

W. S. 800

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21
NO. W.S. 800

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 800.....

**Witness**

Michael O'Flanagan,  
19 Ratoath Road,  
Cabra West,  
Dublin.

**Identity.**

Member of 'A' Company, 1st Glasgow Brigade, 1913 - ;  
Section Commander 'C' Company, 1st Battalion  
Dublin Brigade, 1915 .

**Subject.**

- (a) I.R.B. Glasgow, 1913-1915;
- (b) Easter Week 1916 - Church St. area,  
Dublin.

**Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.**

Nil

File No. S.315.....

# ORIGINAL

W.S. 800

STATEMENT OF MR. MICHAEL O'FLANAGAN,

19, Ratoath Road, Cabra West, DUBLIN.

formerly of the Scottish  
Brigade, and Section Commander  
"C" Company, 1st Battalion,  
Dublin Brigade, Irish Volunteers  
and Irish Republican Army.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BIBLIOTHÈQUE MILEATA 1913-21

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I was born on the 18th August, 1892, at the Rotunda Hospital, Dublin. My parents were Christopher O'Flanagan and Eliza O'Flanagan (née Nelson) of 30½ Moore Street, Dublin.

I attended the Infant Schools, Kings Inns Street, Dublin, until I was 8 years old. I was then transferred to the Christian Brothers' Schools, St. Mary's Place, Dublin, where I remained until I was 15 years old. I left school at this age and took up a clerical job with Myer-Isaacson who was in the Money Lending business at the time. I worked with him for 9 months and went back to work with my father to serve my time at the Poultry business. My father was engaged in that particular branch of trade.

I remained with my father for 9 months and then took up a position with Dillons, Fish Mongers of Moore Street where I remained until 1913, having married in the meantime at the age of 20 years.

With the advent of the Larkin Strike in 1913 I lost my employment because of my association with the Labour Movement. I found it very difficult to procure employment in Dublin and I emigrated to Glasgow. In Glasgow I got a job with Brownlees', the Timber

Merchants of Maryhill, as a clerk. I was there for 6 months. When I left Brownlees', I got a job as Manager of a Licensed premises at 311, Argyle Street, Glasgow.

As I had a lot of spare time on my hands I looked around for something Irish and national with which I could become associated, so I attended the Sinn Féin hall, London Road, Glasgow. There I met very few Dublin men but I made contact with Joseph Robinson, Seamus Reader, Frank Scullen, Cormac Turner, Liam Gribben, Paddy Morren, the two brothers Rice, Charlie Kerrigan (who was killed in Moore Street during the Rising,) Barney Friel and a man by the name of Carmichael whose Christian name I do not recollect; also Seamus Robinson (now a member of the staff of the Bureau of Military History).

The Sinn Féin Club was not known, as far as I can recollect, by any particular name. It was concerned with keeping the Irish in Glasgow together and engaged in lectures, talks, céilís and the furthering of the Irish Language. While there I became intimate with a number of members who, after some time, approached me to know if I was a member of the Volunteers. I said I was not and they asked me if I would join which I readily agreed to do.

I joined "A" Company, the 1st Glasgow and West of Scotland Brigade of the Volunteers. I was allocated to a Squad, the Commander of which was Cormac Turner. We engaged in foot, arms drill, and range practices. We carried out our range practices at a hall in Anne Street, Glasgow. I made good progress at my drill, etc., and after a month I was approached by Cormac Turner and another member of the Squad to become a

member of the Irish Republican Brotherhood. I agreed to become a member and was sworn in by Joseph Robinson, who was then the Head Centre for Scotland, at his home in Robson Street. In addition, Robinson was also the Commandant of the 1st Glasgow and West of Scotland Brigade. This would be in the early part of 1914.

While attending meetings of the Glasgow Centre it became apparent to me, from information received, that an attempt would be made at an insurrection in Ireland at an early date or as soon as the opportunity became favourable.

My job as a public house Manager brought me into contact with many Irishmen, particularly natives of Donegal, who were employed in the mining areas surrounding Glasgow. They were all native Irish speakers. I had a good knowledge of the language and used to engage them in conversation. By this means I learned their sympathetic outlook to Irish affairs. Copies of "Nationality", "Scissors and Paste", "The Volunteer" and "The United Irishmen" which came into my possession were circulated among the Donegal men. These men, by reason of their employment, had access to explosives such as gelignite, detonators and fuse, etc., which they brought to me in small quantities from time to time and which I handed over to my Quartermaster, Liam Gribben.

As we were all more or less under the notice of the Glasgow C. I. D. it was a matter of policy that these men, who were in a position to obtain explosives, should not become actively associated with the Volunteer Movement, it being felt that they were of more use to the organisation than if they were members of a Volunteer Company.

By reason of the general attitude to drilling and arming in Ireland at the time, the Glasgow C.I.D. merely kept a watch on our activities but did not otherwise interfere with us.

On the outbreak of the war between England and Germany in August, 1914, it became apparent in I.R.B. Circles in Glasgow that early opportunity would be taken to rise in arms against the British Government in Ireland and we were instructed then to get as many Volunteers as possible into the Volunteer Movement in Glasgow. As a result of our efforts there was an appreciable increase in Volunteer membership. I obtained 12 recruits who ultimately came over to Dublin and fought in the Rising in Dublin.

Between December, 1914, and January, 1915, Cathal O'Shannon, who was sent from the Supreme Council of the I.R.B. in Dublin, attended a meeting in Joe Robinson's house in Robson Street, Glasgow. He stated that the ground was being prepared for a rising in arms against the British Government and that we were to hold ourselves in readiness for any eventuality; that as soon as the time was opportune a rising would take place.

In the early spring of 1915, I, by reason of my position as a public house Manager, got information from Irishmen that the Anchor Line Shipping Company stores on the Clyde were being used as a munition dump by the British Navy. I reported the matter to the Supreme Council of the I.R.B. in Glasgow and it was decided, after a survey of the whole ground, that an attempt should be made to raid the munition stores. With this object in view a number of us were selected for the job and we adopted the ruse of taking a number of Irish and Scotch girls, who were members of the

Cumann na mBan, as our escorts. We got as far as the sheds where the munitions were stored - in the meantime having knocked out some of the sailors who were on guard duty at the depot. But when we got to the storage sheds we found that the strength of the guard rendered the attempt abortive. Our instructions prior to the raid were to the effect that we were to take life if necessary to attain our object.

As a result of this raid, police activity became intensified and particular watch was kept on Irish nationalists and on our drill hall in Anne Street. At this time the Orange element in Glasgow was pretty strong and, as a result of intimidation by the Orange Lodges, a number of Irish nationalists commenced to drift from the city and on a number of occasions were subjected to hostile demonstration and violence. They were stoned and beaten on their departure by boat for Ireland.

Notwithstanding the intensified activity of the Glasgow police, we continued to obtain supplies of arms and explosives which were duly sent over to Ireland. In a number of cases I succeeded in obtaining revolvers and a few rifles from members of the British armed forces for which I paid, in the majority of cases, by way of drink - or, in some cases - for the nominal sum of £1 or 30/-. These I handed over to my Quartermaster, Liam Gribben, who made arrangements for their transportation to Ireland.

At this time I was living in Nansen Street, Glasgow, and as things were becoming very difficult I decided to send my wife home to Ireland. About this time, the Quartermaster of the Brigade, Liam Gribben, became ill and he was replaced by Seamus Reader who took over charge of the arms and explosives. Reader stayed in

my house and used it as an arms dump.

Reader was an exceptional type aged at that time about 20 years. He neither drank nor smoked and was trusted for his uprighteousness and integrity by the members of the Council of the Glasgow I.R.B. As the son of a serving soldier of the British Army he was more or less ostracised by his family by reason of his association with the Republican Separatist Movement in Glasgow.

The drill hall in Anne Street adjoined the Central Railway Station in Carlyle Street, Glasgow, one of the walls dividing the hall from portion of the railway station proper. We had obtained supplies of glycerine, gun-powder and other materials. And we were engaged on experimenting in the manufacture of explosives when, through some fault in our experiment, an explosion took place which blew down portion of the boundary wall between the hall and the railway station. As a result of this explosion we had to vacate the premises after collecting all evidence of our activities, and seek other accommodation in friendly houses throughout the city. Among those present on that occasion were Joseph Robinson, Seamus Reader, Barney Friel, Cormac Turner, Paddy Morrin, all of whom fortunately escaped injury.

This explosion resulted in C.I.D. activity becoming further intensified and the premises in which I worked were visited on several occasions by a C.I.D. man named Maguire whom I presumed at the time was an Irishman. The premises where I worked were only a short distance from the hall in Anne Street where the explosion took place. While I was interrogated on several occasions, my answers seemed to satisfy my questioners and I was, in consequence, able to carry out, in a somewhat restricted manner, my routine activities. I naturally had to act

with great caution.

By reason of the activities of the C.I.D. our training drills were reduced to a minimum and were substituted by lectures and social gatherings at which the trend of events was carefully watched. This continued from the early spring of 1915 to November of that year. In the meantime we continued to obtain from any and every source explosive material which we stored in my house in Nansen Street. By this time my every movement was watched by the police and, in consequence, Joseph Robinson came to me in the early part of November, 1915, and told me that it would be well for me to get out of Glasgow. As I had some furniture which I wished to take to Ireland with me, it was decided that the explosives which I stored should be packed in the bottom of the chairs and in the mattresses which I was taking home with me to Dublin. At this time I knew a steward on the Burns & Laird Lines plying between Glasgow and Dublin and, as I was aware that he was sympathetic to the Movement, I approached him and explained my difficulties to him. He told me that if I sent down the furniture to the Docks he personally would supervise the loading and that he would allot me a cabin where I would not be disturbed. I gave him a pound (£) for his trouble and, strange to relate, it was the only expense which my journey cost. I then approached a carter named McAllister who was employed by the firm of Haigh & Haigh, Whiskey Merchants, and he agreed to cart my furniture and effects from my house in Nansen Street to the Docks where O'Neill took it over and stored it on the boat. I subsequently took a train from the Central Station, Glasgow, to Greenock where I connected with the boat which had left Glasgow, and reached Dublin without molestation. Among those to see me off were Joseph Robinson, Seamus Reader, Cormac Turner and Liam Gribben.



Prior to leaving for Dublin, Robinson instructed me that if I got safely through with the explosives to Ireland I was, on arrival, to arrange for its transportation to Surrey House where I was to hand it over to the Countess Markievicz. As the boat arrived in Dublin on a Sunday morning I found that there was no means of getting the explosives and furniture away from the Docks where it was lying on the Quay-side. I then went to my brother-in-law's house in Lower Dominick Street where my wife was staying and after some time at home I discussed the matter with my brother-in-law, John O'Hanlon, who worked as a carter with Thwaites, the Mineral Water Manufacturers. He had the keys to the stables in Moore Lane where Thwaites' horses were accommodated and he readily agreed to harness up a horse and dray and go down to the Quays for my belongings. I went with him and we loaded up the furniture and mattresses containing the explosives and took them to my brother-in-law's home in Lower Dominick Street. Here I unpacked the explosives from the chairs and mattresses and got them ready for transfer to Madame Markievicz's house. This we accomplished successfully and got the explosives to Surrey House in Leinster Road without difficulty.

On our arrival at Surrey House we were met by a number of the scouts of Fianna Éireann who were staying in the house at the time. Among those present were Theo Fitzgerald, Andy Dunne, Louis Marie and the brothers Walpole. The boys were delighted when they saw the quantity of explosives which they helped in the unpacking of from the containers. Owing to our ignorance of the nature of the cargo which I was carrying some very scathing remarks were passed about

the manner in which they were packed, as detonators, fuse and gelignite were bundled haphazardly together and it was fortunate that a major explosion did not take place having regard to the rough handling they received in transportation.

I had dinner with Madame Markievicz that Sunday and she told me I would have to take refuge with the remainder of the over-seas contingent in Kimmage Manor. I told her that as my father and brothers were also in the Volunteer Movement there was no need for me to go to Kimmage Manor and that I could stay with them.

Prior to leaving Glasgow the I.R.B. Council there arranged for my transfer to the Brothers Sheares Circle of the Dublin I.R.B. whose Centre was Martin Conlon. About a week after my arrival in Dublin Paddy McGrath, who was then Secretary of the Brothers Sheares Circle, came to my father's house in Moore Street and told me to report to Room 9, 41 Parnell Square, which was then the meeting place of the Brothers Sheares Circle.

This I did on the following Sunday. When I reported to 41 Parnell Square, as instructed, I was questioned on my activities in Glasgow by Martin Conlon and Paddy McGrath and was asked if I had been posted to any particular Company of the Volunteers in Dublin. I said I was not but that as my father and brothers were members of "C" Company, 1st Battalion, Dublin Brigade, Irish Volunteers, I would like to be attached to that Company. They agreed to this and arranged to send forward the necessary instructions to the O/C. of "C" Company. This would be about the end of November, 1915. In the following week I reported to Mr. Frank

Fahy who was then O/C. of "C" Company, Dublin Brigade, at 41, Parnell Square. He questioned me on my activities while in Glasgow and the appointment which I held. I was then put into a section of "C" Company and continued with foot and arms drill which was then very frequent. This lasted for about a month. Captain Fahy, O/C. of the Company, then instructed me to report to No. 2 Dawson Street, then Headquarters of the Irish Volunteers, where I would undergo a course of instruction in street fighting and associated subjects under the tuition of J. J. O'Connell ("Ginger"). I spent about a month on this course after which I reported back to "C" Company where I was given the appointment of Section Commander. I had by this time got a job with Cullens the Fish Mongers of Leeson Street so that between my Volunteer activities and my job I was kept fully engaged.

About the end of February 1916, I, with other N.C.Os. of the 1st Battalion, was detailed to parade with arms and equipment in the Father Mathew Park, Fairview, where the knowledge we had gained on our courses was put to the test by Commandant Ned Daly, O/C. of the 1st Battalion.

Among those in my section were Peadar Clancy who was subsequently promoted Lieutenant in the Four Courts during the Rising; my brother Patrick who was subsequently killed in action in North King Street in Easter Week; my brother Francis; Tommy Munroe; Seán Prendergast who subsequently became Captain of "C" Company; Denis Holmes; Jimmy McArdle; Paddy McArdle; Mick Howlett; Tom Cassidy.

On one occasion while on parade in March, 1916, the Battalion Commander, Commandant Daly, called me and told me that he wanted some material shifted from 41 Parnell Square to a house in Richmond Road, Drumcondra, which I subsequently learned was his residence. I told him that I would have to hire a carter for this purpose. He told me to make whatever arrangements were necessary and that he would pay the expenses. I knew a cabman named Fitzgerald (still living) and with his assistance we took about 30 tins of petrol from Parnell Square to the house in Richmond Road.

On the 12th April, 1916, I was instructed by Joe McGuinness, who was 1st Lieutenant of my Company, to collect from his business premises in Dorset Street a quantity of bayonets which had been manufactured for use with shot guns. These and some boxes of explosives I transferred to my father's residence in Moore Street. As my father who was engaged in the poultry business had a large quantity of feathers stored in barrels, I dumped the bayonets and the boxes of munitions for safe keeping among the feathers.

On Saturday, 15th April, 1916, I got a note from Lieutenant McGuinness to the effect that I was to hand over the boxes of munitions to Donal O'Hannigan who would call on me to collect them. Having satisfied myself that O'Hannigan was alright, myself and my brother Frank loaded the boxes into Fitzgerald's cab and with O'Hannigan proceeded to the Broadstone railway station where we loaded them into a goods' wagon. O'Hannigan told me that he would get into communication with me whenever he wanted my help in matters of this nature.

On Holy Thursday we were employed at 41 Parnell Square from 7.30 p.m. distributing amongst the Volunteers of my Company all accumulated equipment, arms and ammunition with instructions to hold them in readiness for use on further orders.

At 10.30 on Good Friday night Lieutenant McGuinness of my Company came to my house in 40 Moore Street and informed me that I would be required at very short notice to mobilise the half of "C" Company which had been allocated to my area. This area covered the north side of Abbey Street, Capel Street, Upper Dominick Street, Mountjoy Street, Blessington Street, Frederick Street, Mary's Abbey and Moore Street, where the majority of the Volunteers of my half Company resided. I carried out these instructions immediately. The orders were to "stand to".

On Easter Saturday morning McGuinness came to me and instructed me to go round my half company again and inform the men that they were to carry on with their usual work until further orders. I did not go to work that day. I called on Frank Fahy, the Company Commander, at his house in Cunningham Road. He instructed me to get 12 reliable men and meet him at 41 Parnell Square at 6 o'clock that evening. I carried out his instructions and selected 12 men in whom I had absolute trust. These reported to 41 Parnell Square at the hour stated as instructed. When we arrived at 41 Parnell Square I met Captain Fahy and he told me that he had some warlike material, the nature of which I did not know at the time, which he (Captain Fahy) required distributed to certain houses in the Four Courts area. The men were sent separately by Captain Fahy with instructions to meet me at the corner of Inns Quay and Church Street. There was a lorry there

and we proceeded to 41 Parnell Square and loaded a number of cases on to it. Captain Fahy arrived at the appointed place and he met me and the other men and told us that he wanted the stuff on the lorry shifted into two cottages adjoining the Four Courts in Church Street. We brought the cases from the lorry into the two cottages selected by the Company Commander. We then opened the cases which contained mostly shot guns, shotgun ammunition and the home-made bombs. We were then dismissed and told to return to our homes where we would receive further orders.

At about 1 o'clock on Easter Sunday morning Lieutenant McGuinness called to my house at 40, Moore Street and again informed me to instruct my men to "stand to". I carried out his orders and reported to Lieutenant McGuinness at 3 a.m. and stayed with him until 7.30 that morning when he received word - from whom I do not know - to countermand previous mobilisation instructions, but to instruct the men not to leave the city. These orders I carried out.

The Sunday Independent of Easter Sunday contained the MacNeill countermanding order which gave rise to rumours and considerable uneasiness during the day. I stayed at home in Moore Street all day on Sunday and retired to bed about 11 p.m. that night.

At 5.30 on Easter Monday morning, the 24th April, I was roused from bed by a heavy knocking on the door. I got up and went down to the hall, opened the hall door and found my brother Frank and a young lady by the name of Miss Cleary. My brother introduced me to the lady who told me that I was to go at once to a house next door to Saunders', the coachbuilders in Dorset Street. This is now the Balalaika dance hall.

Accompanied by Miss Cleary I went to the house where I was introduced to a young, dapper type of man whom I subsequently learned was Seán MacEntee, now Minister for Finance. He had been sent there by Donal Hannigan previously referred to in this statement, with instructions to get in touch with me. He said he would like to speak to me privately. So the both of us came out of the room into the hall. During the course of our conversation he led me to believe that he had a skirmish with police at Castlebellingham on his way from the North to Dublin and that he was anxious to get in touch with General Headquarters. At that particular hour I did not know where General Headquarters was located. But I did know where Commandant Ned Daly and Commandant-General Tom Clarke resided the previous night, which was Ned Daly's residence on Richmond Road. I told MacEntee that it would be better if we contacted the two officers referred to. So we walked from Dorset Street to Richmond Road where we arrived about 7.45 a.m. During the course of our walk to Richmond Road MacEntee seemed somewhat reserved and highly strung, and he gave me the impression that he was expecting to be pounced upon, as he looked behind him on many occasions. I asked him if he was armed and he said he was not. So I told him not to be nervous as I was armed with a .45 revolver. When we got to Richmond Road I made a good deal of noise ascending the steps to the hall door, and I knocked. After a lapse of about three minutes the hall door was opened by Tom Clarke and Ned Daly, both in their pyjamas. I explained the position and we were both invited into the hall. I introduced MacEntee to Clarke and Daly and then withdrew a short distance away. I do not know what transpired during the conversation between

the three of them. After about twenty minutes the party broke up and I was instructed to take MacEntee to Liberty Hall and report to Commandant Eamon Ceannt. We left the house and went down to Ballybough Bridge where we took a tram to the Parnell Monument. We got off the tram and walked down O'Connell Street, MacEntee, on the way, purchasing a race card for which he paid 2/6d. I told him he was foolish to pay 2/6d. for a race card but he slipped it into his pocket without comment.

When we got to Liberty Hall I explained to the guard the position and inquired for Commandant Ceannt. Commandant Ceannt was not there. We were standing in the main hall of Liberty Hall for about five minutes when Willie Pearse came along and I explained the circumstances to him. Willie Pearse took charge of MacEntee, taking him to a room further down the hall. Pearse came back after a short time and told me to return to my home and hold myself in readiness for further instructions. This I did.

When I arrived home to Moore Street my wife informed me that Lieutenant McGuinness had called and wanted to see me urgently. I was having my breakfast when Lieutenant McGuinness again called and instructed me to mobilise my area for St. Columcille's Hall, Blackhall Street, the hour of mobilisation being fixed for 11 a.m. As soon as I finished my breakfast I proceeded to carry out his instructions. The mobilisation orders were to the effect that all men were to come carrying all arms and equipment in their possession and to bring with them 24 hours' rations.

Between 11 a.m. and 11.45 the men arrived at the point of mobilisation, i.e. Columcille Hall, Blackhall



Place. When we got to the hall in Blackhall Place we found about 130 men, all told, from the various Companies of the 1st Battalion assembled. We were told to fall-in in our respective Companies in the hall and Commandant Daly then addressed the men on parade. He stated that a Provisional Government had been formed and that a Republic would be declared at 12 noon on that date. In the course of his address he emphasised the fact that the men would be required to defend the new Republic with their lives but that if there was any man present who felt that he could not comply with this order he could withdraw and nothing the worse would be thought of him.

We were then detailed to take up positions in the Four Courts area under the command of our respective section commanders. It appeared to me at the time that the Company Commanders had been fully informed of the decision come to before the actual mobilisation of the battalion.

Lieutenant McGuinness then detailed me to take a section of 12 men irrespective of which unit they belonged, and proceed by way of Blackhall Street, Queen Street, etc., to the corner of Chancery Place and Church Street where we were to commandeer suitable material for the purpose of erecting a barricade. When we arrived at the crossing of Church Street and Chancery Place we found that there were three horse-drays which I believe belonged to Sharkeys, the Foundry proprietors. These were parked in an adjacent laneway. I detailed the men to drag the drays out of the laneway and turned them over, thereby blocking the street junction at the corner of Church Street and Chancery Place. We had no sooner commenced to build the barricade than fire was opened on us by a party of Lancers who, I subsequently

learned, were escorting ammunition from the docks to the Magazine Fort, Phoenix Park. This party had been fired on by our men holding the barricade at Church Street Bridge which was under the command of Lieutenant Peadar Clancy. The Lancers, having been fired on at this point, retreated down Charles Street which is at the back of the Four Courts and having observed us in position immediately opened fire on us. This would have been about 12.30 on the date in question, i.e. Easter Monday, 24th April, 1916. A number of the Lancers occupied some of the houses in Charles Street and commenced sniping our position from windows overlooking the barricade. Lieutenant McGuinness told us not to take any particular notice of the enemy occupying the positions referred to as they were fairly well covered, adding that firing on them would only be a waste of ammunition. A number of the Lancers managed to work their way into the Bridewell by the back entrance in Greek Street. Lieutenant McGuinness then ordered me to take a number of men and thoroughly search the entire Bridewell premises with a view to dislodging the Lancers who had obtained a foothold there, if possible, they were to be captured alive with a view to interrogation. I picked the men required and proceeded to enter the Bridewell by the front entrance. We blew the locks of the entrance door and on entering the hall we found four horses' saddles and bridles together with two rifles which we loaded behind the door. I then knew that some of the enemy Lancers were located somewhere in the premises and I proceeded to carry out a thorough search. After about 20 minutes searching, Volunteer Hubert Murphy reported to me that they had captured two of the Lancers in a cell in one of the blocks. The Lancers were searched and the ammunition in their possession which was packed in bandoliers was

taken from them and the prisoners were dispatched across to the "C" Company headquarters which was located in the Four Courts. Accompanied by Section Commander Mark Wilson we proceeded to the outer courtyard where we found four dead horses lying. We subsequently learned that these were horses belonging to the Lancers' detachment.

In the course of our further search we came across a building off the courtyard in which we found 23 members of the D.M.P. I ordered them to come out singly with their hands up. As each man came out he was searched by Section Commander Mark Wilson. During the search of these men we found six revolvers and ammunition which we took possession of. I inquired of one of them whom I knew to be the Station Sergeant if he had any civilian prisoners and he told me that there were only two - one, a man who had been arrested for drunkenness and the other - a woman who had been arrested for vagrancy. Both had been arrested on the previous Saturday night. This Sergeant took me round to the cell block attached to the Bridewell and, producing keys, handed over the prisoners to me.

I reported to Lieutenant McGuinness that we had two civilian prisoners and asked for instructions as to their disposal. He told me to release them, which I did. On his instructions I detailed an escort to accompany the D.M.P. to the Four Courts proper for interrogation. These men subsequently showed no animosity or hostility towards us as subsequently, when we were up for identification at the surrender, all of them failed to identify us.

From Monday afternoon until Thursday my section held possession of the Bridewell premises which was under fire from enemy sniping posts overlooking the premises-which fire we returned throughout the three days occupation. Despite the fact that we were under continuous fire from enemy posts during the three days occupation we were very fortunate in having no casualties.

On Wednesday afternoon we noticed four or five men and women coming from the direction of Mary's Lane. Between them they were carrying a piano which we concluded they had stolen from some business premises. We called on them to halt but they refused to do so. We fired a few shots over their heads as a warning and they dropped the piano and made off.

On Thursday evening Lieutenant McGuinness came to me and ordered me to evacuate the Bridewell premises, stating that as the surrounding area was sufficiently well covered by fire from other posts, the men under my command could be used to better advantage elsewhere. He instructed me to proceed to a house at the corner of North King Street and Church Street which subsequently became known as "Reilly's Fort". This house was actually a business premises owned by a man named Reilly. I withdrew my men and proceeded by way of Church Street. When we got as far as the Father Matthew Hall I met Commandant Ned Daly on the street and informed him of my mission. He told me that he was short of men and that as he required an escort to take some enemy prisoners, held in custody in the Father Matthew Hall, from the hall to the Four Courts, I was to divide my party-sending half of it as an escort with the prisoners, and the other half to Reilly's Fort. The men detailed

to escort the prisoners to the Four Courts were subsequently to return to my command in Reilly's Fort.

I did as I was ordered by Commandant Daly and reported with my half section to Lieutenant Maurice Collins who was in charge of the post (Reilly's Fort) at the corner of North King Street and Church Street. We had some difficulty in crossing North King Street as the fire from enemy forces located around the technical schools in Bolton Street was very intense. I managed, however, to get my half section safely across the street and into Reilly's Fort without suffering any casualties. When we got into the premises I reported to the Post Commander, Lieutenant Maurice Collins, and having surveyed the position, I told him that I was not satisfied that the building offered reasonable security for the men under my command. He replied rather curtly to the effect, "Did I want to save my own skin". I told him that as I was responsible for the safety of the men of my half section I felt that, apart from the fact that the building offered no fields of fire, it lacked all means of a safe retreat should we be called upon to vacate the premises quickly. He then instructed me to make the best arrangements possible and to post my men to the best advantage for the defence of the building. He emphasised the fact that there was no intention of retreating; that our job was to fight to a finish and that therefore the question of a line of retreat did not arise.

I proceeded to place my men in the top windows overlooking and having a field of fire covering North King Street up as far as Bolton Street. The enemy were well placed in Bolton Street and portions of North

King Street and kept us continuously engaged with heavy rifle and machine gun fire, to which we replied vigorously. As we were proving such an obstacle to the enemy forces, I realised that they were prepared to sacrifice any number of men to dislodge us. I aimed at forcing the enemy to make a direct assault on us in the open as by this means I hoped to draw them under the fire of our men who were holding a barricade at the junction of Stirrup Lane and Beresford Street. This actually happened, as the enemy forces came out in the open and advanced on our position and, having reached the junction of Stirrup Lane and Beresford Street, they came under heavy fire from our men holding the barricade at that point, suffering heavy casualties.

On Friday morning the enemy pressure eased somewhat and we held our fire until they had managed to gain possession of houses up to a butcher's shop at the corner of Stirrup Lane. Incidentally, the owner of this shop was taken out and shot by the enemy. During Friday our stock of ammunition was running low and we had to conserve the ammunition we held. On Friday during daylight hours the enemy in possession of the houses sniped our position continually during which we lost one of our garrison - Volunteer Paddy Farrell - who was killed by an enemy sniper's bullet. At about 10 o'clock on Friday night rifle and machine gun fire became very intense, to which we replied cautiously with a view to holding them from making a frontal attack and at the same time conserving our rapidly diminishing stock of ammunition.

At about 4 o'clock on Saturday morning Lieutenant Collins, the Post Commander, called us into conference and pointed out that if the enemy made a frontal attack

on the position we would, in view of our small stock of ammunition, be hard put to it to continue a successful resistance. I suggested that we could attempt to get further supplies of ammunition and grenades from the Father Matthew Hall. We appreciated, of course, that the getting of the ammunition across would present an almost insurmountable difficulty, as the streets in the vicinity were being swept by machine gun fire.

Lieutenant Collins asked for two men to volunteer to run the gauntlet and to try and contact some of the other outposts which were not so intensely engaged, with a view to replenishing our ammunition stock. Volunteers Delamere and Patrick O'Flanagan agreed to take the risk. They succeeded in reaching Church Street. We covered their crossing by vigorous rifle fire. At about 5 a.m. we observed them making their way back from Church Street under heavy fire from enemy forces from North King Street. Delamere was leading and Volunteer O'Flanagan was following closely behind. Volunteer Delamere managed to cross over successfully and gained entrance to the doorway of Reilly's Fort without suffering any mishap. He was in possession of a number of slings of rifle ammunition and four home-made grenades. Volunteer Patrick O'Flanagan succeeded in crossing King Street but as he reached the door of Reilly's Fort he got the full contents of a machine-gun burst from enemy forces located in North King Street. He was killed outright. We managed to bring his body into the shop and found that he was in possession of a number of slings of ammunition and two home-made grenades. At about 8 o'clock a Doctor from the Richmond hospital, accompanied by Father Albert, O.S.F.C. of St. Mary of the Angels, Church Street, Capuchin Friary, arrived and attended to

Volunteer O'Flanagan. Incidentally, Volunteer O'Flanagan was my brother. He was removed to the Richmond Hospital.

At this time the pressure from the enemy forces was intensified and we came under heavy machine gun and rifle fire from Bolton Street and Smithfield. It would seem from the concentrated fire to which we were subjected from these two points that the enemy were making an all-out effort to dislodge us from Reilly's Fort so that they could bring the full force of their fire power to bear upon the Four Courts proper. That was Saturday morning. This heavy fire and pressure continued until about 11 a.m. As the position became almost untenable, Lieutenant Maurice Collins, the post commander, called the section commanders together and told us that he felt the time had been reached when we would have to withdraw from the position. I pointed out to him that this decision was contrary to that which he came to on Thursday morning when he informed us that it was a case of fighting to the last man and the last cartridge. He pointed out, however, that he had decided we should make an effort to evacuate the premises and retire to a barricade outside the Father Matthew Hall. The men were brought together and informed of this decision. They agreed that an attempt should be made to cross the street to the cover of a barricade which had been erected outside the Father Matthew Hall. At this time the enemy had reached a position about 30 yards distant from Reilly's Fort which was then under intensive rifle and machine gun fire. Lieutenant Collins, in the course of his instructions to us, told us that we were to line up



inside the shop of the Fort on the ground floor and that when he gave an order to charge in a sufficiently loud voice which the enemy could hear we were to ignore that order. But when he gave the second order to charge we were to jump as one man from the window into the street and rush across to the barricade outside the Father Matthew Hall which was about 25 yards distant. On receiving the second order to charge we all jumped and, with the exception of one man, managed to reach the comparative safety of the barricade referred to. This man, whose name I cannot at the moment recollect, was struck by a bullet on the heel of the boot and he fell on the footpath. He remained lying still for a few seconds and as soon as the enemy fire ceased, he jumped up and made a run for it and succeeded in reaching the barricade safely. In all, about 14 men successfully crossed over.

While crossing the street we were given covering fire by members of "F" Company under Frank Shouldice who held a position at the corner of Church Street and King Street near the Father Matthew Hall. We took up a position on the barricade under the command of Lieutenant Liam Tobin and continued to fire on the enemy forces. After about 20 minutes in that position I was approached by the Battalion Commander, Commandant Ned Daly, who instructed me to withdraw my men and proceed to the Four Courts to reinforce the garrison there which was under heavy pressure from various points. As I retired to the Four Courts I found my Company Captain, Frank Fahy, lying on the footpath inside the railings of the Church Street entrance to the Four Courts. I thought that he had been killed but he called me over to

him and I found that he had got a heart attack and was unable to move. At this time he and my men were under fire from enemy forces located at Hammond Lane. With the assistance of some of my section we carried our Company Captain into the building where we handed him over to the care of the Cumann na mBan. As my section and myself had been on continuous active service from the previous Monday and had had no sleep during that period we were in a state of exhaustion. On reporting this fact to Lieutenant McGuinness he brought us to a room under the dome where there were a number of mattresses. We lay down and fell immediately into a deep sleep. I do not know how long I slept but sometime round 4 o'clock Lieutenant McGuinness wakened me and told me that an order had come through from Commandant-General Pearse to the effect that a surrender had been decided on, and that we were to take steps to give over the position to the enemy forces. In addition, he told me that any men who could manage it should avail of any and every opportunity to escape if it were at all possible. I then went to the toilet for a wash and while there I met the Vice-Commandant of the Battalion, Piaras Beaslai, and informed him of the position. He knew nothing about the order to surrender and scoffed at the idea, pointing out that the position was "impregnable and could be held for a month". I contacted as many men as possible and informed them of the instructions I received from Lieutenant McGuinness. On looking through a window into the court-yard of the Four Courts I saw a number of the garrison lined up who were handing over their rifles through the railings to the enemy forces gathered in Chancery

Street. A number of the men whom I instructed to escape succeeded in doing so, among them being Volunteers Tommy Smart, Joseph McDonagh and Stephen Pollard, who were members of my Company and whom I knew well. Some short time afterwards, when all the rifles had been surrendered, Commandant Daly fell-in the Battalion in the courtyard of the Four Courts and addressed the men. He told us of the order received, which he had no alternative but to obey, and that as far as he understood the ordinary rank and file would, after interrogation, be set free; but that as far as the officers were concerned he did not know what would become of them. He emphasised the fact that, while we were beaten by a superior military force, we were not, however, cowed, and that we should carry ourselves with pride and conduct ourselves as true soldiers of the Republic. He also pointed out that he did not know exactly where the enemy force commander proposed to assemble the Battalion for interrogation. We then formed into column of fours without any order and the Battalion, headed by Commandant Ned Daly, Vice-Commandant Piaras Beaslai, Captain Eamon Duggan, Adjutant, and Captain Frank Fahy, O/C. "C" Company, took up position at the head of the column and marched out of the Four Courts by way of the Chancery Lane exit to the Quay side. We then marched by way of the Quays, Capel Street and Parnell Street and, on reaching the Parnell Monument, we were lined up in O'Connell Street outside and facing Findlater's - the Provision Merchants. Just before turning into O'Connell Street our battalion was halted for a short period outside Mooney's public-house facing the Rotunda Hospital where our officers were taken from us. After a half hour's delay outside

Findlater's in O'Connell Street, we were turned about and marched back to a spot in Parnell Street facing the Rotunda Hospital. At this time we had been formed into two ranks. While in this position one of our officers, Captain Dinny O'Callaghan, who was in officer's uniform and in the ranks, was approached by one of the British officers. During some exchange of words the officer struck O'Callaghan. The latter was a very strong hefty man and resented being struck. He was going to retaliate but we, seeing the futility of such an action on his part, succeeded in restraining him. As a result of this incident O'Callaghan was taken out of the ranks and placed with the other officers of our battalion who had previously been removed.

O'Callaghan was subsequently sentenced to death but the sentence was commuted later to penal servitude.

We were then interrogated by a British officer whom I later learned was an Irishman named Captain de Courcy Wheeler, who subsequently rose to the rank of Major in the British Army. Wheeler, in the course of the interrogation when he came to where I was standing between my brothers George and Frank, all of us being in uniform, said, "This seems to be a family affair. He was particularly interested in our cap badge and anxious to know what regiment we belonged to, seemingly regarding the cap badge as a symbol of regimental identification. As each man was interrogated he was passed over to the enclosed plot in front of the Rotunda Hospital which was completely surrounded by a cordon of soldiers with fixed bayonets.

At this time the plot contained men from practically all units of the Volunteers on the North side of the Liffey and those from the Mendicity Institute. Among them were Tom Clarke, Seán MacDermott, Willie Pearse, Seán Heuston and our own Battalion and Company officers. This would have been about 7 o'clock on the Saturday evening. The number confined there comprised members of the Volunteers and Cumann na mBan. The weather had been marvellously fine, but when I got into the enclosure I noticed that the ground was extremely wet, having apparently been hosed for our reception with a view to making conditions as uncomfortable as possible. The interrogation having ended about 8 p.m., we were left there from that hour until about 7.30 o'clock on Sunday morning, during which time we got no food or water; nor were any arrangements made to segregate the sexes or provide sanitary facilities.

During the night of Saturday and Sunday morning we were heavily guarded by a cordon of soldiers with fixed bayonets and, in addition, marching patrols carrying grenades then known as "the stick grenade". We were not allowed to rise from the sitting or lying position which we had adopted during the night.

At about 8 o'clock on Sunday morning we got an order to 'fall in' in column of fours. We were marched out of the enclosure in front of the Rotunda Hospital into O'Connell Street and then by way of Westmoreland Street, Dame Street, Thomas Street and James' Street and I think we turned up Echlin Street across the Canal on our way to Richmond Barracks. When passing through Thomas Street and James' Street we were subjected to hostile demonstration on the part of certain elements - notably service and ex-servicemen's

wives of the British Army - who pelted us with refuse and hurled insulting remarks at us. One of our men, resenting the conduct of the bystanders, made an attempt to retaliate but was restrained from doing so by one of the armed escort who lifted his rifle and bayonet with a view to assaulting the man in question.

On arrival at Richmond barracks we were divided into groups. My group was put into the gymnasium with instructions to sit on one particular side of the room. There was already a number of other Volunteers confined in the room. It would have been in or about 12 midday when we were placed in the Gymnasium. While in the Gymnasium I noticed, among others, Tom Clarke, Willie Pearse, Eamon Ceannt and the brothers Bevan, one of whom - Thomas - had been in charge of the prisoners which we captured and confined in the Four Courts during the fight. Thomas, having been in charge of the prisoners, was regarded as of some importance by the British military although during the week he only held the rank of an ordinary Volunteer. After about two hours we were taken one by one out of the gymnasium into an adjoining annexe. At the door dividing the gymnasium from the annexe was placed a table at which a British officer sat with four well known members of the Detective Division, Dublin Metropolitan Police, whose function it was to identify each of us as we were passed through. Among them were Detectives Barton, Bruton and Hoey - two of whom were subsequently executed during the War of Independence, by the Republican Forces. As we were passing through the doorway, certain members of my party, having apparently been identified by the Detectives, were placed on one side under a special

guard of soldiers with fixed bayonets. I, with about 23 others, having passed through the doorway, was escorted to another room in the barracks. Sometime after our confinement in the barrack room each of us was handed a tin of bully beef and 3 or 4 wartime biscuits together with a mug of tea. This was the first meal we had received since the surrender on Saturday afternoon. The room was not equipped with any facilities for sleeping, there being a complete absence of mattresses and blankets. I might mention that on our arrival at Richmond barracks we were thoroughly searched and all our personal belongings, such as money, watches and religious emblems including rosary beads, were taken from us. They made a special point of picking on the rosary beads.

At about 6 o'clock on Sunday evening a British officer came into the room and took us out, one by one, to the corridor where, with the assistance of a Dublin Detective, each of us was separately fingerprinted. As soon as the room had been emptied we were marched on to the barrack square and placed with other men who were already there. We were left standing on the barrack square for about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  hours until the occupants of the other rooms had been similarly dealt with. At about 7.30 or 8 o'clock, when dusk was falling, a heavily armed guard was marched on to the square under the command of an officer. We were then formed up in fours and, surrounded by an armed escort, we were marched out of Richmond barracks, down Kilmainham, Bow Lane, Steevens Lane, Kingsbridge and the North Quays to

the North Wall where we were placed on a British War Department sloop. On our way from Richmond barracks to the North Wall all our men were in great spirits and sang the marching songs of the Volunteers.

On arrival at the North Wall we were marched directly on to the boat and we were left on deck surrounded by an armed escort. After about a half hour and as soon as the British military authorities had completed the ship's complement of prisoners, the sloop moved out en route for England. The night being calm and the weather good, we enjoyed the crossing. Some of the men slept. As we were on deck, the passage was easier for us and during the night some of the sailors, who were sympathetic to us, handed us mugs of hot coffee or cocoa and bread which we greatly appreciated. As there were not enough mugs to go round we had to take turns in disposing of the food given to us.

On arrival at the port of disembarkation, which I recognised as Holyhead, we were taken ashore and divided into two groups. My brothers and myself were kept in one particular group. Then we were marched to waiting trains and 10 or 12 of us placed in each carriage with an armed soldier in each. Immediately the train was full it moved out at about 4 a.m. It was about 7.30 a.m. on Monday morning when the train arrived at its destination, which I subsequently learned was Stafford. We were taken out of the train and formed up into two ranks and numbered off. Then we were handed over to another escort that had been waiting our arrival in Stafford railway station. While on the station I noticed groups of



English people who were, presumably, on their way to work or returning from night work. These were generally hostile and subjected us to a good deal of jeering and insolent remarks. Some of them were wearing badges indicating that they were engaged on war work. The officer in charge of the escort taking us over ordered these to disperse, saying to them, "These men at least were fighting for their country and young men like you should be doing likewise." His remarks evidently had the desired effect and they dispersed. He then formed us into a nondescript column and marched us under heavy armed escort to Stafford gaol, a distance from the railway station of about one mile. On our way to the prison from the station, we noticed that in some of the windows of the houses overlooking the road a number of people were congregated and shook their hands in friendly gesture towards us.

On arriving at the prison, the gates of which were open to receive us, we were marched into the courtyard, and after some short delay our party were placed in confinement, one to each cell, in what was then known as "the New Hall", distinguishing it from a part of the prison known as "The Crescent". Stafford gaol was previously used as "the women's prison", but during the war it was taken over for military purposes, principally for the internment or imprisonment of people such as conscientious objectors and soldiers of the British Forces undergoing detention for various causes. The prison staff comprised solely military personnel who performed the duties of warder. These men were dressed in military uniform and held a rank not lower than that of Sergeant. They carried batons as part of their equipment and on our arrival

they were somewhat inclined to be rough towards us. The cells in which we were confined were furnished with the usual prison equipment - a plank bed which was a fixture, a stool, tin basin, tin mug, tin plate and three blankets. Sometime in the evening our cells were opened and we were ordered to 'stand to'. A number of our men were taken out and escorted to the cookhouse where they were given cans of tea for distribution to our party. In addition we received a quarter of a loaf of bread and a small piece of margarine. As soon as the meal had been distributed and consumed we were again confined to our cells. After some time we were visited by a Sergeant who took from me, and I presume from the remainder of my party, my full name, address and next-of-kin. He particularly wanted to establish the regiment to which I belonged and the area in which I operated during the fighting but I did not give him any information in this connection. He also instructed each one of us in the method which we were to adopt to keep our cells clean and in accordance with prison regulations. We were then locked up for the night and on the following morning at about 7 o'clock we were awakened by the ringing of the prison bell. The cell doors were opened and we were ordered to 'stand to'. The same procedure took place as on the previous evening, some of our men being taken out and escorted to the cookhouse to collect and distribute the breakfast, which consisted of porridge, a quarter loaf of bread each and a mug of tea. As soon as the breakfast was over we were ordered to clean our cells and make up our beds. We were locked in at the end of each meal. I was confined in a cell (No.38) on "G" landing which

was at the top of the building. At about 10 a.m. I was visited by a Sergeant Major who took me out and brought me to a store on the landing where he gave me a bucket, a hand-scrubbing brush, soap and a cloth and accompanied me to the landing where he instructed me to scrub a portion of it. He also gave me some Emery paper, telling me to use it in brightening the hand rail of the banisters leading to the ground floor. When I started on the job I found others of my party engaged on similar work and as we managed to get near to each other we exchanged confidences in whispers, although we were told previously that no talking would be permitted. I subsequently learned that the Sergeant Major who detailed the work for us was a Dublin man and a staff sergeant whose name was Leonard. He was a very objectionable type and went out of his way to make things unpleasant for us. When the job of cleaning was finished we were sent back to our cells and told to dress and get ready for exercise. We were then escorted down to the prison yard where we were lined up three paces apart facing the prison proper. As soon as we had taken up our positions, four civilians with some military officers approached each one of us individually and subjected us to a very strict scrutiny. While this was going on I noticed in the cell on the ground floor nearest to the prison door, looking through a small window of the cell, Seán MacEntee who had been isolated from us from the time of our arrival in the prison. He made signs to me which I took to mean that he was being removed from Stafford gaol. As soon as the identification, which lasted about an hour, was over, we were marched back to our cells and locked up. We were served with dinner by our own party, as previously,

between 12 and 12.30 midday. The meal consisted of some sort of stew, bread and potatoes. We were locked up for the remainder of that day. This routine was typical of the treatment which we received during the first three weeks of our internment in Stafford gaol. We had the usual prison fare, three meals consisting of the prison fare outlined with the usual hour's daily exercise. After about three weeks we were taken out one morning on to the Square and informed by the prison Commandant that a special messenger was expected from the War Office who would address us. Up to this we had no special organisation functioning to act on our behalf and our treatment during the period was similar to that accorded to ordinary prison inmates. Shortly after we had been 'fallen in' on the courtyard, a high-ranking officer wearing a 'Glengarry' cap and, presumably, belonging to a Scottish regiment, came on to the Square and addressed us. He informed us that he was from the War Office and that in future we would receive prisoner-of-war treatment. He added that on our conduct would depend the type of treatment we would receive. From that hour our cell doors were left open and we were allowed free intercourse with each other. I may mention that during the previous three weeks we were facilitated in attending Mass and receiving the Sacraments, but we found that the officiating clergy there - not understanding our temperament and the ideals for which we fought - were inclined to be somewhat antagonistic. In some cases, where some of our men refused to answer certain questions concerning their part in the Rising, Absolution was refused.

As a result of the relaxing of prison discipline and the granting of prisoner-of-war treatment, steps were taken to organise our party on semi-military lines and an executive was elected whose function it was to act as spokesmen for the entire party. This executive consisted of a prisoners' Camp Commandant, an Adjutant and a Quartermaster.

As far as I can recollect, Leo Henderson, Mick Collins, Brian O'Higgins, Frank Henderson and Darrell Figgis were on the Camp Council. This council set about organising the prisoners into working parties for the administration and running of the camp and, in consequence of their activities, the prison regulations ceased to be applicable. Some others and myself were appointed to supervise the landings of the cells in which we were confined. As a result of the Council's work, we were eventually allowed to receive visitors and parcels. My first visitor was Mrs. Darrell Figgis, who came to me in or about the first week in June and gave me a telegram informing me that my wife had given birth to a baby daughter and that I was not to worry, that everything was being taken care of. I found Mrs. Figgis to be a very charming lady and anxious to do all in her power to make things easier for us.

The money which had been taken from us on our arrival was returned to us and in addition we were permitted to receive gifts of cash from home or outside sympathisers. A travelling shop from which we could buy foodstuffs of every description was allowed into the prison and was a great help to us in augmenting the scanty prison fare. Football matches, concerts, etc., were organised which helped to while away the time. We were also allowed to buy English newspapers but we

were not allowed to receive any copies of the Dublin daily papers.

About the third week in June each of us was visited by a military warder who handed us a form which we were to complete and return to the prison authorities. I cannot recollect the exact wording of this form but I do know that it had for its object the repudiation by each one of us of the action of our leaders in Easter Week. There had been a great outcry against the British over the executions following the Rising and it seemed that as there were further executions pending, the British wanted to prove to the world that the men who took part in the Rising were only dupes and did not know what they were going out to do. The signing of these forms by any one of us would have given the British justification in the eyes of the world for the action they had taken. Our prisoners' Council gave us very definite instructions that under no circumstances were we to sign the forms given us by the British authorities. As there were men in prison who had taken no part in the Rising, but who were picked up during the round-up, they, if they wished, were at liberty to sign the forms, if by so doing it would expedite their release. For example, the caretakers of the premises of the Independent and Freeman's Journal newspapers who were arrested during Easter Week and who were interned with us in Stafford took no part in the Rising and consequently signed the forms and were subsequently released.

In or about this time we were also served with a form telling us that we were to be interned in a prisoner-of-war camp under Defence of the Realm Act or D.O.R.A., as it was then called; the place of internment in our case being indicated as Frongoch

prisoner-of-war camp, Balla, North Wales. This form provided for a right of appeal against internment which had to be supported by full detailed reasons in support of the appeal. To my own personal knowledge, no prisoner of the Stafford gaol party completed the form. Up to this, any of us who had surrendered in uniform had continued to wear it. In the last week in June we were informed by the Prison authorities that we would not be allowed to wear uniform in Frongoch and that we should immediately hand in our uniforms to the local Quartermaster's stores, when steps would be taken to have them suitably parcelled and returned to our homes. We were then taken out in batches of 25 to 30 men in each batch and issued with an overcoat for which we were asked to sign. As we objected to signing for the overcoats, there was a slight altercation between Seamus Robinson, one of the prisoners, who was in front of me, and the local Quartermaster who stated that in the absence of signatures he would not issue the garments. However, we eventually got our way and got the overcoats without the signatures. We were then supplied with substantial bread, butter and meat sandwiches and an assurance was given that we would be supplied with tea en route to Frongoch. We were then fallen-in in Column of fours and marched out of Stafford gaol en route to Stafford railway station where we were then placed 12 men in each carriage with an armed guard. There was no incident on the route between the gaol and the station. We were delayed at the station for about a half hour during which time we were checked and re-checked and we eventually steamed out of Stafford on our way to Frongoch in the afternoon of a day in the last week in June. We arrived at Frongoch camp at about 8.30 that evening, sick and weary and we were searched and re-

checked before being allotted to our huts. I may mention in passing that Frongoch Camp had been used as a German prisoner-of-war camp and in consequence of an objection by the International Red Cross, it had been condemned as unsuitable for that purpose.

On the following morning we were fallen-in and addressed by our own Camp Commandant, M. W. O'Reilly, who told us that we would have to perform certain duties for the proper administration of the Camp, particularly in regard to hygiene and sanitation. Those physically handicapped from doing hard work would be given jobs suitable to their physical capabilities. The British Camp staff was composed mainly of elderly men who would appear to have been specially enlisted for duty of this nature. They wore British Military uniform and were armed with shotguns. The routine in Frongoch was somewhat similar to that which we had been used to immediately prior to our departure from Stafford gaol except that in addition to the usual camp duties we were taken, weather permitting, every second day on marches through the Welsh hills and on these marches we were accompanied by an escort of the prison staff armed with shotguns.

About the third week in July we were informed that we would be taken before a commission sitting in London and presided over by Judge Sankey where we would be interrogated. On the answers given by us to the question put by the Commission would depend whether we would be released or retained in confinement. Our Camp Executive, having studied this proposal, told us that having regard to our action in the different gaols, it was incumbent on us not to give any



information to the Commission which could be used by the British for propaganda purposes. Some few days after this we were fallen-in in camp and marched in batches to the local railway station where we were entrained for London. On our arrival at Paddington station we were loaded on to buses and conveyed under escort to Wandsworth. Our escort from Frongoch to Wandsworth was composed of elements of the London Irish Rifles, all of whom were of an independent type - friendly in their attitude towards us but definitely pro-British. Their general conversation was couched in such a manner as to make it appear that they were anxious to obtain information. On our arrival at Paddington station - word having apparently preceded us that we were due in - we found a large crowd collected inside the station precincts. This crowd was made up of two groups, one awaiting the arrival of the prisoners from Frongoch and the other awaiting the arrival of an ambulance train bringing wounded from the western front. As soon as the train stopped and we got out on the platform, the attitude of the people awaiting the arrival of the ambulance train, and who had learned who we were, became very hostile, while the attitude of the crowd who were waiting on us became boisterously friendly. The guard, which was small, sensing the possibility of a row at the station or some of us escaping, which we could easily have done, asked us to keep together. The guard succeeded in separating the two crowds and got us on to the buses without incident. While on the station a girl approached me and asked me if I knew Joe Good and if he was in the party. I told her that he was and I learned subsequently that she was able to speak to him and have

some messages delivered. We were fortunate in having in our party the brothers Noonan - Seán and Ernest - Joe Good and Jimmy O'Connor (Blimey), who had spent years in London and had belonged to the London I.R.B. They had come over and taken part in the Rising. These men knew London very well and en route to Wandsworth were able to point out to us the different places of interest. Our route took us through Marble Arch, Hyde Park to Wandsworth Road and into the gaol.

On arrival in gaol we were marched into the courtyard where we were addressed by the Governor, who informed us that as Wandsworth was a convict prison, we would be required to surrender all our personal belongings, including money, cigarettes and matches, and abide by the rules laid down for convict prisoners. Talking was also strictly prohibited. We were then searched by a convict dressed in convict clothes, who knew his job and gave each of us a thorough searching. After this, each of us was allotted a cell. Having taken up our abode in the cells, we were subjected to the supervision of what appeared to be a military prisoner. These people were evidently undergoing terms of imprisonment for various offences and were dressed in brown convict attire. All of these prisoners wore rubber-soled shoes so that we never knew when we were under observation, as we could not hear them approaching our cells. One man in particular was very hostile towards us, and accused us of smoking. He said to me that he smelled smoke and I told him he could not have, as I had no cigarettes on me. He became very aggressive and attempted to search me, which I objected to. He then tried to use force, during the course of which he knocked me about. I picked up a

stool which was in the cell and told him that if he did not get out I would let him have it. He was a pretty hefty individual but he apparently realised that I could give as good as I got, and he withdrew. I subsequently learned that he had subjected several of my comrades to the same treatment and they also retaliated.

Sometime after our arrival we were supplied with a supper consisting of tea, bread and butter. We were then locked up for the night and the following morning each of us was brought from our cells and marched out to the yard for exercise. This took the form of marching round in a ring at so many paces between each prisoner. Within the rings of prisoners at exercise were several armed soldiers whose duty it was to see that we observed the prison rules regarding talking. At about 10 o'clock at the end of the exercise hour we were returned to our cells and immediately afterwards we were informed by a warder that we would be brought before the Commission at 11 o'clock in an office in the prison building. Some short time before 11 o'clock we were assembled in the yard and marched over to this particular office where we were interviewed by a Mr. O'Donnell who was briefed to represent our people who were being called before the Sankey Commission. O'Donnell interviewed each one of us in a cubicle adjacent to the office in which the Commission was sitting. When it came to my turn he asked me in what area I operated during the Rising in Easter Week. I told him I was not prepared to give any information to the Commission which would help to bolster up British propaganda to the effect that the majority of the men who took part in the Rising were dupes who were led

astray. He replied that the Commission were well aware of the part which I took and that I was foolish to adopt this attitude, and that if I continued in this frame of mind the Commission had it in its power to retain me in confinement indefinitely under the Defence of the Realm Act then in operation in Ireland. I replied that I was prepared to face up to it and that under no circumstances was I prepared to give information which might be used against my leaders. He then pointed out to me that if I was adamant in the matter there was nothing he could do for me. My brother George was immediately in front of me and my brother Frank was next after me. When George came out from the Commission I attempted to find out from him what questions had been put to him and what was the general attitude of the Commission. A plain-clothes man who observed my attempt to get into conversation with my brother George hustled him away and I did not succeed in making contact with him. I was then ushered into the room where I found three gentlemen in civilian attire sitting at a table and one standing with his back to the fireplace. When I entered the room Sankey, who occupied the centre position at the table, said "Good morning, Mr. Flanagan, take a chair", and he offered me a cigarette. I told him that I did not feel like smoking at the moment. He then addressed me and said, "Did you know when you were going out on Easter Monday that you were going to take part in an armed rebellion?" I replied, "I knew at 12 o'clock on that day that I was going out to take part in an armed rebellion", adding that I had the opportunity of withdrawing from active participation in it if I so desired. Sankey then said, "Would you like to get out of this place and be released?" to which I answered,

"Certainly". He then said, "Well, that depends upon the attitude you now adopt". He continued, "There were four brothers of you and three of them are here, where is the other one?" I replied that he was killed. He said "How do you know this?" I said that I heard it from one of my colleagues. He asked, "What regiment did you belong to and where were you engaged?" I said I belonged to a Company and that I had fought in the Four Courts area. He then referred to a map which he had on the table in front of him and asked me what particular part of the Four Courts area I fought in. I told him that I did not fight in any particular part but that I was all over that particular area during the week. I had the impression that the Commission were anxious to find out if I was one of the members of the garrison of Reilly's Fort where the British forces suffered heavy casualties. But I did not enlighten him in this matter. Sankey then said to me, "Of course you realise that it is our function to advise and help you as far as possible but I regret to say that we have not got the co-operation from you which we expected. I could not get any information out of your brother who preceded you". I said that I was not responsible for my brother's attitude, that I was only concerned for myself. Sankey then shrugged his shoulders and said, "That is all, Flanagan. You may go."

As soon as the investigation concluded with our group we were marched back to our respective cells and some time afterwards we were served with a dinner of the usual prison fare. We remained in Wandsworth gaol until the following morning when we were again assembled and handed back the belongings which were taken from us on our entry into the gaol. We were then supplied

with sandwiches, placed on buses and returned by the same way to Paddington railway station where we entrained for Frongoch.

We arrived in Frongoch sometime about 8 o'clock that evening and returned to our huts. When we arrived at Balla station which was the point at which we left the train for Frongoch we got a very friendly reception from the Welsh people who had assembled in large numbers on the platform. They were particularly anxious to obtain souvenirs from us and sought diligently such personal belongings as Rosary Beads and other religious emblems.

We settled down to the usual camp routine in Frongoch, attending lectures, route marches, Irish classes and so forth. In or about the third week in August we were assembled in batches and as each man's name was called out he joined those who had already gone before him and we were then told to pack up our belongings as we were being released. After these preliminaries had been completed we were marched in a batch of about 60 men to Balla station where we entrained for Holyhead. We arrived at Holyhead at about 11.30 p.m. that night unaccompanied by any armed guard or escort. The only representative of the British military who came with us was a Sergeant-Major whose duty it was, apparently, to arrange for our embarkation on the boat leaving Holyhead two hours later. We then embarked on the boat leaving for Dublin sometime about 2 a.m. the following morning and after a reasonably good crossing we reached Dunlaoghaire or, as it was then known, "Kingstown", at about 5.30 a.m., where we had a rousing reception from many hundreds of people who had

been gathering there morning after morning in expectation of the general release. We reached Westland Row Railway Station at about ten minutes to seven where we again found a large crowd assembled to greet us. I was particularly struck with the changed attitude of the people on our arrival back from prison compared with the hostility of the Dublin citizens on our departure for an English internment camp after the Rising.

Before concluding my account on the period of my association with the Separatist Movement from 1913 to my release on the General Amnesty, I wish to refer to the meeting of the I.R.B. which was held in Frongoch some short time before our release. As far as I can recollect, this meeting was attended by known members of the organisation who had come over to Dublin for the Rising from Glasgow, Liverpool and London. They included, among others, the following:- Joseph Duffy, Hughie Thornton, Seamus Donegan, Joe Gleeson, Martin Gleeson, Paddy Brennan and Jack Kerr, all from Liverpool; Mick Collins and Christy Whelan from London; Paddy Morrin, Barney Freil, Seán Hegarty, Sandy Carmichael and my brother Francis O'Flanagan from Glasgow. The meeting was addressed by Michael Collins, who stated that the fight for Independence would continue and that the I.R.B. would be used to the utmost to perpetuate the ideals for which they had gone out in Easter Week 1916. Some of those present who had never been in Ireland until a short time before the Rising in Easter Week were worried as to how they were fixed for employment and they were informed by Collins that the prospect of their returning to their jobs in the English cities and towns from which they had come were not too

rosy, and that, in the circumstances, special efforts would be made to obtain jobs for them in Ireland.

Signed Michael O'Flanagan  
(Michael O'Flanagan)

Date 11<sup>th</sup> February 1953  
11th February 1953.

Witness M. F. Ryan Comdt.  
(M.F. Ryan) Comd't.

