where they turned in and were lost to my view. After about 15 minutes Morton and Mullane and two others came towards Taylor's house. Morton and Mullane entered Taylor's. One

FIRST WITNESS.
(Contd.)

of them (I can't say which) had a single-barrelled shot-gun. After a few minutes they came out, both having shot-guns, and went in the direction of Lisscarroll".

(Sgd.) Thomas McDermott. Const.

Accused declines to cross-examine this witness.

SECOND WITNESS.

No. 67947 Const. Chas. Woodbyrne, R.I.C., Freemount, states:-

"On the 19th April, 1918, about 3½ p.m. I was in the R.I.C. Barracks, Freemount. From the door I saw about 12 persons in military formation about 50 yards from the Barracks. Patrick Murphy, now present, was in command of them. Thomas Morton and Denis Mullane came out of Sheehan's public-house, Morton having a double-barrelled shot-gun, which he handed to Patrick McCarthy, who was in the ranks. McCarthy appeared to load the gun. Morton and Mullane fell in, in the ranks, and Patrick Murphy gave "Right Turn", "Quick March". The party marched to opposite Taylor's public-house. Morton entered the shop, and returned after three or four minutes, and again fell in, in the ranks. Murphy gave the command "Quick March", "Right

SECOND WITNESS.
(Contd.)

Wheel". The party marched to Barry's public-house. Morton and Mullane conversed with Richard Barry for some minutes. The Company then went towards the Creamery and were lost to view. After about 15 minutes four men came towards Taylor's public-house. Mullane and Morton were two of the men. Mullane had a single barrelled gun. After a few minutes they came out, both having guns".

(Sgd.) Charles Woodbyrne. Const.
67947.

Accused declines to cross-examine this witness. R.P. 4(c), (d) and (3) having been complied with.

Taken down by me in the presence of accused at Cork Male Prison, the 8th May, 1918.

(Sgd.) J.J. Carroll, Capt.

CHARGE SHEET.

1ST CHARGE:

Reg. 48.

D.R.R.

The accused, Patrick Murphy, of Knockawilliam, Co. Cork, civilian, is charged with doing an act prohibited by Regulation 48 of the Defence of the Realm Regulations, namely, aiding and abetting an act prohibited by an order made under the said Regulations, namely, the order

1ST CHARGE:
(Contd.)

made by the Competent Military Authority for Ireland, dated 20th February, 1918, under Regulation 9 A.A. of the said Regulation -

in that he

at Freemount, Co. Cork, on the 19th April, 1918, aided and abetted in the carrying firearms by one Patrick McCarthy, civilian, and one John Noonan, civilian.

2ND CHARGE.

Reg. 9 E

D.R.R.

Doing an act prohibited by Reg. 9 E of the Defence of the Realm Regulations and the Military Exercises and Drill Ireland Order, 1916, made in pursuance of the said Regulation, namely, being concerned in movements of a military nature in an area in which the said Reg. 9 E is in force,

in that he

at the time and place specified in the first charge, practised a party of men in movements of a military nature.

Signature

Commanding Cork Garrison

Place Cork.

Date: 15th May, 1918.

The Unit with which
the accused is in
custody

To be tried District Courtmartial.

Place: Cork.

Date: 15/5/18.

G. Dray. Major General.
Commanding Southern District.

From 1918 onward there was not anything of much interest. On the 15th of August, 1918, I read the Sinn Féin Manifesto to an audience of four R.I.C. and the congregation coming out from second Mass.

On the 7th February, 1919, on an order from Sinn Féin Headquarters, we stopped the Duhallow Fox Hounds from hunting at Seeds' fox-covert. There were English Army Officers hunting with the foxhounds, who had been sitting on courtmartial on our fellows.

On November 22nd, 1919, an I.R.A. convention was held in Dromohane, Mallow Battalion area, when Cork Brigade was changed to Cork I, II and III. North of the Blackwater was to be Cork II. It was also proposed and passed that the oath of allegiance be taken by each member, to take effect until he reached the age of 45. I spoke against the oath of allegiance. I was guided by the failure of secret oath bound societies in past history. A good man was not in need of the oath, and it was useless to a slacker.

Sometime towards the end of 1919 the sum of £193 (One hundred and ninety-three pounds) was subscribed to the Dáil Loan.

Sometime in May, 1920, there was an election of Officers and committee of the local Sinn Féin Club.

Michael Collins was elected President, Ned

Morton outgoing,

Denny Noonan, Vice President.

Paddy Carthy, Treasurer.

D. Mullane, Secretary.

Jack Brennan)
Tom Morton)
Jer. Brennan)
Bill Dwyer) formed the Committee.
Seán Noonan)
Denis Foley)
Mick Madden)

There was also formed the Parish Arbitration Court. The Court sat regularly for the hearing of various claims, such as the validity of a will and poaching for hares within the coursing club preserves.

On February 2nd, 1920, the Charleville Battalion arranged with the Freemount Company that a mock attack be made on Freemount R.I.C. Barracks, so that a lorry load or two of military be sent from Buttevant to the relief of Freemount. The attacking party was in positions around the barracks when a despatch rider came from Lisscarroll to inform us there was to be no attack, as the Charleville Battalion would not have the trench made on the Buttevant-Churchtown road in time to coincide with our attack in Freemount. The yarn went out that we could not attack as the ammunition did not turn up to us. Next night the village of Freemount was surrounded by military from Buttevant in expectation of the attack being that night.

Early in March the R.I.C. left Freemount.

On the 3rd April, 1920, Freemount R.I.C. barracks was burned and blown up by an order from Headquarters.

Early in May a section of Volunteers was mobilised for an attack on the R.I.C. guard on the mail car from Charleville to Ballagh. The local Volunteers also helped to arrest three men who robbed Rockchapel Post Office. They were brought into the Company area and guarded there for a time.

There was a successful raid on the mails at Banteer railway station on 9th July, 1920. Seán Noonan (R.I.P.), Paddy Carthy (R.I.P.), Jack Duane and Bob Keane took part. The local mails were raided on four occasions by Wm. Dwyer, Jack Duane, Jack Larkin and Jer. Duane. One was sometime in 1918 and the other three were in 1920 and 1921.

In May, 1920, the following took part in the burning of the Courthouse, Newmarket :

Jack Duane.	Mick Collins.
Paddy Carthy.	Con Ahern.
Bob Keane.	

On May 12th, a party was sent to guard the polling booth in Charleville.

June 21st, 1920 - the Drumcollogher Courthouse burning took place. Through some unexplained cause a premature explosion took place while members of the burning party were inside the building. The roof was blown clean off and of the four inside only Seán O'Farrell escaped. Buckley was burnt to a cinder; Dave Brennan and Billy Danagher were taken away alive but both died later. One

of the victims, Dave Brennan, was removed to Nicholas Kenneally's house in Kieltane, Freemount, where he died and was buried at midnight in Knawhill cemetery, near Freemount. The Volunteers turned out to guard the house and funeral, one of whom, Mick Madden (R.I.P.), brought the coffin from Newmarket under a load of straw.

Later in July and August, Courses in drill, tactics, organisation and the use of small arms were held in an empty house near Lisscarroll in the Charleville Battalion area under Seán O'Sullivan from Brigade H.Q. The classes were for the men of the Charleville Battalion. Four of us from Freemount Company attended as the venue was quite near.

Sometime in May, 1920, Freemount cut adrift from Tullylease, as it was considered that both half Companies would do better as two fully fledged Companies. Freemount held an election of Officers. Jack Duane was appointed Captain; Bob Keane, 1st Lieut.; Mick Collins, 2nd Lieut.; Denny Noonan, Quartermaster and Dispatch; Tom Morton, Adjutant; Ned Mark Morton, No. 1 Section Commander; Jim Nagle, No. 11 Section Commander; Con Ahern, No. 111 Section Commander; Jer. Brennan, Intelligence; Jim Leary, Signalling; Denny Rahilly, Signalling; Mick Ahern, Scouting; Con Brown, Transport; Pat Barry, Musketry; Dick Collins, Police; Jer. Duane, First Aid.

August, 1920: The following travelled to Newmarket for the attempted attack on a curfew party:-

Bob Keane.

Jack Duane.

Jack Larkin.

Jer. Brennan.

Paddy Carthy.

Con Ahern.

Pack Barry.

Mick Ahern.

I think it was in July that Seán Noonan, Bill Dwyer, Jer. Duane and myself interviewed the relatives of the only two R.I.C. men belonging to the Company area to get them to resign from the Force. Both of them, Denis Coleman and Ned Kelleher, remained on. The former is in England and the latter in the U.S.A. and drawing R.I.C. pensions.

25th July - Sunday: A party of the 17th Lancers occupied Lisscarroll Castle and remained in occupation until October 11th, when they left in a hurry. The reason for their quick departure was: I got the loan of the MSS. of Sir Philip Percival, Earl of Egmont, who was granted extensive tracts of land in the districts of Churchtown, Lisscarroll and Kanturk. Captain Raymond was then in charge of the garrison in Lisscarroll Castle. In a letter from Captain Raymond to Sir Philip, dated January, 1646, he mentioned that he had found a spring well in one of the towers. In the event of a siege this would be very valuable. I made a note of this and other items of interest with the intention of discussing them with an old man who lived in the vicinity of the Castle. The Lancers ~~raided~~ my house on several occasions, sometimes twice a day. The last raid was on the 9th of October, 1920. They found my notes on Lisscarroll Castle and took them away. They must have thought that the notes referred to some underground passages that the I.R.A. meant to utilise for

a surprise attack.

They spent a couple of days digging in the Castle green or enclosure and left hurriedly on the 11th October, the day of Ballydrahane ambush. We understood, at the time, the strength of the 17th Lancers in the Castle to be 80, but the correct number was 40.

Ballydrahane is situate on the Kanturk-Newmarket road in the Kanturk Battalion. Seán Noonan and Paddy Carthy from Freemount Company were members of the Brigade A.S.U. (Flying Squad). The Brigade Squad was billeted in Freemount Company area, where they retreated after the capture of Mallow Barracks, September 28th. Paddy Carthy took part in this engagement. Dick Willis of Mallow, who was a painter, when doing some job of painting inside the barracks, saw the possibility of overpowering the guard and making a quick getaway with the captured arms and ammunition. It was decided that Paddy be also on the job in the pretence he was the "Clerk of Works". In this way he could move around freely inside the barracks with a tape measure and sheaf of papers under his arm and take in all details of the plans for the capture.

Paddy Carthy had previously joined the Brigade "Flying Squad" in August and held the rank of Squad Quartermaster.

Freemount Company was Battalion and Brigade Headquarters from the 28th September until the 11th October. Paddy was a native of Rowels, Meelin, Newmarket. He came to live with his aunt, Mrs. Fitzpatrick, of the "House of

Commons", Freemount.

On the morning of the 11th October the Brigade Squad was transported and scouted to the scene of Ballydrahane ambush. Paddy Carthy and Seán Noonan took part in this engagement. Four days later Jack Brennan was arrested in his home and detained in Cork Detention Barracks. He was tried by Courtmartial on the 13th and 14th March, 1921, on the capital charge of the murder of Sergeant Jackson at Ballydrahane ambush. The evidence went to prove that he supplied milk to Freemount Creamery half an hour before the ambush took place. It was a case of mistaken identity. Ernie O'Malley was the man in charge, and they mistook Jack Brennan for him.

Paddy Carthy was killed in action against the Tans in Millstreet on the night of November 22nd. He was buried by lantern light in Kilcorcoran graveyard in the Lismire-Kanturk parish on 23rd November. His body was reinterred in the family burying ground, Clonfert, Newmarket, October, 1922. The coffin lay overnight in his native church, Meelin, with an all day and night guard in relays. The funeral cortege was over three miles long. It reached from Clonfert to Meelin. The volleys fired over the grave were heard in Meelin and the funeral procession was still moving out of the village.

From December 6th to the 9th there was a training camp in Ballinaguila, Tullylease Company area, for the newly-formed Battalion Squad. There were also some twelve Volunteers from each Company in training for active service.

The old Battalion Flying Squad was composed of the following members :

Seán Moylan, O.C.
Dan Brown, Quartermaster.
Mick "Mike Denny" Sullivan.
Bill Moylan (R.I.P.)
Bill Keeffe.
Tom McNamara.
Dan Riordan.
Jim Riordan.
Johnny Jones.
Seán Healy.
Dan Vaughan.
Con Morley.
Davy McAuliffe (R.I.P.)
Paddy "Jamesy" Dennehy, Signals.
Jim Cashman do

(I do not remember if we had any Adjutant).

The following members of Freemount 'B' Company took part in Meelin ambush, January 24th, 1921:-

Jack Duane.	Mick Ahern.
Bob Keane.	Mick Collins.
Con Ahern.	Jim Nagle.
Bill Dwyer.	Jack Larkin.
Pak Barry.	Mick Madden (R.I.P.)
Jim Leary (R.I.P.)	Denny Mullane.

In January, 1921, the military from Buttevant posted up a proclamation in the bar of each public-house in Freemount. The substance of the proclamation was that the residents of the village would be held responsible for any acts contrary to D.O.R.A. They also formed a "civil guard" of the old men of the village: Tom Hayes was put in charge. The duty of the "civil guard" was to report to Buttevant Barracks any disaffection in the district.

That night we entered the village. Dividing into ~~five~~ parties we entered the five public-houses and tore down the proclamations. The civil guard never reported the matter. When the military next visited the village about a week later, they arrested Dick Barry and Denis Sheahan, in whose houses were posted proclamations. The two prisoners were taken to Buttevant Barracks. They were sent home after a few days on condition that they report themselves at Buttevant within a week. At the end of the week they were captured by our fellows when on their way to report at Buttevant. They were court-martialled on the same day at Brigade Headquarters (Duanes of Ballinla, Freemount) and left off with a strict caution not to travel to Buttevant or have any communication with the military.

On February 6th, 1921, Freemount chapel was raided during Mass by a party of military, with two of the R.I.C. as spotters - McDermott and Reilly. I got away.

February 16th, 1921: Two privates from Buttevant were captured on the Freemount-Kanturk road. Both were

unarmed and posed as deserters. They were tried by court-martial and released.

When Bill Dwyer, Battalion Quartermaster, was arrested on 28th April, 1921, he was identified by the two privates - Jack Butler and Harry Honeywell - as being a member of the courtmartial. Bill Dwyer received a sentence of seven years' penal servitude. He was released in January, 1922.

February 22nd, 1921: Information was received at Battalion and Brigade Headquarters (Duanes, Ballinla, Freemount) that Colonel Hope, Buttevant Barracks, was to hunt with the Duhallows. The hounds were to meet that day^{at 11 a.m.} at John's Bridge, Ballybahallow, in Freemount 'B' Company area. The Battalion Flying Squad was billeted in Freemount Company area. Positions were taken up around the fox-covert. Members of the hunt were arriving. One, riding a horse and leading a horse, broke away before reaching the Bridge. Dan Browne thought he was a civilian and did not like to fire on him when he refused to halt. He was Colonel Hope's groom. He galloped to Castlecree Post Office and 'phoned to Colonel Hope to stay in Buttevant. There was a 'round-up' of the district later on in the day. The Flying Squad was outside the encircling movement. Mike Reilly, (R.I.P.), of Liscarroll was a hostage in one of the lorries.

I think it was at this time Seán Noonan was appointed O/C. of the 6th Battalion.

March 3rd and 4th: The squad took positions at the Kerry side of the 6th Battalion. On the 4th, a car passing the Bower, near Barraduff, containing members of the American Relief Committee, and an English journalist, travelling to Killarney was held up by some of our party. I knew the party in the car would not keep their mouths shut in Killarney and later on in the day I noticed a man leaving a farmyard on a saddle horse and galloping in the direction of Killarney. That finally decided things for me, so I voiced my suspicions. As a result, all the ambush positions were evacuated. The 6th Battalion Squad was put in position near the road to cover the retreat of the main body (members of a Kerry Flying Squad and the Charleville Battalion Squad) in case my suspicions were correct, and in the event of we being surrounded. As a matter of fact, there was a false alarm received by Paddy "Jamesy" Dennehy from his signal men on a neighbouring hill, but the car they had seen turned out to be a doctor's on a sick call.

That night we vacated our positions at the Bower. Next morning we arrived at Clonbannin and took up our ambush positions. Clonbannin is about six miles from Millstreet and the same distance from Kanturk. Two lorries of military passed through our positions in the morning. The land-mines failed to explode. Towards evening a convoy of military in lorries, an armoured car and a touring car drove into the ambush position. The Northern side of the position was held by the Newmarket

Battalion "Flying Squad" and the Charleville Battalion "Flying Squad". The fight lasted over an hour. General Cummins was killed. The Newmarket and Charleville Squads retreated after the fight by Loumanagh to Knockavorheen, Kiskeam. Jack Duane and D. Mullane from Freemount Company were members of the attacking party.

Commencing March 21st, 1921, Freemount Company broke six bridges and worked at some others outside the Company area.

When all the bridges were destroyed the trenches across the roads were next made, commencing at the end of April and continuing on to the beginning of July.

I was appointed Company Captain in place of Jack Duane who was Company Captain, but was caught with arms on the 14th of April, 1921. My first job was to select suitable scouting positions. These positions generally overlooked a stretch of country surrounding the Company area, as well as having a good view of the roads approaching the Company area. These positions roughly encircled the Company area. In this way a party of military were unable to invade the Company area without being seen by the "scouts" or sentries.

The duty of the "scouts" in the event of a raid was to notify any wanted men in the Company area or any others that were billeted in the area, such as the "Flying Squad" and the sentries guarding Battalion or Brigade Headquarters. It was also their duty to warn the neighbouring Company scouts.

The selected scouting or lookout positions in the Company area were:-

No. 1 Section:

Larkin's Hill, near Tarrant's Cross
Kenny's Cross.
Ballinla Hill.

No. 11 Section:

John's Bridge (Fox Covert).
Mullane's Cross.

Healy Kiln (one of the seven
ancient Irish scouting
positions).

No. 111 Section:

Kilnockin (Árd na Cille).
Jeffries' Hill.
Forrest's Hill.

I held the post of Company O.C. for only a couple of weeks and as there was an intensive destruction of bridges, etc., in the Brigade area I was needed to carry out the programme.

Seán Noonan, Paddy Carthy and Pad Murphy were arrested on the morning of the 8th of May. In order to prevent further arrests, sentries or "scouts" (the term by which they were known in our Battalion) were placed in positions overlooking the R.I.C. barrack. In this way the R.I.C. would have difficulty in leaving the barrack at night without being seen by the "scouts". If any of the R.I.C. were seen to leave the barrack it was arranged to ring the chapel bell as the quickest means of calling the

Volunteers into action. There was never any need to ring the bell as the R.I.C. discovered they were being watched. When the Brigade "Flying Squad" was billeted in the Company area after the capture of Mallow Barracks, September 28th, it was agreed that the ringing of the bell was the best alarm signal. The "scouts" were supplied with tin horns at the end of April, 1921.

There was a continuous chain of scouts in the twenty-four hours - two men in each position during the night and one in each position during the day. In seventy-two hours eighty-one men were needed.

The knocking of bridges and trenching of roads were night operations, when all the Company turned out. Added to all this, a special guard was on Battalion Headquarters in the Company area from April until the truce. Very often Brigade Headquarters and Divisional Headquarters were in the Company area and had to be specially guarded. Then there were the Parish Arbitration Courts that were guarded by the Republican Police and Volunteers.

There were forty-one farmers' sons, thirty-eight farm labourers in Freemount Company, one tailor's son, one mason, one creamery manager, one M.D., one retired bank clerk.

On the 4th May, a party of British camped at Knawhill at the eastern side of the Company area. Next morning there was a big 'round-up' in the Tullylease Company area.

10th July: Acting on a general order, the telephone was taken from Freemount Post Office.

There were four dumps in the Company area for the safety of rifles, ammunition, exploders, shot-guns, Company records and military equipment passing through the area. The standard size of the dumps was: 5' x 2' x 2', wooden and proofed with felt.

There was a foundry in 'H' Company area, Kiskeam, for the manufacture of bombs. There were special men required in each Company to supply scrap metal and casting sand. Each Company in turn supplied men for work in the foundry.

In January, 1921, came a general order from Headquarters to destroy bridges and make trenches in roads to obstruct enemy transport.

The following bridges in the Company area were destroyed:-

John's bridge, across the Allow, with a single arch span of 45 feet.

Freemount bridge, across the Allow.

Malichs on the Tarrant's Cross-Milford road.

Cromoge bridge on the Tarrant's Cross-Charleville road.

Matt Fitzs. bridge on the Knawhill-Liscarroll road.

Regan's bridge on the Tarrant's Cross-Liscarroll road.

Freemount bridge was destroyed in this way: An anvil braced to a long plank and balanced on a trestle was used underneath the arch of the bridge. A rope was attached to the free end of the plank and pulled on by six men in the style of bell-ringing, so that the smith's anvil struck at

the key stones from the underneath side of the arch. Freemount bridge was demolished in a very short time by this method. John's bridge was partly demolished by charges of gelignite, but, as this was in small supply owing to its use in land mines, the main work was done, as in all bridges, by crowbar and sledge-hammer.

The following is the location of the trenches:-

Currans of Cools - on the Tarrant's Cross-Dromcollogher road.

Johnny John's Cross, Ballinla - on the Tarrant's Cross-Dromina road.

Clearys, Knockaneda - on Knockaneda-Liscarroll road.

Trench at boundary between Ballybahallow and Knockloona Liscarroll.

Padd's Cross, Ballybahallow.

Lane, old road Freemount to Kilbrin, through Ballybahallow.

Vaughan's, Kilnockin, Freemount, Kanturk road.

Ahern's Cross, Kilnockin, Bawnmore-Geoffrey's Cross road.

Rodney Tourard - Freemount-Newmarket road.

Jim John Noonan's - Freemount-Broadford road.

Jack Bowler's, Ballybahallow-Freemount road.

In all, six bridges and eleven trenches.

The trenches cut the road from ditch to ditch. They were 16 feet wide and 3 or 4 feet deep. All the stuff dug out had to be carted away, as well as any broken stones in the vicinity, so that they could not be filled in again with rounded up labour. The ordinary traffic was turned in to the adjoining field.

See the sketch plan showing demolitions and obstructions carried out by the Company.

On the 25th April, 1921, a British soldier, who gave his name as Private Fielding, and who posed as a deserter from Buttevant Barracks, was captured by Denny Noonan, who was in charge of a party of three, namely, Mick Collins, Con Browne and Jack Sheahan. He was tried by courtmartial and executed as a spy in the Charleville Battalion area. Later, I learned from the regiment's official "Lily White Magazine" that he was a high ranking, highly efficient Intelligence Officer. No more would-be deserters visited the area.

There was one very efficient dispatch rider, Jack Costello of Kilberrihert, Freemount. I may say he gave full-time service from the 8th May, 1918, to the finish. He was not classed as a Company dispatch rider. His duties were to travel from Tullylease Company Headquarters to Divisional and Brigade Headquarters in Lombardstown area every other day in all classes of weather. White and Rahilly, who were from the Charleville and 'E' (Rockchapel) Companies as dispatch riders on this particular route were captured in the Kilbrin Company area, Kanturk Battalion, carrying despatches.

Jack Costello had some marvellous escapes. On one occasion he went on the roof of a house and continued at thatching whilst the military were searching the house. He walked into a search party in another house and worked at making "scallops" for thatching. When warming himself

to the fire in a farmer's kitchen, a search party of soldiers came. He pretended the woman of the house was his wife and he ordered her to make tea for the "poor devils". On another occasion one of the soldier's was lame and Costello discovered the cause was a nail, so he remedied the trouble. He delivered his dispatches every time.

The Companies in the 2nd Battalion, Cork IV Brigade, 1st Southern Division, were:-

'A'	"	Tullylease.
'B'	"	Freemount.
'C'	"	Meelin.
'D'	"	Newmarket.
'E'	"	Rockchapel.
'F'	"	Taur.
'G'	"	Kingwilliamstown, now Ballydesmond
'H'	"	Kiskeam.
'I'	"	Knocknagree.
'J'	"	Umeraboy.

Freemount 'B' Company had 84 men on the roll on the 11th July, 1921. Of this number four men were in jail.

The number of engagements in which members of the Company took part are:

Ballydrahane	-	October 11th, 1920.
Meelin	-	January 4th, 1921.
Clonbannin	-	March 6th, 1921.
Rathcoole	-	June 11th, 1921.
Abbeyfeale	-	June 5th, 1921.

The following is an account of the fight at Abbeyfeale.

ABBEYFEALE - JUNE 5TH, 1921.

Previous to the attack on the R.I.C. patrol at Abbeyfeale, June 5th, 1921, the 2nd Battalion, Cork IV Brigade, was in consultation with some members of the West Limerick Brigade in order to bring off an attack on the R.I.C. and Tans either at Brosna or Abbeyfeale.

On the 21st May the 2nd Battalion, A.S.U., destroyed Guiney's Bridge that was partly demolished earlier in March, near the Cork-Kerry-Limerick border, and lay in wait next day for a patrol of R.I.C. and Tans from Brosna. The patrol failed to turn up and, on the invitation of the West Limerick Brigade, the 2nd Battalion, in co-operation with members of West Limerick Brigade, lay in wait at Abbeyfeale hill May 29th. As there was a heavy downpour all day the patrol failed to come out. When all the efforts failed it was decided to attack the patrol in the town. It was brought about in this way. The 2nd Battalion, Cork IV Brigade A.S.U., with members of the local A.S.U., West Limerick Brigade, entered the town from the Newcastlewest side about

midnight. Local scouts were in readiness to take the barefooted men into the houses where positions were taken up. The houses occupied were : Egglestons, Hartnetts, Brownes, O'Connors, Fordes, O'Connells and Leahys. At 6 a.m. a patrol of twelve came along the street in extended order. Fire was opened from the houses occupied by our men. Jolly - a Tan - was killed and some of the others were wounded. The attack lasted only about fifteen minutes. The attackers retreated to Mileen by the eastern side of the town. Our line of retreat was covered by local outposts.

The members of the 2nd Battalion who took part were:-

John C. Murphy,	'H' Company.
John D. O'Connor,	"
Mick Sullivan,	'C' Company.
Dan Browne,	"
D. O'Mullane,	'B' Company.
Tim Coughlan,	'E' Company.
Paddy Coughlan,	"
David C.D. Curtin,	"
Jack Guiney,	"
Dan Riordan,	"
Wm. O'Keefe,	'D' Company.
Dan Corbett,	"
David McAuliffe,	" (R.I.P.)
Mick Callaghan,	'H' Company.
Aenus Guiney,	'E' Company.
John Buckley,	"
Tom McNamara,	'D' Company.

John Jones,	'G' Company.
Con Kennedy,	'C' Company.
John White,	Charleville Battalion.
Jerh. Sheehan,	Signalman 1 Company.

Officers and men arrested and interned :

Seán Noonan, Battalion Quartermaster: arrested 8th May, 1918. Got 12 months for arms collection in Company area. Served sentence in Belfast jail. He was appointed Battalion O.C. March 1921 and was later O.C. Cork IV Brigade.

Patrick McCarthy, Company Section Commander: arrested 8th May, 1918. Got 19 months for a similar charge. Served part of sentence in Belfast and part in Manchester, escaping from there 25th October, 1919. Killed in action in Millstreet, 22nd Nov, 1920.

Both took part in the Doran jail strike in Belfast.

John Brennan, Company Quartermaster: arrested October 15th, 1920. Tried on charges of the murder of Sergeant Jackson at Ballydrahane ambush and in being in charge of the ambush. Released 15th March, 1921.

Michael Noonan arrested 22nd February, 1921. Released 11th December, 1921.

Jack Duane, Company Captain: caught with arms 14th April, 1921. Tried by drumhead courtmartial. Escaped out of Cork Mental Hospital August 24th, 1921.

Bill Dwyer, Battalion Quartermaster: Arrested 28th April, 1921. Tried for his part in the courtmartial of two Privates captured in Company area, 16th February, 1921. Received sentence of seven years' penal servitude. Released in January, 1922.

Michael Larkin arrested 28th April, 1921. Released December 14th, 1921.

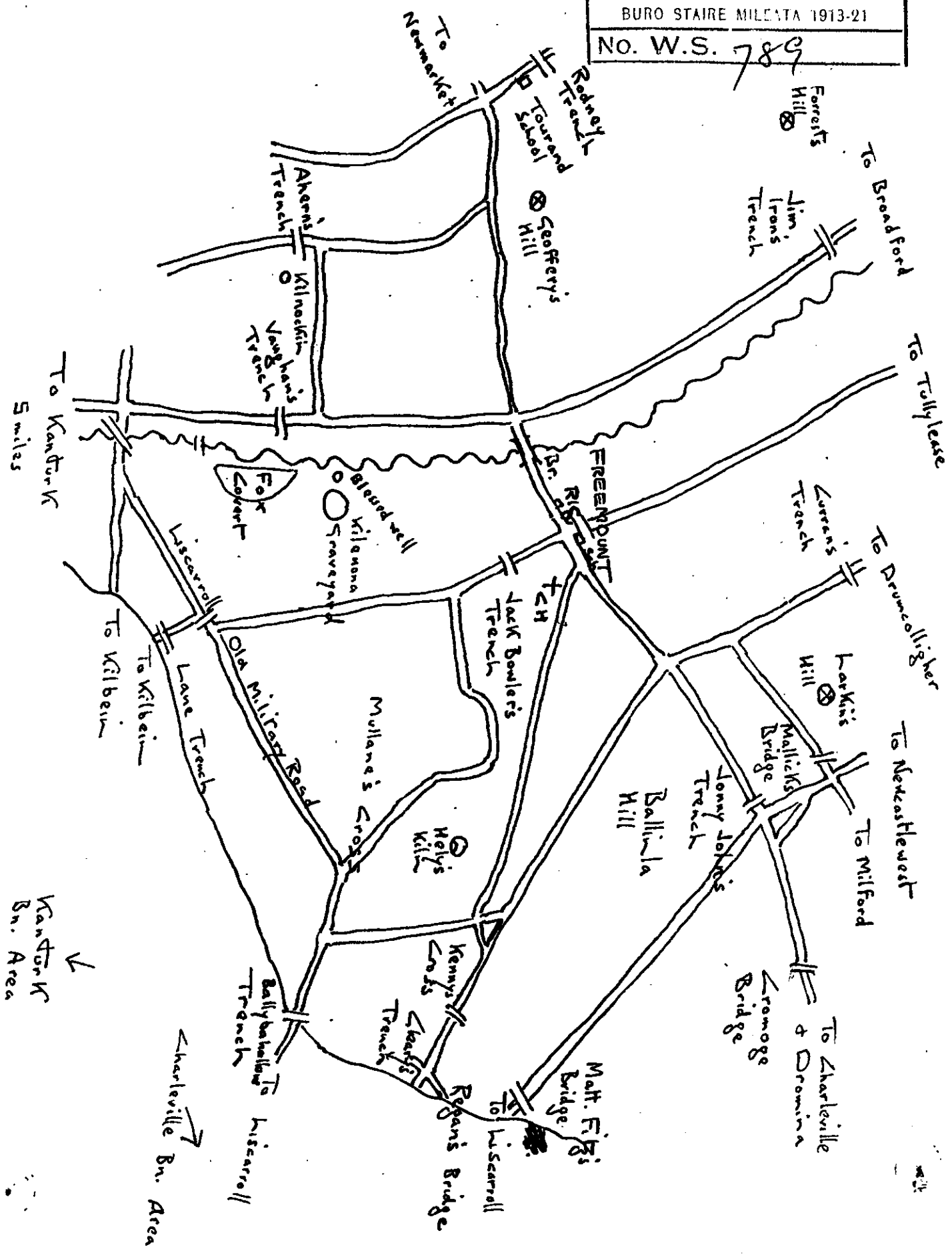
SIGNED:

Denny Mullane
(Denny Mullane)

WITNESSED:

C. Gaurin, Lt Col.
(C. GAURIN)
BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BURO STAIRE MILITAIRE 1913-21
No. W.S. 789

DATE: 26th January 1953



1921
 FREEMOUNT
 COMPANY
 DEMOLITIONS

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