

W.S. 803

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BURO STAIRÉ MILEATA 1913-21
No. W.S. 803

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 803

Witness

Commandant Michael Sheer in (O.2984),
Baldoonnel Camp,
Co. Dublin.

Identity.

Member of Irish Volunteers, Tyrone, 1914 - ;
Company Officer Irish Volunteers, Derry, 1917 - ;
Member of Flying Column, Co. Donegal, 1920-'21.

Subject.

National events, Donegal-Derry,
1914-1921.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 4.13-21
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803

STATEMENT BY O.2984 COMMANDANT MICHAEL SHEERIN,
ARMAMENT OFFICER, THE AIR CORPS, BALDONNEL CAMP,
COUNTY DUBLIN.

I was born in Glenelly, Co. Tyrone, on 26th September, 1900 and after leaving school I went to Hughes' Academy in Derry City. I lived at 17 Foyle St. in the private apartments of the group of buildings known as Conlan's Rooms. My uncle administered this property. The Irish Volunteers used these buildings as Assembly Rooms. My "keeper" was Miss Conlan and Miss Reddy - both of these ladies were elderly spinsters.

I think I actually became a member of the National Volunteers about the middle of 1914.

I was intended for the Church, and while getting a grind from Fr. Jos. Lagan, C.C., Cranagh, preparatory to entering St. Columb's College - a brother of Dr. Lagan, the donor of the Lagan Cup to the Gaelic Athletic Association - I persuaded him to take me into a juvenile section of the local Company that he directed. This was probably the Fianna.

When the Rising occurred in Dublin during Easter Week 1916, there was some activity in Derry. A number of the leading Volunteers were arrested and subsequently interned. Amongst the arrested were Joe O'Doherty, Seamus Kavanagh, John Fox and Hugh McGuinness. Boys like me who were only on the fringe of things then were not given much information by the older crowd.

After the 1916 Rising, when the interned leaders were released, a Company of Volunteers was reorganised on the west side of Derry City.

In 1917 I became O/C. of No. 1 Section of this Company. Alfie McCallion was one of the squad commanders and perhaps Dan McGandy was the other. Seamus Kavanagh was Company O/C. In 1917 a Company was said to be organised in the Waterside district. Dan Kelly (old-timer) supposed to be in the I.R.B., and now in the Customs & Excise, knows all about the Waterside

Company. Colonel McCabe should know this Company; in 1920. Paddy Shiels was said to be O/C. of Bradywell Company. We had little touch with these Companies as these areas were Bradywell and Waterside. Seamus Kavanagh, our O/C. was supposed to be an early member of the I.R.B. He served in his youth in the South African War. His selection as a company officer was probably due to his military experience. Drills, parades, collection of arms and G.H.Q. details etc. were the normal routine in the years 1917, 1918 and 1919. Internal dissensions during the year 1917 caused some disruption in the organisation of the Volunteers in Derry. The O'Doherty family's control in the Volunteers and kindred organisations seemed to cause resentment. A large percentage of the unit were of the working class element and they did not care much for the professionals. The condition of affairs in the organisation in Derry seemed to have come to the notice of G.H.Q. and Ernie O'Malley came along from G.H.Q. in Dublin. I remember being on parade in Derry where O'Malley told us of the concern at G.H.Q. about the state of the organisation in Derry and he advised us to sink our differences and come together. We did not know what he was talking about at the time.

After O'Malley's visit most of the older crowd of officers faded away including Seamus Kavanagh, who may at this period have been arrested. Gabriel McGrath, who was in the company from early in 1917 and had attained the position of Company Adjutant, assumed command of the Company. He reorganised the Company on a new basis. He took any of the boys he considered good and put them in No. 1 Section. He initiated me into the I.R.B. My initiation took place in a wood on the west bank of the Foyle near the point where the Boom of Derry fame was anchored on the west side. Ex-servicemen were not accepted in this section. He made a further selection from the men of this section to form a sort of active service unit. This was named "The T.F.P. Squad" (Ten Foot Pikers).

At this time through leakage of information, men were getting arrested and this designation of the active men in the Company was selected for the purpose of eliminating possible weak characters and confusing the British authorities. This also had a bearing on the designation of the parent unit. When they knew that a man was a member of something called "The T.F.P." or No. 1 Section, it would convey much to them. The T.F.P. Squad members were all members of the I.R.B. No. 1 Section was kept continually under training. This included drills, arms training, field exercises and G.H.Q. details. I will try to give, as far as I can now remember, the names of the T.F.P. Squad :-

Andy Hegarty	Lorkan McGrath, Dublin
Phil Doherty	Dan McGandy (killed in action)
Eddie Deane	Tom Hinchey (Clare man)
Alfie McCallion	Jim Kerby (from Sligo)
Patk. Connolly (Omagh)	J. McGlynn (Sligo)
Tim Doheny (Tipperary)	Sean Haughey (Teelan).

The policy of the T.F.P. Squad was to gain and take control of all republican organisations in the city. It succeeded in some measure in this aim, but I had a feeling there was at least one I.R.B. Centre working independently though not doing anything of note.

Most of the T.F.P. Centre were from outside Derry and kept local squabbles out of the organisation. Gabriel McGrath was the dominant personality in the Volunteer organisation in Derry in those years.

The Company was divided into four parts and each part was made into a cadre Company. Joe O'Doherty may have been Battalion O/C. at this time. All men of any notoriety in the Volunteers in Derry were arrested by the British on the slightest provocation.

During the conscription scare there was a big influx of men into the Volunteers and the numbers probably reached battalion strength. At the end of 1919 I was an apprentice Marine Engine fitter with Messrs. Swan Hunter and I was sent to

Harland & Wolff's Diesel Works in Glasgow and later to Messrs. Camel Laird's, Birkenhead. During my time in Glasgow I acted as an escort for Mr. Eamon de Valera on a visit he paid to Glasgow where he addressed a meeting in St. Andrew's Hall, Anderson. I had attached myself to the Glasgow Battalion. Parades were held in the Patrick Subway Hall. The personalities I recall of this unit were a man named O'Farrell, a native of Lisnaskea, Co. Fermanagh, who managed a provision store near the Central Station; and a Dublin man said to have been wounded in 1916 who had a brush-making business in Argyle Street. An effort was made by some people at this meeting to interrupt Mr. de Valera during his address. The people who were associated in those interruptions were principally trades union or socialistically inclined people. Peadar O'Donnell was in the audience at this meeting.

I remember being in Derry during the General Election of 1918. One of the members of the T.F.P. Centre, Dan McGandy, was an official in Derry Post Office and had access to the postal votes. He arranged to collect all postal votes he could lay his hands on in the course of his employment and hand them over to the T.F.P. Squad. It was well known that the vast majority of postal voters would record their votes for the Unionist candidate. As a result of McGandy's efforts, several thousand of those votes were not recorded as intended. The republican candidate won by a small majority.

On my return to Derry in the spring of 1920 I was told Jim Kirby was O/C. all Derry Units and that the numbers were so reduced that it almost disappeared. The McGrath brothers and some of the native Volunteers in the city had been arrested or had gone to seek employment elsewhere. I remember at this time talking to Alfie McCallion and we discussed the situation and decided to re-form the unit in a more stabilised form. We got this under way during the month of May, 1920.

In June 1920, we had a Company strength of about 50 men. Jim Kirby was away

during this period in Co. Donegal, and I think that Paddy Sheils was then in gaol.

THE MILITARY OPERATIONS IN DERRY IN JUNE, 1920.

In June 1920, I remember walking up Bishop St. with Alfie McCallion one evening. We heard a volley of shots coming from Fountain St. into Bishop St. We were walking towards the scene of the shooting and when we arrived there we heard that people were wounded and some killed. We decided to exploit the situation and mobilise the unit. It was assembled that evening in the Shamrock Hall, the usual place of parade for the unit.

A general scare spread in the city and some excitement existed. A lot of lapsed members of the Volunteers flocked into the Shamrock Hall that evening and a section of the Cumann na mBan under Kathleen McGuinness of Chamberlain Street. The unit paraded, armed, and we proceeded to occupy St. Columb's College. On our arrival at the College we were welcomed by the Dean, Fr. James McGlinchy, and the President, Dr. McShane. Both these priests were in the Sinn Fein organisation and were two fine Irish priests. I cannot remember how many days we used the college as headquarters - I think about a week. We occupied all the streets surrounding the college and in some instances up close to the walled quarters. About the third day of our occupation of the College I remember Paddy Sheils coming there. My position in relation to Sheils was rather indefinite at this time. I knew he was O/C. of a small company and I had the impression that he was only out from a period in gaol. I directed operations at the college for the first few days. A chap named Flynn from Sligo, a commercial traveller, was, during this time, my adjutant and he kept a copy of all orders issued by me. On Paddy Sheil's reporting to the college, he assumed command. Paddy's reputation as a politician and a man who had been in and out of gaol often gave him a considerable local reputation. This fitted the situation.

Our information after the first few days was that the British had brought in a brigade of troops from England to Belfast to oppose us. Looking back now I would say that this report was exaggerated, as the increased British strength was probably a battalion. We got information later that a large British force had arrived in Belfast and were actually on their way to Derry. This eventually transpired to be a battalion of the Dorsetshire Regiment with an armoured corps attachment. We procured some bombs and inflammable material and planned to attempt to occupy the section of the city west of the river. Whilst these arrangements were under way the British brought the Dorsets and their attachments into action. The armoured cars encircled our positions and by machine-gun fire destroyed most of our street barricades. Those barricades were made of sandbags, flour bags, sugar bags, etc. which machine-gun fire reduced in a very short time. Eventually the personnel manning the outer defences who were mainly ex-British soldiers with a national background were dislodged and came into the College, handed over their arms and were sent home. Our occupied positions after this were reduced to the College and its grounds. The British then brought along searchlights, turning the searchlights on the college buildings and played machine-gun fire on the windows of the college. We then decided to evacuate the college. The Cumann na mBan section was evacuated. We collected the spare arms and made our way by the rear entrance to arms dumps off William St. Here we dumped the spare arms and dispersed.

On the succeeding three days the section of the city west of the river was practically under our control. Serious lootings, burnings and sectarian clashes took place the day after we evacuated the college and we had to take over police duties and get things under control, which we succeeded in doing.

At this period personal representatives from G.H.Q. in

Dublin arrived in Derry and they left us under the impression that valuable military experiences had been acquired by our actions in Derry and that in the circumstances we had done the correct thing.

An interesting sidelight in this period was that the R.I.C. in their barracks on the north side of the river barricaded themselves in and made no effort to oppose us during our occupation of that section of the city. The operations we carried out during this period gave us control of a good part of Derry city. Our activities in the part we controlled were both military and administrative. We acquired a considerable quantity of arms due in a great part to the anxiety of the nationalists of the city that we should protect them. Our casualties were negligible although there was a good number of casualties among the civilian population. These casualties were considerably exaggerated in the Press at the time.

The issue was mainly between the I.R.A. on one side and the Ulster Volunteers under Dr. Craig on the other. Ultimately the British military interfered. Curfew was imposed and, as far as I can remember, the city was placed under martial law. A considerable amount of destruction of property occurred. One instance of this was the looting of Watt's Distillery.

THE T.F.P.s. SECTION ACTIVITIES.

The T.F.P. Centre during its existence planned and controlled all Volunteer activities in the city. These included two raids for Ulster Volunteer arms in Innishowen (one in the house of the Lord Mayor of Derry in Merville;) two raids for arms near Limavady; two raids for arms at Ardmore, burning Carrigans evacuated R.I.C. barracks and Burnfoot evacuated barracks; raided for and got National Volunteer arms at Strand Road, Derry; got possession of the arms of Merville Company of the Nationalist Volunteers.

During this period there is a series of incidents I would like to record. In my employment I had access to Craigh's engineering works in Derry. One day while searching for some equipment required I discovered a store which on investigating I found contained a large number of Mills grenades without fillings but otherwise complete. On discussing the matter with other members of the T.F.P. Squad, we decided to avail of these grenades for I.R.A. purposes. The transport of the grenades from the premises where they were stored and the storing of them by us presented a problem. We decided to take them in small quantities. There were two entrances to the Works; one from Strand Road and the other from the Quays. The quay entrance consisted of a large wooden gate with a wicket entrance. We procured a key for the wicket entrance and for the store holding the grenades, and we proceeded to remove the grenades by hand as the opportunity presented itself. The grenades were distributed to various units and individuals, a quantity going to G.H.Q. in Dublin.

The taking of these grenades never seemed to be detected although their removal from the store was carried on over a period. I was on this operation one night - I don't now remember the exact date. Two other members of the Squad were on the job - Dan McGandy and, I think, Gabriel McGrath or perhaps Alfie McCallion. The arrangements for this night were that McGandy, who worked in the G.P.O. in Derry, and had the keys for this particular night, would bring along with him a post-bag and meet us at the Technical Schools about 200 yards from the Strand Road entrance to Craigh's engineering works. We waited for him at this assembly point, but he did not turn up and we came to the conclusion that he was held up by duties in the G.P.O. After waiting for over an hour we went home. The following morning his coat, revolver and post-bag were found on the quay in Derry opposite the entrance to Craigh's from which we had been taking the grenades. About a week afterwards his body was found floating in the river. The verdict

at the inquest was "found drowned".

I believe this man met his death on active service. He was probably prevented by his duties in the Post Office from being at the place of appointment within a reasonable time and he apparently went to remove a consignment of the grenades by himself, as had happened on some previous occasions. The British authorities may have come to know of the loss of the grenades some time previously to this particular date and they were probably waiting in Craigh's on this night, where they captured McGandy, took his revolver and post-bag from him and dumped him in the river. This is only surmise, but I think a correct version of what happened. We could do nothing about the matter at the time except give him a military funeral.

About October 1920, it came to our notice that two armed R.I.C. men were placed on guard at night at the quayside of the General Post Office in Derry adjoining the Strand Road R.I.C. barracks. We decided to disarm these two men. On the night of 6.9.'20, we carried out this operation it was dark and with myself and McCallion who were leading and two other Volunteers following (Mick Molloy and Seamus McCann) covering our retreat, when I rounded the corner and came within view of the two police I discovered that a Head Constable was on his rounds of inspection and was with the two men on guard. I ordered them to put their hands up. The Head Constable made a motion to do so, but then dropped his left hand and caught my wrist. I fired and he fell to the ground. McCallion closed with one of the other policemen and the third policeman ran into the rear entrance to the barracks. There was a series of shots fired on both sides. Eventually McCallion got a rifle from the policeman he was in grips with and I got the Head Constable's revolver. When we got these arms we cleared off. We had some difficulty in getting away as the site of the operation was covered by a series of military blockhouses. The R.I.C. and military came out before we got clear away and we had to disperse and get away singly.

Subsequently that night the British forces carried out very serious reprisals in Derry city. They burned practically all the premises in William Street and a good many business premises were burned in other parts of the city where the owners were known to be Republicans. This night in Derry is known since as "the night of terror". (See newspaper reports which give graphic descriptions of what happened).

The casualties on the British side for this night were pretty heavy as some sections of the Black & Tans and R.I.C. came into conflict with the British military and some fire-fighting units they were escorting. At least one pitched battle between two different bodies of British forces took place that night. We were commended by G.H.Q. for this particular operation. We received more credit than I think was due as we had no responsibility whatever for the clashes between the British military and police nor for the casualties which resulted. We were severely censored by the Church for our responsibility for that night's events in Derry. That night was the winding up of a Novena for Peace in the Cathedral in Derry.

The main problems we had to contend with in Derry city during the period were :-

- (1) The apathy of the nationalist population to our aims and objects, and the strong opposition from the unionist element in the city.
- (2) Derry City was and is a British garrison town - had a large percentage of the native nationalist population in close association in various ways with British Services.
- (3) Serious opposition to our military activities from the Catholic Church. Only about three priests showed any interest in the Republican movement. Two of these were Father McGlinchey, Dean, and Dr. McShane, President of St. Columb's College.

- (4) The National Volunteers were strongly organised in the city at the start of the 1914-18 war. A large percentage joined the British services and many of them who returned took up a hostile attitude towards the I.R.A.
- (5) In the years immediately succeeding 1916, personal differences between individuals in the Volunteer organisation in Derry became manifest and caused damage to our efforts.
- (6) Great difficulties were experienced in keeping some units in existence owing to other counter attractions.
- (7) The small active element in the Volunteers was continually clamouring for action. This element became easily discouraged and was inclined to grumble and complain even unjustifiably against older sections which controlled the Sinn Fein organisation in the city and, to some extent, the military organisation.

A lot of credit is due to the older members of the various republican forces in the city, as immediately after any incident or military operation, these men were invariably gathered up and placed in gaol although they had little knowledge of what was happening.

CONTROL:

Everything we did was planned by the T.F.P. Squad. It never consisted of more than ten members. They were all I.R.B. men.

From Ernie O'Malley's visit, Joe O'Doherty kept in the background. He was, however, in close contact with our activities and kept us on our toes. He held conferences regularly when he was available, at his private house in Clarendon Street. His wife was a Medical Doctor. He used her consulting room for his classes and she dealt with the patients in the waiting room. In the early days I was his No. 1 Section Commander and I provided the personnel for these occasions. He gave lectures on the Conventional Military Subjects and provided us with Manuals. He enlightened us on Politics, Policy and other matters. These sessions were not popular. Some of it was far above the head of most of the class. The last of these sessions, I recall, took place the afternoon he first became a father. One wit suggested he had put it on to take his mind off the event. However, he taught us a lot. We often accompanied him on armed missions in County Donegal and County Derry where he seemed to have a big organisation. Dr. McGinley of Letterkenny seemed to be his second in command. The personnel were all, except ourselves, from Donegal Units.

The atmosphere of these excursions was most impressive - bands of armed men careering around the country in assorted motor vehicles. They were probably all arms raids. Our job usually was to commandeer a few motor cars or lorries, provide ourselves with a revolver, hatchets, wire cutters and an assortment of tools, and report at certain check points. Sometimes we got a detail to cut telephone wires, block roads or bash in doors. Nothing much ever seemed to result except perhaps a collection of old swords, ancient rifles, and things of that sort. We frequently got lost and the vehicles often broke down. We usually managed to get back to the city before dawn, abandon the vehicles in some back street and go home.

Subsequently we had to make out a report and later assemble at Clarendon Street where blame or commendation was apportioned as I expect, deserved. I may say it was mostly blame; we made many mistakes.

In addition to the foregoing, Joe O'Doherty exercised a most important function as far as we were concerned. In the course of his instructions he taught us enough to enable us to appreciate that we must have a legal status. This problem was always obtruding itself in the spiritual sphere and was the subject of much discussion in the T.F.P. circle. The situation was:- As far as we knew Joe O'Doherty was my immediate superior officer. When I joined the Volunteers I was told he was my platoon commander. He was not removed from that office or suspended although he probably held many other offices, including that of T.D., with which we were not concerned. He was not replaced and no one was elected to the appointment. I kept in touch with him. In the course of a year or so I had, de facto, control of about 100 armed men and Joe O'Doherty was the essential immediate link with control authority. He could sanction minor operations, give general directions or obtain covering sanction from G.H.Q. I remember when I committed the unit to the major operation of June 1920 I had many qualms. I was banking on Joe O'Doherty's sanction or his obtaining covering sanction from G.H.Q. Unfortunately, on the second day he was arrested at Enniskillen while on his way from Dublin to

Derry and the matter was not straightened out until the arrival of the G.H.Q. staff officers from Dublin.

STRENGTH:

The average strength of the unit was around 60 (See Appendix I) during the period, with a reserve strength in the region of 50. This could be easily increased to 500 partially trained men.

DISCIPLINE:

Discipline was very easy to maintain. The personnel were keen and intensely patriotic young men in the age group 18 to 24. When there was little activity, attendance on parades tended to fall off. This was dealt with by ordering ^{surprise} parades at an unusual time. Patrols were then detailed to round up the absentees who were usually found in dance halls or other places of entertainment. Being rounded up in this way kept them on the alert and a talking-to was all that was ever required.

TRAINING:

The usual foot drill, arms' drill of the period was carried out. We usually had field exercises on Sunday mornings. The training area for these exercises and for target practices was the area to the west of the city between Ballygarvin, Greenan Hill, Sheriff's Mountain and Springtown. Rifle and revolver practice could usually be carried out up to about midday on Sundays without any interference. We did quite a number of night exercises. Some of the Unit were picked up by the R.I.C. during the training period and had the current charge of drilling etc. made against them.

ARMS:

Arms were quite easy to pick up. Every man was expected to arm and equip himself. Most of them were well armed; some had small arsenals and a few had nothing. There was plenty of traffic in arms in the unit. The most popular weapon was the German Parabellum. These were hard to come by. They were brought home as keepsakes during the war by soldiers returning on leave. The most popular rifle was the Naval Service Rifle of the period. It was a short Lee Enfield.

easily dismantled and assembled and could be stowed around the body when passing through town for target practice etc. When the Yanks established their Naval Air Services Base on the west bank of the Foyle about the end of 1917 there were plenty of fancy American revolvers around. These were not much good. They were mostly of small calibre. Most of the unit made their living as employees of the Admiralty. They were artisans and apprentices of various trades and had access to the naval installations and vessels, including submarines, Destroyers, Cruisers and other naval craft. Dan Gallagher, a Sinn Feiner, was a supervisor. Sam Stewart, a member of the unit, was engineering foreman on overhauls, salvage etc., Eddie McCaffrey, Workshops Foreman, John Doherty was Machine Shop Foreman. The two latter were sympathisers and reliable.

There was always plenty of arms and ammunition lying around the naval stores and vessels during the war, especially when the vessels had been in action and were shot up. It was easy to arrange with the Superintendent and foremen for alternative temporary employment for fellow workers who might be a nuisance and place our men for the job. The usual practice when the preliminaries were completed was to secure the arms/ ^(and) or ammunition and bring them to a secluded spot, often the engine room or boiler room, dismantle the rifle or rifles and stow them about the body. The ammunition and sometimes the rifle butt could be placed in a tool bag. The participants went ashore apparently on their normal pursuits such as meals, and brought the stuff home with them. It was not the practice of the Naval Authorities to check dockyard employees. An amusing sequel was all the boys got medals from the Admiralty for their services during the 1914-18 war. I hold one of these medals myself.

At Christmas 1920 the first phase of our mission or job, as set out by G.H.Q., i.e. "Engage the maximum enemy Forces and take the pressure off the South" was largely completed. The city and its surrounding districts were under martial law and curfew was in operation. The walled part of the city had formidable defences.

All the gates (5) and Craigavon Bridge had strong posts. The streets were honeycombed with a blockhouse system of about 50 units. The four railway termini, shipping sheds and docks were under guard. All roads leading from and to the city were cordoned off. The Power Station, Gas Works, Waterworks, Guild Hall and City Institutes were under military guard.

The imposition of these measures occupied a reinforced Brigade consisting of :-

One	Battalion	Northumberland	Fusiliers.
"	"	Dorsetshire	Regiment.
"	"	King's Own	Yorkshire Infantry.

Each Battalion had armoured and artillery attachments and ancillary Services. The Strand Barracks was garrisoned by a Company of the Auxilliary Cadets. The six other Police Stations were each garrisoned by 20 Black & Tans and four N.C.Os. The Ulster Volunteers, reformed and later named the A and B Specials, occupied all the surrounding towns and villages. The strength of these forces was something in the region of 500. This later force was the toughest problem and equalled that of all the other elements combined.

The total armed force marshalled against us at the end of 1920 was something in the region of 5,000 men. This was no small effort in a city of 50,000 inhabitants, half of whom were antagonistic.

Harassing tactics were carried on up to the spring of 1921. These took varying forms, one of which I will describe. It merely involved detailing six or seven men to discharge shots at a fixed time in widely separated parts of the city. In most cases they fired them in their own backyard or through a skylight. When this occurred the enemy reacted in a form of drill as follows -

The alarm was sounded in Ebrington barracks. The garrisons of the block houses took up the alert position and cordoned streets of the sector the blockhouse covered. Everyone caught in the cordón was held until the Tans and Auxilliaries came along to screen and search them.

A platoon of military was posted on each of the five gates. No one was allowed enter or leave the walled part of the city until screened and searched. The armoured sections, the Auxiliaries and Tans started careering around the streets. Any male caught in a cordon or inside the city walls was searched and knocked around indiscriminately whether Loyalist, Nationalist or Sinn Feiner. The roads to and from the city were closed and all traffic stopped. Three hours usually elapsed before the "all clear" was sounded. In those three hours there were hundreds of people milling around inside the walls waiting to get screened and passed out. About the same numbers were on the outside waiting to get passed in. Similar procedure was operated in the cordoned areas. The citizens, especially the loyalists, didn't like this carry-on at all.

Sometimes the approach was varied. Mills grenades would be fired into the County Jail at a blockhouse or other suitable targets. Some preferred the grenade approach as, once the firer got rid of the grenade, he was finished and could take part in the ensuing "entertainment". If he had to use a revolver he had to dispose of it. In order to illustrate how the thing was worked I will relate an incident against myself. This night I had arranged the details in the Shamrock Hall where we usually met. It was a revolver job and the alarm was timed for 8 o'clock. The boys went off to their various points. I got mixed up in the time or I got delayed. I had selected Foyle Street as my point. I lived there. In order to get to Foyle Street I had to pass through Waterloo Square. This Square was covered by three blockhouses.

When I was about the middle of the Square the alarm sounded. The blockhouses came into operation and the occupants closed all entrances and exits from the Square and enclosed some 300 people who crowded into a mass in the centre. I only had a small revolver but I was worried. I found I was caught in a trap I was setting through carelessness. However, three girls of Cumann na mBan came up to me and broached the operative question of the period, "Have you anything on you?". I said yes. They spread themselves around, took the gun, and I got it the next day. Girls were never searched at this time and I must record

that the girls of Cumann na mBan of Derry always seemed to be hanging around when we got into difficulties. The reader who took any of the local loyalist papers during the period will now know there was something in the claim of the editors that we were hiding behind the skirts of women.

While these things were going on some of the boys found it was quite easy to part the Subalterns of the K.O.Y.L.I. from their revolvers. The adepts of the Squad in the technique employed were Jim Taylor and Eddie Dean. Both of these boys were boxers of some note. I can't claim any personal success. The set-up was as follows:

When the alarm was sounded a platoon with fixed bayonets was drawn up in two ranks, one half facing inwards and the other outwards on each of the five city gates. In about an hour the soldiers got tired. The crowds inside and outside got impatient, and started to push up against the soldiers and chaff them. The officer usually supported himself by leaning against a gate pillar on the most interesting side. The young officer was lured to this point; the two boys edged up to him; one gave him a dig in the ribs or thereabouts and the other severed his revolver hangcord, snatched his revolver and dived into the crowd. The soldiers could do nothing until they got an order. It took the officer some time to recover and the affair ended in a volley of shots, screams of women and girls and the shattering of glass. This type of thing only worked with the K.O.Y.L.I. The other two regiments were not inclined to take any nonsense, especially the Dorsets.

All these sort of things took a lot of planning and timing and even the simplest job involved perhaps twenty men as foils, up to ten or twelve Cumann na mBan and five or six Fianna boys. The personalities of the latter organisation I recall were :- Liam Brady, Waterloo Street; Sean Hegarty, Foyle Street and George Doherty, Waterloo Street. These boys kept the Fianna going from 1917 onwards and took over the Volunteers when we went to Donegal.

We did not kill or maim many. If we had done so we could not have carried out the mission. The killing instinct was not developed in any of the Units and none of us had the serious outlook said to be prevailing in other sectors. In the end of 1920 rumours were going around that a new organisation was coming into force. In January 1921 or perhaps December 1920 I was summoned to Chamberlain Street and introduced by one of the McGuinness girls to Frank Carney. He told me he was forming or taking over the 1st Northern Division and was looking for a staff, flying columns etc. He asked me if I was free to go to Donegal. He said all the units in Derry city were coming under his command. I said I would think it over. Later I found out he was a British ex-Serviceman and at the time I had a poor opinion of those types and still have the same opinion. However, most of the boys were keen on the adventure and it would be hard to hold them. Eventually I was sent to the 3rd Donegal Brigade, and Alfred McCallion to the 2nd Donegal Brigade. All the units that were prepared to leave the city were formed into a Divisional Guard and two Flying Columns - one Column going to the 1st Donegal Brigade and the other to the 2nd Brigade. Some were also sent to G.H.Q. for munitions duties.

I reported to the O/C. No. 3 Donegal Brigade, as far as I remember, in February 1921. His name was Sean Heuston, a very pleasant, considerate and agreeable young man when not engaged on official duties. He was about ten years my senior, a teacher by profession, a native of Glenfin and a member of a large family all connected with the Movement - one brother in Dublin - one in Belfast - one the O/C. of the local Company at Letterbrick. He told me my work included accompanying him on his various tours of the Brigade area, to get to know the personnel and arrange to form and train a Brigade Column. This was a very interesting job as in addition to being Brigade O/C., Sean Heuston exercised a large measure of control over the other activities of the area including the Gaelic League, Gaelic Athletic Association, Rural and Urban Councils, the Teachers' Organisation, and the social activities of the towns and villages.

The Brigade was bounded on the north by Gweebarra Bay, Gweebarra River and the Owenwee River. On the east by the Blue Stack mountain range. On the south by Barnesmore Gap, Lowermore River, Eask River and Donegal Bay. On the West by the Atlantic Ocean. The area included the parts of Donegal known to adherents of Irish authors as the McGill country around Glenties and the McManus country around Mountcharles. The Brigade Adjutant was Sean McGroarty, a teacher of Sellaces near Mountcharles and the Brigade Quartermaster was Jim McGinley, another teacher of Croagh near Killybegs. The Brigade O/C. known throughout the area as "The Brig" did not approve of his staff taking part in shooting jobs. He very wisely let it be known that they would serve a more useful purpose planning and arranging things. In addition he had a relatively large number of men on the run in the area from other parts and he was getting difficulty in keeping them under control and provisioning them. He hoped to make fighting material out of them. There were only two enemy strong points in the area at this time - Glenties and Killybegs. Glenties was garrisoned by a mixed force of Black & Tans and was always an irritant to the Brig. Killybegs was garrisoned by a larger force of the same make up and in addition was a Royal Marine base for coastal protection. The Wiltshire regiment occupied Finner Camp across Donegal Bay and had an outpost in Donegal town on the border. There were a few pockets of loyalists on St. John's and Dorrin Points south of Dunkineely and a strong pocket of Hibernians east of Drumarone in the Letterbarra, Drumborisley, Tulleynaha, Ardban areas. I had some interesting experiences with these Hibs, as they were known. I may relate these ^{ex} experiences later. I never met a more conservative body of men. They numbered something over 100. I never brought them around to our outlook. I had great admiration for them. They always maintained their attitude of neutrality even under severe hardships. There was a sprinkling of loyalists mainly in the professional classes in the towns and villages.

The nucleus of a Battalion A.S.U. was in existence in each of the four battalions. A Battalion headquarters was established in each of

the battalions. The 1st Battalion was at Mountcharles; the 2nd at Carrick; the 3rd at Ardara and the 4th at Glenties. During the period the 1st Battalion A.S.U. carried out an ambush in the Glen at Mountcharles and the 2nd Battalion an attack on a Coastguard Station at Teelan. I took no part in these operations that I can recall. During the time I was also interested in Derry sector. In the spring the loyalist papers took an antagonistic attitude to the British Military authorities and started clamouring under headings like 'Why subject the Citizens to these hardships', 'The Wild Geese have flown, why don't you follow them'.

The reaction of the military authorities was swift and unfortunate for the Division O/C. The Gordon Highlanders with Auxiliary Cadet attachments made a surprise night landing at Burtonport in the 1st Brigade area. The Dorsets and Northumberland Fusiliers closed in from the east. The Gordons overran the Divisional Headquarters near Dungloe, captured the Divisional O/C., his staff and the Divisional Guard. In the course of a week the 1st all Brigade was fairly well combed and practically/the 1st Brigade Column were captured.

I paid a visit to Derry in the late spring. As far as I was concerned the place seemed deserted, except for the Cumann na mBan girls and the Fianna. The meeting I had with the girls was not pleasant. They were under the impression we had let them down and they let me know it. The Fianna boys were trying to get things going again.

The 2nd Donegal Brigade seemed to have suffered little and was active. I came across three members of the 1st Brigade Column who escaped the net and these three men were ultimately posted to the 3rd Brigade. When I got back to the 3rd Brigade the organisation of the Brigade Column proceeded. The three men above referred to arrived. Their names were Charles McGuinness, Hugh Martin and Owen Callan. Although they were all in the Derry unit I did not know them well personally.

Charles McGuinness was a Master Mariner by profession. He had accompanied Admiral Byrd on his expedition to the North Pole and had captained vessels of all sorts to most parts of the world. He was a brother of Hugh McGuinness referred to earlier. He was a very interesting character and made a great impression on the Brig who appointed him to the Command of the Brigade Column.

Hugh Martin had been wounded in an engagement with the Tans in Carlisle Road, Derry. He got caught in a cordon and shot his way out. His wound was in his foot and it sometimes gave him trouble. He had poetic aspirations and wrote sentimental poems for Ireland's Own and publications of that nature. He got inspiration at the most inconvenient times both day and night, and anyone he selected for his audience was in for a bad time. He also possessed a tenor voice that he used on the least encouragement.

Owen Callan was the student type. He got some training in military engineering from Charlie McWhinney, later known as Linda Keanns' husband who was, prior to 1921, Chief Engineering Instructor in the Derry Technical School. Callan was known as Ginger. He was continually experimenting with gadgets and explosives. He got his hands on an old six-pounder gun known locally as the Maas Cannon that was washed in on a wreck on the coast. He had visions of using this weapon extensively. He was a menace at times. Later he blew himself up but I am happy to say he recovered and made quite ^a name for himself in Constructional Engineering Circles in London. The Column was based initially about two miles north of Glenties on a homestead called Gildea's at Strabay; as it assembled it spread out to Shalloghan. The situation was discussed and arrangements made to move to Rosbeg about seven miles north-west of Ardara where better training facilities existed. The movement took place at night and was screened by the 4th Battalion. En route we had a crack at the Glenties post. Rosbeg was in the 3rd Battalion area. On the succeeding day we were screened on the south by the 3rd Battalion and the north and east by the 4th Battalion. The column was based in Rosbeg on a homestead

called Harkins. On the second day while waiting the arrival of the 1st and 2nd Battalion contingents we decided to investigate the possibilities of Ardara, a town which patrols of the enemy passed through regularly from Killybegs to Glenties as the location of an ambush. I, Martin, Callen and McGuinness proceeded towards Ardara on the morning of the second day, on bicycles. On the way my bicycle got a puncture and I exchanged it with a postman for his bicycle. This was the official Red Bicycle of the period. The postman was not pleased with the exchange. The remainder of the Column was left distributed in the Assembly area and as far as I remember the O/C., 2nd Battalion, was left in charge. We arrived in Ardara without further incident.

The main street of the town was then roughly "L" shaped, one "leg" running roughly north and south and the other east and west. Martin and I took the former leg, McGuinness and Ginger the latter. Martin and I had examined the buildings on the south of our "leg" and had reached a part about midway up the north side, and were talking to Con Kennedy in his draper's shop when I happened to look out of the window and saw two lorries of Tans preceded by a motor cyclist passing north. We were assured by Kennedy that it was a usual occurrence. A little later McGuinness and Callen came along and told us they had a narrow shave. As they were passing down their "leg" on the south side opposite the Ulster Bank they spotted the convoy and went into the Bank and shut the door. The occupants of the Bank became alarmed and they had to restrain them until the lorries passed.

We finished the job and went by the Strand Road back in the direction of our billeting area. It was a warm day. McGuinness and Callen fell behind walking. Martin and I cycled as much as we could of the journey. As we approached Harkin's house we had to leave the Strand due to cliff obstruction and were cycling through small sandhills when my bicycle collapsed under me. At the same time I heard a volley of shots and some of the bullets hopped all around me. I glanced to my front and about 100 yards distant I saw about twenty rifles blazing and smoking and pointing in our direction over a stone wall. I also saw

some khaki caps. I had a parabellum and I fired a few shots in the direction of the rifles. Martin did the same. We rolled and scraped through the sandhills until we got cover from a cliff. I saw McGuinness and Callen leave the strand and take up positions in the sandhills to their right. In order to join them we would have to cross the open strand.

We decided to try and work our way out and around the cliff and proceeded to do so. This possibly took up a half hour. We were not pursued and came out in rear of the position our attackers occupied. The whole area was deserted, not a human being anywhere. We went into a house. An old woman was saying her rosary and she told us there had been a terrible battle and many people were killed. In the intervening years since this incident I have often heard the observation to which I never made any reply, "The I.R.A. were really murderers. They got behind ditches, surprised the unfortunate Tans, opened fire on them without warning and never gave them a chance to surrender. The only bit of luck the poor Tans had was the I.R.A. were notorious bad shots". In this incident and others I can claim to have seen the picture from both sides. In this case the Tans ambushed us in the recognised manner from behind a stone wall. They watched us cycle into them from a distance of about a mile on an open strand. They opened fire on us from a range of less than 200 yards without warning, did not call on us to surrender but missed us. The only immediate claim they could make for their efforts was the capture of one bicycle and the recovery of a shot-up postman's bicycle complete with carrier.

That afternoon we sorted out the situation. Some of the 1st Battalion A.S.U. started to arrive and a few - about six I think of the 4th Battalion Column who were in the area at the time, but about a mile or so to the north-west and who escaped. The Column was re-formed. Seven were reported captured and one missing. I took over the Column. That afternoon we got a report from the 4th Battalion that we were being cut off by military along the road leading

from Ardara and Glenties. We decided to evacuate the area by sea. The 3rd Battalion provided fishing boats. Near dark we embarked in Loughros More Bay. We sailed out to sea and turned coastwards during the night and landed in a small bay near Gull Island. We made our way through the mountains southwards and in the morning came to a halt in the mountains north of the Glengesh Pass at a place named Lerguynascarhagh where the 3rd Battalion had made arrangements for our reception.

That night Ginger reported and told us of his escape from Rosbeg. When Martin and I cycled into the trap, McGuinness and he took up positions in the sandhills to try and extricate us. From their position they could not see us ^{as} and we did not retreat across the strand they assumed we were wounded or killed. They were both armed with parabellums and started exchanging shots with the Tans. McGuinness was hit early in the exchange in the leg. He told Ginger to try and make his escape and he would cover him. Ginger retreated along the sandhills until out of range. A member of the 3rd Battalion, a fisherman, was a spectator of the events from out at sea. He brought his boat inshore. Ginger clamoured aboard and they proceeded seawards.

That night Ginger was landed at Maheara. Later we learned McGuinness was captured badly wounded. He was hit seven times covering Ginger's retreat. The following morning the Wiltshire and Tans made a pass at us from the Glencolumbkille direction. The 2nd Battalion drew them off. The weather got bad and preparations were under way to move to the 1st Battalion area. The arrangements were not complete until the following day and before dawn we crossed the Glengesh Pass and were halted in the mountains south of Crowbane. Late that afternoon the enemy caught up with us and chased us over Crocknapensil. The following morning we came to a halt in the Tullinteane where the 1st Battalion had made arrangements for our billeting and screening.

At this part the Brigade O/C. sent for me and I handed the Column over to Hugh Martin. It eventually came to a more or less permanent

rest at Disert in the Blue Stacks where it was joined by the 2nd Battalion A.S.U. and replacements. I reported to him at Doobin where Brigade Headquarters was located at the time. He was not in the best of humour. He had a lot of trouble extracating us. He had to make all the arrangements for screening us, blocking roads, opening roads, provisioning and billeting us etc. He had lost at least ten trained men and probably a whole Company of Volunteers and had nothing to show for it. In the interim his Intelligence Section had decided the whole trouble was initiated by a Congested District Board's Inspector known locally as Mr. O'Kane.

This man was a British agent in fact. In the course of his C.D.B. work he came upon the Column accidentally at Rosbeg. The chaps there paid no heed to him. He mounted his motor bike, proceeded to Killybegs and brought the Tans to the spot where the Column was billeted. It was decided this man would have to be dealt with. The case was investigated and he was sentenced to be shot. Martin and Ginger were detailed to carry out the execution. On the night fixed for the job, O'Kane was located in bed, apparently under the influence of drink in the house of a prominent loyalist named Falvey, a medical doctor, who lived on the outskirts of Ardara. There was a bit of a scene, women screaming and O'Kane protesting while getting him clear of the house. He was brought to a wood close by and prepared for execution. During this he was praying and pleading for a priest. Ginger was a very religious boy and volunteered to get the local Parish Priest in Ardara. He proceeded to the Parochial House. The Parish Priest, an old man who did not approved of the Movement at all, refused to accompany Ginger. Ginger was trying to persuade him to change his mind and while doing so he heard a series of shots from the direction of the wood. He thought the execution was over and returned to the wood where he found Martin searching for the victim. Martin's story was, after Ginger left, O'Kane, who was bound only on the wrists, passed the time praying on his knees. After a while O'Kane jumped up and made a dive into the wood. Martin fired a number of shots at him

and thought he hit him - it was a dark night. Later we received a report that O'Kane had escaped. A different version of this incident appeared in recent years in one of the English papers, obviously supplied by the man known as O'Kane around Ardara but, in fact, a British agent. I should perhaps record that I was on a subsequent inquiry into the matter at the time and Martin and Ginger were absolved from all blame.

In the interim the Column was brought around to Doobin and placed in training. Under Martin and James McGill an Irish-American and member of the Column who served as an N.C.O. with the American Expeditionary Force in France during the war and returned subsequently to Ireland to take part in the struggle. The Brig was still keen on eliminating the Glenties post but ultimately compromised on an ambush at Kilrean on the Glenties Ardara Road. The planning of this proceeded parallel to the training. While engaged on this an amusing incident occurred of which I was the victim. One June late afternoon the Brig and I were going over the ground at the scene of the proposed ambush and we were investigating the lines of withdrawal. We agreed to do two different routes and became separated.

A thick mist or fog came down suddenly as often happens in the hills of Donegal. In a short time I was completely lost and wandered around until I came to the banks of a lough. I decided to lie down in the heather and wait for the fog to clear. The atmosphere was eerie; foxes running round yapping and the wild life of the mountain following its pursuits. I must not have slept well until near dawn.

I woke up with two dogs barking over me. I jumped and a short distance away I saw two young girls staring at me. I went over to them and tried to get on speaking terms but they would give me no information or tell me where I was. They obviously took me for one of the Tans. After a while I persuaded them to take me to their home and when we arrived there I was given a meal in a room and the door was locked. Before I had the meal finished the house was surrounded by a

band of armed men with an assortment of weapons. I was told to surrender and I agreed. One of the girls whom I later knew was Chris Gallagher of the Glenties Cumann na mBan, unlocked the door, came in and took my revolver. I was quite harmless now. The boys gathered around and luckily I was known by sight to one of them. After profuse apologies I was restored to the Brig. I feel in relating this incident I have been unfair to the foxes of the Blue Stack. While, no doubt, they could be trying at times they were our friends. When they got accustomed to us they played around and did the things that foxes do. But when any strange influence was around they seemed to sense it much sooner than we did and when the foxes stopped yapping and started streaking by to their dens it was always prudent to get on the alert.

On the night previous to the Kilrean ambush the Column was brought over Meenawannia and occupied the Kilrean district. It was screened on the north by the 4th Battalion, on the south by the 3rd Battalion and on the south-east by the 1st Battalion. The forward assembly point was one of the forts of earlier times adjoining the homestead of Cardinal O'Donnell. Breakfast was provided by the Cumann na mBan girls under Sis McGuire of Priest Mount who also provided for First Aid and Nursing Services. The boys kept themselves amused singing patriotic and sentimental songs and playing a variety of instruments. Around 2 o'clock the target was signalled. The advanced positions were occupied. These were - one section on the left, one on the right with a central and control position in the rear. The first vehicle came abreast of the left section, fire was opened, the driver was hit and the vehicle came to rest partly in the ditch opposite the centre section. Some of the occupants of the vehicle fell out; the others stood up and held their rifles above their heads. At this point we became badly confused. The other vehicles stopped out of range of the three sections and dismounted and proceeded to outflank us on the left and south. We did not know the strength of these parties. We were in the position now that we could not accept the surrender of the occupants of the first vehicle and we could not move them down as they

had indicated they wished to surrender. However, a Head Constable named Duffy, who had been a Sergeant-Major in the Irish Guards during the war, solved the problem for us. This man could always be recognised. He had his breast covered with Battle and Service medals that made a great display when they came within the viewer's cone of vision. His array of medals was something on the line of Monty's of present-day fame.

That reminds me Monty came under our notice during the period. The set up was as follows. Monty's father was the Church of Ireland Vicar of Merville. My uncle was the Parish Priest. The Parochial House and the Vicarage were next door to each other. I often visited my uncle and Monty was often at home with his parents. The Vicar and my uncle were on intimate terms. They both had the same interests; both were keen gardeners. I often had to listen to long discussions between them over the garden wall and accompany them on examinations of flower-beds, shrubs etc. In the course of these excursions, needless to say, I became interested in Monty who was a young officer of the time interested in most things including gardening, games and swimming. He had the reputation later of being a great Orangeman, but it was well known he never associated in any way with the local loyalists, and I am almost sure he never had any connection with that movement. The family was very popular locally. Unfortunately during the reprisal period a list had to be made out and his name was included as one of the targets. Field Marshall Alexander also of later day fame and a native of the area was also listed. This list fell into abeyance after Bloody Sunday. We never regarded these two men as enemies.

Reverting to Kilrean and H.C. Duffy. He was in the cab of the leading vehicle, sneaked out on the off side and rallied the occupants of the vehicle, sensed our confusion and got them all under cover and into firing positions. An exchange of rifle fire took place for a while. We did not know the strength of the enemy.

Subsequently we discovered that we outnumbered them at this stage. The left section had to be withdrawn to the rear to cover our south flank. Reinforcements were expected from the Glenties post on our right. This did not materialise but the right section was withdrawn to the rear to cover the centre section. This step-by-step withdrawal was carried out through the afternoon. We had, of course, our anxious moments. Dan McTigh was seriously wounded early on and had to be evacuated to the rear, partly carried. Others got minor injuries. These things delayed our withdrawal as the ground was rough and stoney. The Glenties garrison, two miles distant, who we expected to attack on our right, made a detour, came up on our right rear and tried to cut off our retreat. We were not, however, pursued by Duffy's section. Later the Wiltshires came in from the south and were drawn off by the 1st Battalion. When we got into the foothills of the Blue Stacks, the force on our left called it a day and withdrew. The Glenties garrison kept up a half-hearted pursuit until near dark and then withdrew. The Wiltshires chased us around the Blue Stacks for the following two or three days. The weather was bad and we saw little of each other. The Tans combed the 1st and 4th Battalion area. The morale of the boys was high and it was boosted by highly exaggerated reports which filtered in of the enemy casualties.

It will probably strike the reader as strange that we did not arrange things better. He should appreciate that we were all around 20 years of age. We had, of course, the guidance and advice of our elders, but once contact was made with the enemy we were on our own. I think it is only right that I should pay a tribute at this stage to the unrecognised and unsung real hero of the period; the ordinary Volunteer in the remote Company who never let us down. He may not have had much conception of aims and objects. He did what he was told to do and did it well. All the chores fell to his lot. He was mainly unarmed and untrained and had to sacrifice himself to capture and ill treatment by the enemy. The glamour boys of the period - the members of the Column - would have had a short existence without his services.

After things settled down I reported to the Brigade O/C. He was, on the whole, satisfied the way things were going. We had established that we could move around the Brigade area in relative safety; if the organisation remained intact. If we happened to be cut off in any of the points on the coast, we had the fishing fleet of the 2nd and 3rd Battalions at our services. The enemy were hardly likely to bring up the Navy. Inland we could always fall back into the Blue Stacks. It would take a large force to dig us out of these mountains. Most of the year they were covered in clouds and drenched with rain. We could live quite well on mountain sheep, mutton and deer. There were plenty of these animals around as the fences of Glenveigh were broken down at the time and the deer were running over the mountains. The diet might not be well balanced but we wouldn't starve.

There were other matters occupying the Brig's attention. One of these was Prisoners. He was getting cluttered up with prisoners, mainly soldiers who strayed and got lost, agents of various sorts picked up by the Battalions. Before the turmoil in the 1st Brigade all prisoners were passed to this Brigade where it had a prisoners' camp on one of the islands off the coast. The organisation was disrupted after the capture of the Divisional C.O. and prisoners had to be retained.

Another problem was provision for dealing with sick and wounded. At the time he was in the process of fixing up a sort of Medical Centre at Letterfad. He had many other problems with which I won't trouble the reader. While he was dealing with them, information came in that the enemy were breaking through to Glenfin from the Stranorlar direction, were putting the Glenties railway line into commission, clearing and filling in the roads. This route, I should mention, was fairly thoroughly blocked and we never worried much about it. However, the information proved correct and the force involved was identified as the Dorsets. A few of us had many tussles with this regiment in the streets of Derry in which we often came out second best. The news that they were coming after us was received

with relish and we were looking forward to getting our own back around the Blue Stacks. We decided to receive them at the west end of Lough Finn. The Column was brought across the Glehties Glen and billeted on the area centered on the Agila Mountain. As a matter of interest, my billet was the homestead of Paddy McGill. The Dorsets made slow progress and on about the 3rd May they seemed to be halted for no apparent reason at Brokagh. On the fourth day we reached the conclusion that they had changed their minds or got to know of the preparations. While we were deciding what to do, a messenger in Volunteer uniform delivered a message stating a Truce had been arranged and ordering all units to cease operations. I learned later the date was the 12th July, 1921. The bearer of the message was Jim Timoney (R.I.P) late O.C., Irish Speaking Battalion. I reported to the Brigade O.C. He disbanded the Column and I have seen less than five of it and the Derry City Unit since. The event was celebrated in the fashion of the time. Martin and Ginger went into Killybegs and were promptly picked up by the Tans. The services of the liaison officers had to be sought to effect their release.

A week or so afterwards I was sent to Glenasmole Camp in the Dublin mountains. At the end of the course in Glenasmole I was appointed as a wholetime paid official i/c. of the Civil Administration of the South Donegal District. This job took up all my time and I lost contact with the military organisation, except when I came into conflict with it. When the Treaty was signed I was just one of the many displaced persons of the period. The struggle was over. We were not the victors and the struggle for an existence commenced. In December, 1922, I joined the Free State Army with the rank of Captain. That is another story.

The youths of to-day have the impression that all real I.R.A. men were fixed up in some sort of menial State employment, subsequent to the Treaty, where they invariably misbehaved themselves, were fired and ended their days in the South Dublin Union. I think I should, therefore, record the subsequent trend in the lives of those I knew.

During the Truce period the Divisional Guard was reformed, increased in strength and provided with uniform. At the Treaty they were provided with Crossley tenders and amused themselves careering around the country in these vehicles. An unfortunate accident happened at Newtowncunningham just prior to the outbreak of the Civil War. The Guard was passing through this village on the Derry Donegal border and ran into two Columns from the South - one from Cork and the other from East Kerry, who were operating in the adjoining 2nd Northern Division. The southern Columns thought the Guard was a British convoy and opened fire on it with machine guns and rifles. Before the error was discovered the Guard was badly cut up. Many of the men were killed and wounded. At the outbreak of the Civil War they joined the contestants in approximately equal numbers. The victors got rid of their adherents when it was over as easily and quickly as possible. The vanquished could do nothing about theirs. They left the scene of their endeavours in the traditional way. They drifted to America, mainly through Canada.

Alfred McCallion became Waterworks Superintendent of Detroit and is at present a personality in American politics. He has two sons fighting the Communists in Korea.

Ginger Cullen became a Constructional Engineer of some note in London and supplied a large family to the British services.

Hugh Martin became an American journalist. The film of recent issue "Odd Man Out" is said to be based on incidents of his life at the period. As a matter of interest it reflects the atmosphere very well except the Royal Ulster Constabulary is substituted for the R.I.C. and glamorized. The I.R.A. is, of course, toned down.

The R.U.C. was not formed until 1922. Later Martin went to Australia and formed the Martin Gang of ill fame.

Charlie McGuinness established a successful Rum running business on the Pacific and Atlantic Coasts of America. He had a large fleet of vessels. He wrote several books still in circulation and was in

good demand as a radio speaker. He made serious mistakes later and was ultimately lost at sea.

I won't trouble the reader further with the subsequent lives of these men. They were ill-equipped to lead a normal life. Some were broken in health; all were frustrated and easy targets for exploitation; many were absorbed into the American Gangs of the late twenties and thirties, but none of them has entered the portals of the S.D.U. yet.

I think it is fitting I should close this narration by paying a tribute to Alfred McCallion, Kathleen McGuinness, Charlie McGuinness, Danny Duggan and Paddy McHugh, four very gallant boys and one resourceful girl who, in succession, rescued me from imminent danger and provided me with the borrowed time in which I regret to say I had no opportunity to repay them, to the many families in the city of Derry and the hamlets of the Hills of Donegal who sheltered, fed and assisted us at great personal risk, who were prepared to receive us at all hours day and night, sacrifice their homesteads and children for an ideal and to assure their descendants it was no fault of theirs we failed. I hope when their effort is made it won't entail so much pain and frustration and that it will be crowned with complete success.

The motives that induced me to write this record will likely interest the readers.

On the 17th October, 1952, I was introduced by Martin O'Donnell to John McCoy who talked me into doing the job. I am not handy with the English Language. I have a plebeian taste in Literature, but I seem to remember someone once said 'History is the story of living men'. This may be a good definition. It can be interpreted in at least two ways. I interpret it in one way. The Bureau of Military History will interpret it another way. I was told the personalities associated in the public mind with the area and for whom the bugles and trumpets sounded in the intervening years were coy when approached and put over the line. Nothing really happened in the area ~~according to them.~~

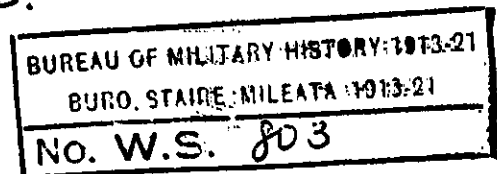
They made their appearance on the scene later. I felt this was most unfair to those who did their duty as they saw it at the time and to their families and descendants. This was the main incitement. I have simple tastes. I harbour no grudges and I have no regrets. As I went along, happy memories came to mind of pleasant places and kindly people who deserved a better fate.

M. Sheerin Commandant.
(M. Sheerin).

ARMAMENT OFFICER, THE AIR CORPS.

Date: 13th July 1952

Witness: *John Mc Coy*
13/2/53.



Appendix I.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1613-01
DURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21
No. W.S. 803

Roll of Derry Unit.

Alfie McCallan,	Pennyburn.
Dan McGandy,	Waterside. Missing, reported captured. Found drowned.
Lorcan McGrath,	Dublin. Subsequently wounded.
Eddie Dean,	Rosville Street.
Sean Haughey,	Teelan.
Jim Cunningham,	Teelan.
W. Moyne,	Magazine Street.
John Grant,	Inishowen. Subsequently wounded.
Jim Taylor,	Pennyburn.
Frank McCourt,	Bishop Street.)
Jim McCourt,	" ") Brothers.
Patrick McCallan,	Pennyburn.)
John McCallan,	") Brothers.
Mick Doherty,	Allies.
Phil O'Doherty,	Lecky Road.
John McDaid,	Creggan Street.
Jim Harkin,	Nelson Street.)
Leo Harkin,	") Brothers.
Joe McMurray	Foyle Road.
Dan Doherty,	"
John Harkins	South Derry.
Owen Callan (Ginger)	Donemanagh.
Patrick Connelly,	Omagh.
Martin Savage,	County Down.
Sam Stuart,	Newry.
Tim Doheny (Tipperary),	Tipperary. Subsequently killed in action.
Jim Hinchey,	Clare. Reported killed in action.
John O'Hair,	Creggan Street.
Leo McGrory,	Rosemount.)
Jim McGrory,	") Brothers.

Appendix I. (Contd.)

Hugh Martin,	Lecky Road.	Wounded in action.
Antin Rodgers,	Bogside.	
William Doherty,	Lecky Road.) Brothers.
Charles Doherty,	"	
Mick Kelly,	Belfast.) Brothers.
Jim Kelly,	"	
Manus McCool,	Burtenport.	
Austin O'Dwyer,	Galway.	
Mick Flynn,	Sligo.	
Charlie Cannon,	Lettermacaward.	Subsequently killed in action.
Paddy Wynne,	Mayo.	
Gerald Loughery,	Moville.) Brothers.
J. Loughery,	"	
J. Scanlon,	Glenfin.	Subsequently killed in action.
P. Conroy,	Ballina.,	Co. Mayo.
Mick Dawson,	Mountcharles.	Subsequently severely wounded.
T. Murphy,	Leitrim.	Captured.
S. Breslin,	St. Columb's Hall.	
John Murphy (Spud).	Cobh, Cork.	
Jim Walsh (Mut),	Cork City.	Subsequently wounded.
John O'Sullivan (Jef.)	Cork City.	
Joe Bradley,	Bridge Street,) Brothers.
William Bradley,	"	
Mick Kelly,	Dollymount, Dublin.	
J. McKeever,	Fanad,) Brothers.
F. McKeever,	"	
Dohertysly (About ten, all brothers and relatives in the Long Town area).		
Charlie McGuinness,	Pennyburn.	Subsequently seriously ill wounded.
John Sheehy,	South Derry.	
Chris. Gallagher,	Donegal.	
Williem McCauley,	Pennyburn) Brothers.
Leo McCauley,	"	

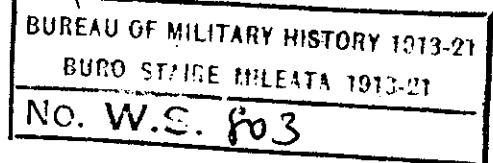
Appendix I. (Contd).

Leo McGinley,	Leckey Road.	} Brothers.
Charles McGinley,	Leckey Road,	
Charles McGill,	William Street.	
B. McLoughlin,	Waterloo Street. (About five other McLoughlins).	
Mick McGeehan,	Raphoe. Wounded in 1920.	
G. Devine,	Strabane. Subsequently killed in action.	

Personalities of the 3rd Donegal Brigade area (Civil)

not referred to in the narrative.

P. T. McGinley, (Cullad)	Kingarrow
Mary McGeehan	"
Teresa McGeehan	"
John McMenamin (Sean Bawn),	Glen Finn.



A P P E N D I X 2.

Maps included with signed copy of
statement:

- (a) North West Sector - General
 - (b) Derry June 1920.
 - (c) Derry Unit withdraws.
 - (d) 3rd Donegal Brigade May 1921
 - (e) 3rd Donegal Brigade June 1921.
 - (f) 3rd Donegal Brigade 11th July 1921.
-

The Royal Irish Constabulary.

The R.I.C. were never really aggressive during the period I was in contact with them, i.e. 1916 to the end of 1920. They were mostly from the south and west. The members of settler extraction could always be counted on to fight it out.

From the beginning of 1918 we exercised partial control of the part of the city west of the city walls covering roughly the working class district on both sides of Leckey Road. At the time we wore the conventional outfit of the period, i.e. black velour hats and belted coats, and moved around in sets of four, two leading and two about 50 yards in the rear. We were well known by sight to the R.I.C. of Leckey Road post and often did police patrols on the same beat. They ignored us and we ignored them. The unit had men from most parts of the country and I often heard them talk of having got into conversation with R.I.C. men of the Leckey Road post and other stations belonging to their own particular part of the country and of having been invited to play handball in the handball alleys of the barracks. Some of these R.I.C. men were also keen to get into hurling teams. We didn't encourage fraternization, but the individuals concerned were noted for obvious reasons. During the operations of 1920 we received an offer of rifles and ammunition from the Leckey Road post provided we gave an undertaking not to attack this post. We did not accept this offer, but I heard some of the boys availed of the arms unofficially. One of the Sergeants of the Leckey Road R.I.C. post was named Higgins. He was an elderly man, religious, fond of a Pint, always in trouble with his superiors, with a mind focussed on his pension and retirement. He didn't like the locals and they didn't like him. I heard after I went to Donegal the 2nd Donegal Brigade shot him. I think it was a shame.

In fairness to the native Volunteers of the city, I shall perhaps mention that I was looking at the picture from a different angle. I was

never in any real danger of arrest or interference by the R.I.C. My boss, who was responsible for my conduct and provided my livelihood, was Miss Conlon, the daughter of an R.I.C. Head Constable long dead. The Manageress of the Criterion Hotel, where I often located myself, was also a daughter of an R.I.C. Sergeant also dead. Due to my associations with the Criterion I had access to most of the small hotels, including the City Hotel which at that time was managed by Tommy O'Kane, a relative on my mother's side, who was a County Derry woman from the Ballymullins.

She was one of the Mullens. This branch of the family was engaged mainly in the public house business in the city. That often proved useful, especially Mullen's public house in Bishop Street opposite the County Jail Gates. My uncle was a figure of influence in Diocesan affairs. He was on the Board of St. Columb's College and many other city institutions. He was later Vicar General of the Diocese. It was well known that none of these relatives approved of the Movement. They had no idea I had any connection with it and my relations with them were the normal relations of a boy to older relatives. About the end of 1920 their suspicions were aroused and they became alarmed. But, of course, they could not let a relative down, especially when they had charge of him. Around 1918, Derry Jail was extensively used for prisoners picked up in the West. The escorts for these prisoners were R.I.C. men. When they handed over the prisoners they usually spent a night in one of the smaller hotels. We often picked up revolvers from the R.I.C. in various ways due to the set-up. I will describe one of these incidents. Austin Dwyer, a Galway man, about eight years my senior and something over six foot in height, a hurler and footballer of note, was anxious to get an R.I.C. man's revolver. He didn't care much for automatics. I found out that two R.I.C. men of an escort party were staying in the Mourne Hotel at the Great Northern Railway end of Foyle Street. We went along and stayed at the hotel for the night. It did not, of course, cost us anything. At breakfast on the

following morning the maid told us where the R.I.C. men were seated. We went into the dining room, told the maid to let no other guests in and serve breakfast. We sat opposite the two R.I.C. men, made a few comments on the weather etc., and proceeded to eat the breakfast. When they were absorbed in the meal I told them we were I.R.A. of the local unit and we wanted their revolvers. They turned several colours. I told them not to be alarmed, that we would not harm them if they handed over the guns quietly and said nothing about it. They protested they had no guns and stood up. O'Dwyer searched them and they had nothing. We suggested they might have something in their rooms and one of them admitted he had a revolver in his room, but it was not his official revolver. I went upstairs with him and into his room. I had him covered, of course, with no weapon visible. He told me the revolver was under his pillow loaded. I took it and he gave me about six spare rounds. It was a small nickel-plated revolver of, I think, 38 calibre. O'Dwyer was very disappointed in it. He was inclined to be of an excitable disposition and impressed on the R.I.C. men what would happen to them if they mentioned the incident, and I must say they didn't. We walked out of the Mourne and heard no more about it.

During the training period I remember having occasion to pick up one of the unit around the Long Tower, who had not been attending parade and was reported to have taken to drink. Four of us went up to his house and as soon as we knocked and told the occupants who we wanted the females started to scream and in a few minutes the street was in a state of alarm. Two R.I.C. men on beat came along and asked us who we were looking for. I told them and they said the man was down in a public house in the Brandy ~~Wall~~^{Well}. We went along and got him and they took no further interest in us.

During the period when it was said the railway employees refused to operate the trains, we had some amusing incidents with the R.I.C., as I think I have already intimated. Derry was the terminus of four railways, with the result a large number of

railway employees lived around the city. During this period some of them gave themselves up to us and we retained some of them in the city and sent the others to camps in Donegal. These all later claimed they were captured, and got away with it. I should perhaps say we didn't stop all the trains, but we stopped some and caused a lot of dislocation. I remember one Sunday afternoon having to pick up a driver of the Great Northern Railway who wasn't inclined to co-operate. He lived in Creggan Street just opposite to the Creggan Street entrance of St. Eugene's Cathedral. We had to time our arrival to coincide with the time he would normally leave his home to report for work. This happened to be the time the people were crowding in to evening Devotions in the Cathedral. We spread ourselves around the street. I went into the house and I found the driver in his uniform ready to start for the station. I told him I wanted him and that he would drive no train that day. He became alarmed, got into a funk, started to protest and explain. He was obviously under the impression he was going to be shot. His wife and children ran out of the house screaming. I brought him out into the street and told him he would come to no harm if he co-operated. I explained to him we were only taking him into custody for his own safety and to stop all the fuss. At this time his wife was hanging around his neck sobbing. His children were all around him crying and a large crowd of spectators were looking on. Six R.I.C. men came down the street from Rosemount barracks, looked at the crowd and went into the Cathedral for Devotions. It took us some time to get the man under control. He was in uniform and asked to be allowed to change into his ordinary clothes. I went into the house with him. His wife started to prepare a change of underclothes for him, pack a bag, prepare food for the journey etc. When he was ready he took a touching farewell of his wife and about six young children and we were ready to move off with him as the people were coming out from Devotions. He was sent off in a car that night and I have never seen him since. Later I heard he returned and left the Railway. We had a lot of incidents of this nature during the period but none that put so much strain on so many emotions.

During the arms raiding period around the end of 1917 or the beginning of 1918, we had to commandeer private cars. This often entailed breaking into several private garages before we found a car with petrol in it. During the war the issue of petrol was severely restricted. On the occasion I am going to deal with, the party consisted of myself, Gabriel McGrath and Alfred McCallion. We had entered about four garages before we came to a car suitable for our purpose. It was located in a Crescent off James Street and was the property of a Doctor. It was Delage make. McGrath was the driver and on examining it he found it was started on petrol and when it warmed up it was switched to paraffin. It took some time to get it started. He drove it out of the garage. I got into the front seat and Alfred McCallion closed the garage doors. We didn't bring Alfie with us as he was known to the R.I.C. men. We spluttered our way down to the Strand Road end of Clarendon Street where the engine stopped. McGrath got out and started to fiddle around with the engine. While he was doing this two R.I.C. men came over and examined the car and asked us where we were going. McGrath, at this time, spoke with a nice refined Rathmines accent. They seemed to be impressed and sympathetic. We got the car going and it spluttered to a stop opposite the main entrance to the Strand R.I.C. barracks. The same thing happened: two R.I.C. men came over and McGrath told them the same tale which was that we were going to Letterkenny and the car belonged to his uncle who was a Doctor there. He got it going again and it stopped at the Guildhall. Two R.I.C. men came over again. McGrath told the same tale. They hung around while he was fiddling about the engine. He didn't succeed in starting it this time. We decided to leave it. The two R.I.C. men helped me to push it about 200 yards across Guildhall place. McGrath steered it to the left/^{hand}side between the City Hotel and Crampsies Hotel. The two R.I.C. men were most sympathetic and directed us to the Metropole Hotel where they told us we would find suitable accommodation for the night. We, of course, made a bit of a detour and went home. I hadn't far to go and McGrath lived on

the Strand Road. The operation we were on was, of course, dislocated but the matter had no subsequent repercussions. The old car was towed away the following day. I should perhaps make it clear we were armed and so were the R.I.C. We were often chased around Greenan Hill by the R.I.C. during the drilling period but they got fed up after an hour or so and went home.

I know Head Constable Wiseman and Constable Walters of the R.I.C. were blamed by their authorities for the Military and Black & Tan casualties on the night of November 6th., 1920. I heard their Black & Tan comrade say they did not put up a fight and should have been able to detain their attackers until the Military got into position to deal with them. I think I should record that Wiseman and Walters fought bravely while they were able to stand on their feet. Their Black & Tan comrade of the occasion let them down.

We planned and timed the job fairly thoroughly. We banked on being clear of the scene with ⁱⁿ two or at most three minutes of the time of contact.

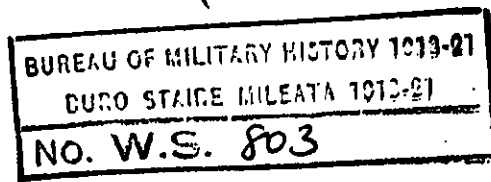
The four of us left the crowded thoroughfare leading into Guildhall Place. We turned to the left into Post Office Street and dropped two men to cover our retreat. About fifty yards further on we turned left around the Post Office corner. There was little light and it was in our backs. Walters and the Black & Tan were standing with their backs against the Post Office wall and Wiseman was talking to them. We surprised them. We were emerging from our teens. They were around thirty, relatively old men for this sort of carry-on. When I ordered them to put up their hands they reacted instantly. I did not see what Walters did but I had the impression he made a grab for his rifle. Wiseman partly raised his hands but halfway up he dropped his left hand and caught my wrist; at the same time he reached for the butt of his revolver on his left side. I fired perhaps two shots. I had a parabellum and at the same time reached for his revolver. I got my left hand on the butt before he did, but his right hand grasped my left hand on the butt. The shot took effect. We were on the

footpath. He stepped back, losing his grip with both hands. He stumbled on the kerb and fell on his back, striking his head on the cobblestones. His revolver came clear of its holster while he was falling. It was attached to a lanyard and this pulled me partly on top of him. He seized the end of the Lanyard and shouted for help. The Lanyard was, I think, severed by a shot or it gave at the swivel. After a few tugs it came clear. He was now lying helpless on the ground stunned. These events covered a period of less than five seconds. I turned around and saw the Black & Tan running towards the barrack door about 30 yards away. I fired at him. He fell over his rifle, lost it and dived into the barrack door. Alfie was wrestling with Walters. The latter had partial control of his rifle and was discharging shots. I had two revolvers at this stage and every time I made a pass at Walters, who was a tall man, he shoved Alfie in front of him. He was probably wounded before this. I eventually got a hit to his shoulder. He released his rifle. Alfie took it and Walters came for me with his arm outstretched obviously stunned. I stepped back, fired at him low and he fell on his face. The 9 m.m. ammunition of the period had light stopping power. The Black & Tan's rifle was lying on the street about 35 yards away. I could not afford to collect it. We made our escape by different routes. I took the Magazine Street route. As I entered Magazine Gate the Military from the Waterloo Square Blockhouse were practically in position to cover it. They had a crack at me. I made my exit through Castle Gate. As I reached the gate the Military from the Castle Street blockhouse were racing towards it from Castle Street. I think their rifles were not loaded. I heard a clatter of bolts and a volley after I passed through. Something similar happened to the other three. Alfie had, of course, the additional weight of a rifle to carry. If Wiseman and Walters had succeeded in detaining us another five seconds we would have been caught.

I am happy to say neither Wiseman or Walters were seriously injured. They recovered, were commended, were given an ample monetary award, and promoted to higher ranks in the force in which they were not obliged to risk further encounters with the I.R.A.

The reader should, however, attribute their escape to the restraining influence of the Fifth Commandment and the training of the I.R.A.

When I left the sphere of influence of the Royal Irish Constabulary they published a much-admired photograph of me in their gazette; it gave a flattering description of me and told its readers my body was of considerable value.



The Scenes of the Period that made the most lasting
impression on me.

The November job of 1920 in Derry was carried out on a Saturday night at 8 o'clock. After dispensing of the arms, we met at the Technical School on the Strand. I was living at the Criterion in Foyle Street and when we talked the matter over I made my way there and went to bed. I was aroused once or twice during the night by the firing and noise outside, but I did not take much notice of it. It was a common occurrence at the time. I got up for 9 o'clock Mass and some of the staff told me there had been a terrible night. I did not pay much attention to this as all nights were more or less terrible according to them.

I opened the door and went out and the scene of destruction I saw was appalling. A Black & Tan was lying about five yards from the door with half his head blown off. Two soldiers were lying dead, one at the entrance to a coalyard and the other in the middle of the street opposite the City Hotel. Their arms and equipment were scattered around. A Fire Engine burned out was askew the street on the right and the implements littered around. Pat Hegarty's shop was burned out and smoldering. I picked my way through broken glass and bottles and blood towards the Guildhall. Every door was broken in and the windows smashed. All the public houses were wide open and the stocks littered around.

In Guildhall Place there was a mixed crowd of Military and Tans carousing around in and out of the Guildhall. They were singing, swigging and brandishing bottles of liquor about. A lot of them were lying, apparently helplessly drunk, on the footpaths and streets with rifles and equipment and vehicles littered around them. The scene was similar in Waterloo Square. The Block houses were deserted except for some soldiers lying apparently asleep outside on the ground against the sandbags. Along William Street all the windows and

doors were broken and the street littered with broken glass. A fire engine was across the street, opposite Crocket and Guys, burned out and the tools scattered around. Further up Charlie Breslin's shop was in ruins and smoldering. Near the top of William Street on the left hand side a dairy yard containing about thirty cows and four or five horses was completely burned out. The unfortunate animals were all burned in their stalls.

In the Cathedral the congregation were obviously/stricken ^{terror} and the priests were trying to calm them. The city was covered in a pall of smoke and it was hard to see more than ten or twelve yards. I made my way by a different route along which the scene was not so trying. I had my breakfast and the next hour or so I prepared myself to take the unit parade. It was held in the Shamrock Hall at 12 o'clock. I picked up Alfred McCallion on the way. When we entered the hall the unit seemed to be all there assembling rifles and fiddling around with revolvers. They appeared to be all armed and ready for action. We did not anticipate this. I gathered from the conversation and remarks that they regarded the events of the night before as a challenge to fight it out. Only four of us were involved the previous night. The other two were not on parade. The rest knew nothing of how things started.

I fell them in and told them we accepted responsibility, that they would get the details later, and dismissed them. They dispersed grumbling. A meeting of the T.F.P. Circle was held immediately after the parade. McCallion and I explained what had happened the previous night: that it could be regarded mostly as an incidental brought about by the accident of H. C. Wiseman happening to be at the point on his rounds at the time we approached the Guard. Most of them wanted to fight it out. A few felt the hardships inflicted on the civilian population were too onerous for the return. We pointed out we were doing quite well, but not ready to fight fixed battles and making a sacrifice of ourselves would serve no purpose. We agreed it was hard on the civilian population but it had not

Appendix 4 (contd.)

started to complain and would likely take as much punishment as in the cities of the south. We brought them round to our view in a sort of way, but we lost confidence in the circle and afterwards its functions were purely nominal.

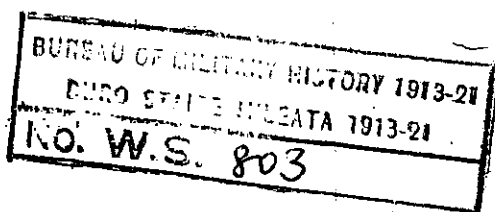
Another scene I recall vividly. I have referred to it in the narrative as the occasion on which Joe O'Doherty became a father.

Joe was a teacher by profession and he used schoolmaster's technique when lecturing. We were assembled in a semi-circle in his wife's consulting room. The class had been in progress for some time. He was out in front. A nurse in uniform entered the room unannounced, carrying a baby. It was probably a week old but we had the impression it had just arrived. The nurse went around the class accompanied by Joe and introduced each of us to the baby. We were at the age that we did not rightly estimate the import of babies in the scheme of things. We were not versed in the patter for such occasions and I am afraid acquitted ourselves deplorably. However, it was the first time the complexities of the physical sphere were thrust before my mind.

I think I should record for the benefit of research readers that Joe O'Doherty and Gabriel McGrath were St. Enda's Boys.



BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BURO STAIRS IRELAND 1913-21
NO. W.E. 803



APPENDIX 5.

G. H. Q. DETAILS.

ENEMY RECRUITING: From 1916 onwards to the end of the war the enemy pushed recruiting for the British Services vigorously and it took our full resources to combat it. We gradually succeeded in preventing recruiting meetings being held in any of the parochial halls or assembly points in the city, including the Guildhall, and eventually restricted these meetings to the Orange Halls. This met the situation. We picked up all potential recruits for the Services and for the R.I.C. that came to our notice. This entailed the employment of a great number of men especially at times when demands were coming in from other areas for the interception of potential recruits.

INTELLIGENCE: There was always some of the unit employed on this work. We had to watch a big military and naval base, keep track of units and movements; also to trace agents and spies notified from other areas and pass them on. Later we got demands to shoot at sight certain agents. A few of the latter came our way but we never had enough details to identify them positively.

GUARDS & ESCORTS: There always seemed to be important personages of the movement arriving and passing through the city to other areas. Often they were around the city for up to a week.

VOTERS' LIST: We had to provide men to check local and parliamentary lists, attend the Recorder's Court and supply the information for the lawyers appearing before the Recorder on these lists. This sort of thing often went on for months. At election times we had to provide officials and guards and polling booths. Our assistance on these occasions was deemed helpful in encouraging the native population to exercise the franchise. The Orangemen made a great display of force at these times and this deterred the more timorous adherents of the National Movements from going to the polling booths. Provided the boys were around to keep

these chaps in check they had no hesitation in doing their duty.

PROTECTION OF PRIVATE PROPERTY: During periods of tension we were often inundated with demands from business people for protection guards for their premises. These people were under the impression that we had a large organisation behind us. We didn't disillusion them, but were only able to meet a fraction of their requests. Any we undertook involved the providing of the men and arms. The applicants provided the accommodation, food etc. This was a most unpopular chore.

CONSCRIPTION: During the conscription scare, G.H.Q. directed we avail of this opportunity to increase our strength. We enrolled something around 100. They were no good. Most of them thought the I.R.A. was some sort of organisation one joined if he wanted to be protected from conscription escorts. We swore very few of them into the Movement, and saw little of them after the enrollment. We had, however, some fun with them. We let it be known that we regarded them as being members of the I.R.A., that they were deserters and we would pick them up when we required them. It was amusing when we made an appearance at a Football match or in a Dance hall to see them scuttling off.

I have no doubt that we handled them badly, but other units dealt with them in a different way. I never heard of any of them turning out useful.

BURNING EVACUATED R.I.C. BARRACKS AND DESTROYING
CUSTOMS & EXCISE RECORDS.

During the period these details operated we took part in several and completed a few ourselves. I think I dealt with this in the narrative.

RAILWAY SERVICES DISLOCATION.

See under Royal Irish Constabulary.

LIAISON: OTHER UNITS.

See Glasgow Battalion.(Appendix 6).

ENFORCEMENT OF ANTI-FRATERNISATION MEASURES.

These measures were enforced through the medium of unarmed combat. As I have already said, Derry was a garrison town. Our first target about the end of 1917 was the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers. The Skins were too good for us. They wore a belt and side arms at the time and used them freely. We had to set up a boxing club and Gym in Bridge Street under Eddie Dean to train the boys for the job. I think Spider Kelly was also one of the Instructors.

Most of the boys were also members of the Emmett's Gaelic Football and Hurling Club, although the best players of this Club were not in the Movement. This caused complications at times. After Dean's Club got going we gradually wore the Skins down, but the Northumberland Fusiliers made their appearance. However, we reached the stage where they could not frequent any place of amusement in the west side of the City in safety. They could not enter a Dance Hall except in force and then the patrons took their departure more from fear than anything else. We kept hammering at them until their meanderings were restricted to the east side of the city, Carlisle Bridge, Carlisle Road and up to the Diamond. All the females who would normally associate with them were too scared to do so. Someone had, of course, to pay for this and as usual it was the unfortunate civilian who had no connection whatever with it. I think there were about five of them drowned during this period. The melees usually took place along Carlisle Road and Carlisle Bridge and anyone cut off and caught was dumped over the bridge into the Foyle. Some of the boys suffered this ducking, but they all could swim fairly well and it did them no harm. I recall an incident in which Manus McCool had a narrow shave. Manus couldn't swim. He is known nowadays as a writer of Irish Text Books for the Department of Education under the name of Finn McCool. At the time I am dealing with he was a

hardy man. He and a companion - I think it was Eddie McLoughlin - pursued a batch of Northumberlains across Carlisle Bridge. About half way across they ran into a military patrol of about ten and were surrounded. The patrol attacked them with belts and side arms. Manus and his companion strew the patrol around the centre of the Bridge and I still can picture Manus coming across to the west side brushing his coat with his hands, chuckling, and a very satisfied look on his face.

ARMS RAIDS:

In addition to the excursions we carried out under Joe O'Doherty, we had to cover our own unit area. At the period this was the area east of the Foyle, bounded on the north by a line joining Limavady and Park and on the east and south by a line joining Park and Strabane. Nearly all the unit lived on the west side of the Foyle and this entailed crossing Carlisle Bridge when the job was finished or if transport was used travelling to Strabane and crossing it at Lifford, or as usually happened hanging around in the woods east of the Limavady Road until the River Ferry Service started to operate around 8 a.m. It was always chancy crossing Carlisle Bridge armed. On a few of these raids we got a bad soaking in the woods waiting for the Ferry Service and we thought we could do the job with less hardships by crossing Lough Foyle from the west by boat. The first occasion we attempted this approach we had a close shave. We procured a ~~large~~ fishing boat that was beached about three miles north of Muff on the west bank of the lough. About twelve of us piled into it after getting oars, oar-locks etc. At this point it was about eight miles across to the other bank. It was a rough night, raining, blowing and dark. About half way across the old boat sprung a leak. We started to bale out the water and decided to turn back to the west side. While turning the boat around Willie Moyne was swept overboard. In fishing him out we lost one of the oars. We spent an anxious two hours propelling the boat with one oar and bailing it out.

It was eventually washed into the mud flats on the west side of the Lough where it sank and we swam and trudged ashore. We nearly lost Moyne in these flats again. He was weak from immersion and exposure and got stuck in the soft mud of the flats. Sean Haughey was the individual who brought us out of this difficulty. He was a native of Teelan and had been a west coast fisherman. This incident took place around the spring of 1918.


Another incident I recall of this period was a raid on a retired Admiral of the British Navy, at Ardmore. It took place about the end of 1918. We surrounded the house and knocked at the front door. A land girl of the period came to the door carrying a paraffin lamp. Phil Doherty, who was about six feet in height, grabbed the lamp and fired it out on the drive where it went on fire. The land girl was bundled out of the door screaming. The old Admiral came along with a flash light and we persuaded him to hand over his weapon souvenirs. We parted with him on fairly good terms. About three days afterwards some twenty Volunteers were picked up in the city by the R.I.C. As far as I recalled only three of the party implicated were amongst these and included Gabriel McGrath, Lorcan McGrath and Phil Doherty. The later was positively identified by the land girl. As far as I remember the McGrath brothers were not held very long, but I don't recollect Phil Doherty being around after this affair. One member of the unit, T. Murphy who, as I remember, was not on the job was also picked up and identified either by the land girl or the Admiral.

I have no doubt some of the boys must have sustained disabilities in the execution of these raids that possibly had serious repercussions on their health later in ^{their} life.

The raiding period from the end of 1916 to 1919 occurred in my formative years and provided the opportunities for observing the behaviour of human beings under the natural conditions of the time. The people we came into contact with were well developed intellectually,

and were trained and accustomed to directing and controlling the lives of men. They had been brought up and lived in the belief that they had the protection of the machinery of Government. When surprised in their lairs in the early hours of the morning they reverted to their natural selves. They were incapable of defending their bodies and possessions and unable to call on someone else to do the job. They grovelled, squirmed and pleaded quite unnecessarily. We had no intention nor did we ever use violence on them. Nevertheless they could not conceal the fact that they were unprepared to take their departure from this world.

In a day or so they recovered, and when the machine got going they composed themselves and with the aid of the press resumed the role of the person others thought they were. These raids were all moderately exciting. They gave us a pleasant feeling of power and well-being. We endured some hardships but the reader will appreciate we could regard ourselves as well rewarded if he has viewed the changing picture surrounding him from the Limavady Road or Brehen Hill just after dawn on a bright morning as we often did and if in addition he can visualise himself as one of us viewing the scene in the atmosphere and surroundings of the time and looking upon it as his natural habitat, from which he was temporarily excluded. He will, I am sure, agree no effort, however confused it may have appeared, was too futile or good enough for the prize.




During the period we regarded the Glasgow Battalion as our neighbours. We co-operated on many questions and it was a unit I admired. We had plenty of opportunities of getting together as most of this unit were engaged in making their living in much the same way as ourselves. Most of the Derry unit had occasion to visit the Clyde especially during the late years of the war and up to 1920 when the Admiralty was changing the Destroyers from coal burning propulsion to Deisel.

The Deisel Works were in Brimalaw and nearly every Destroyer trial run ended in the Clyde. Up to a week often elapsed making adjustments and getting replacements. Sometimes these visits were more prolonged. The Clyde boys often visited the Foyle on similar errands. The Battalion was made up mostly of first and second generation boys of Irish extraction. They were a very keen lot and had a much better organisation than we had although they had few opportunities of using it. I was often invited to their parades and I was amazed at their strength. The unit gyrated around the Celtic Football team of the period. Its main Drill Hall and assembly point was the subway hall in Partic. It had a sub-unit assembly point in Argyle Street and small units in Campbelltown, Greenock, Port Glasgow and other small towns of the Clyde. The O/C. of the Battalion was from Motherwell - I forget his name. The personalities I recall were Jim O'Farrell from Lisnaskea, County Fermanagh, who was manager of a grocery and provision store south of the Central Station. As far as I remember he was the Adjutant. The Quartermaster was a Dublin man. He walked with a limp and was said to have been wounded in Dublin during 1916. He had a brush manufacturing business at Anderson Cross. All the unit thought that they would ultimately be called to Ireland to take part in the struggle and they seemed to think we should know when it was going to start.

They had a very exaggerated impression of our resources and the

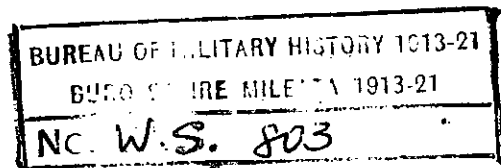
position was often very embarrassing. They nearly all had arms and equipment and were prepared to move at a minute's notice. During the time I was on the Clyde I stayed with a distant relative named Mullen at his house in St. Vincent's Crescent south of Kelvingrove Park. He had a residence also at Greencastle in Inishowen that he used in summer. The old fellow, he was really a Scotsman, thought every Irishman was a Sinn Feiner. This place later became one of the residences of the Bishop of Derry. He made his living as a ship's broker and had a small yard at Clydebank. He bought old ships, reconditioned them or broke them up and sold them. During the time preparations were being made for the rescue of Frank Carty. I was asked to get a ship from Mullen to bring Carty to Ireland. He agreed to give us every facility at his yard, to take a ship that he would allot. This transpired to be an old tramp steamer of about 5,000 tons. The arrangements were we would provide the crew and get the ship ready for sea. When Carty was rescued by the Glasgow Battalion he was to be placed aboard and the ship headed out to sea and run aground the Donegal coast. Old Mullen was taking no risks. He knew nothing about it. If the ship was sunk or lost he collected more than its value from Lloyds. Charlie McGuinness and some of the crew were brought over from Derry. This included Jim Taykor, Owen Callen and two McCourt brothers. McGuinness had a look over the ship and he didn't like it at all, and didn't like Mullen. He wanted a small steam launch or yacht. I went out of the picture at this stage. Old Mullen was very disappointed I think mainly for the reason he had hopes of collecting a big sum of money from Lloyds. I remember, however, he gave his son's-in-law revolver to me afterwards. His son-in-law and he did not get on too well. They lived in the same house. He had been an officer in one of the Scots Regiments during the war and was badly shell-shocked. He had bouts of whiskey drinking and could be wild. Old Mullen came into the sitting room one evening with a Wembley 45 revolver and a heap of ammunition and a Sam Brown belt and handed the lot to me, saying "Take this before that so and so shoots me. I was, of course, very grateful.

Around this time I had to go to Liverpool. Later I read of the failure to effect Carty's release, and I heard McGuinness and the crew got a suitable craft and were ready at Clydebank when the attempted release took place. There was some delay in notifying them of the failure and when they attempted to put to sea they found they were blocked by Destroyers and had to abandon the vessel in the Clyde and make their way home as best they could. I had not much contact with the Liverpool unit. They seemed to be all Dubliners or of Dublin extraction. There was a big area around the Docks populated apparently wholly by Irish from the South. They were a very reserved lot and seemed to think I was a Scotsman. I, however, remember attending a few parades in Great Howard Street. I never traced any organisation in Birkenhead.



APPENDIX VII.

SETTLER ORGANISATION.



As the Settler organisation in Derry is somewhat different from the popular impression in the South I think I should give a little more detail than I gave in the narrative for the benefit of Southern readers.

The kernel of the Ulster Volunteers in Derry is and was the PRENTICE BOYS. This force is never permitted to drop below a strength of 500. It is administered by a Secret Society called the THE BLACK CHAPTER. The whole lot is covered broadly by the political organisation known as the ORANGE ORDER. The Prentice Boys have a tradition since our forebears failed to take the City in June, 1869; always coming to her rescue when she is menaced. Every year the Prentice Boys are assembled at the Walker Statue. An effigy of LUNDY is strung up and burned as an indication to the Leaders of their fate if they fail in their duty.

The Prentice Boys are never brought into action while British or local Forces are able to keep the situation in hand. We brought them into action in June 1920 and we had hopes of Dr. Craig taking his place alongside Lundy at the next Lundy Ceremony whenever it would be held. Unfortunately as one of the Prentice Boys ballads relate - "The City on the Hill is a Maiden Still".

B I B L I O G R A P H Y.

This list of authors and publications is merely provided for the purpose of enabling the reader, if he so desires, to get the background and atmosphere of the area with which the narrative deals. Little information will be obtained from these publications of the military operations of the period.

<u>AUTHOR:</u>	<u>TITLE:</u>	<u>AREA:</u>
Ernie O'Malley	On Another Man's Wound	Ireland
Charles McGuinness	Nomad	Globe
L.J. Walsh	On My Keeping	Glenelly
Seamus McManus	Several Books	Glen of Mountcharles
Paddy McGill	do.	Glen of Glenties
Seán Bawn		Glenfin
Terry Ward	Press Columnist	Derry.

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A P P E N D I C E S.

- Appendix 1. Roll of Derry Unit (incomplete).
- " 2. Maps (a) North West Sector General
 (b) Derry June, 1920
 (c) Derry Unit withdraws
 (d) 3rd Donegal Brigade May, 1921
 (e) 3rd Donegal Brigade June, 1921
 (f) 3rd Donegal Brigade, 11th July, 1921.
- Appendix 3. Royal Irish Constabulary.
- Appendix 4. Scenes of the Period.
- Appendix 5. G.H.Q. Details.
- Appendix 6. Glasgow Battalion I.R.A.
- Appendix 7. Settler Organisation.
- Appendix 8. ~~Derry Unit, 1920.~~

Signed this 13th..... day of January, 1953, at
 Baldonnel Aerodrome.

2ND BRIGADE

1st BRIGADE

3RD BRIGADE



M DF MALIN HEAD

R BR TORY ISLAND

W Sp FI (4) 90-0 sec

Tory Island 88

TORY SOUND

W R (sector) Sp FI (6) 15-0 sec

W GP FI (2) 6-0 sec

Owey Island 104

Torneady Point

W FI 6-0 sec

ARAN ISLAND

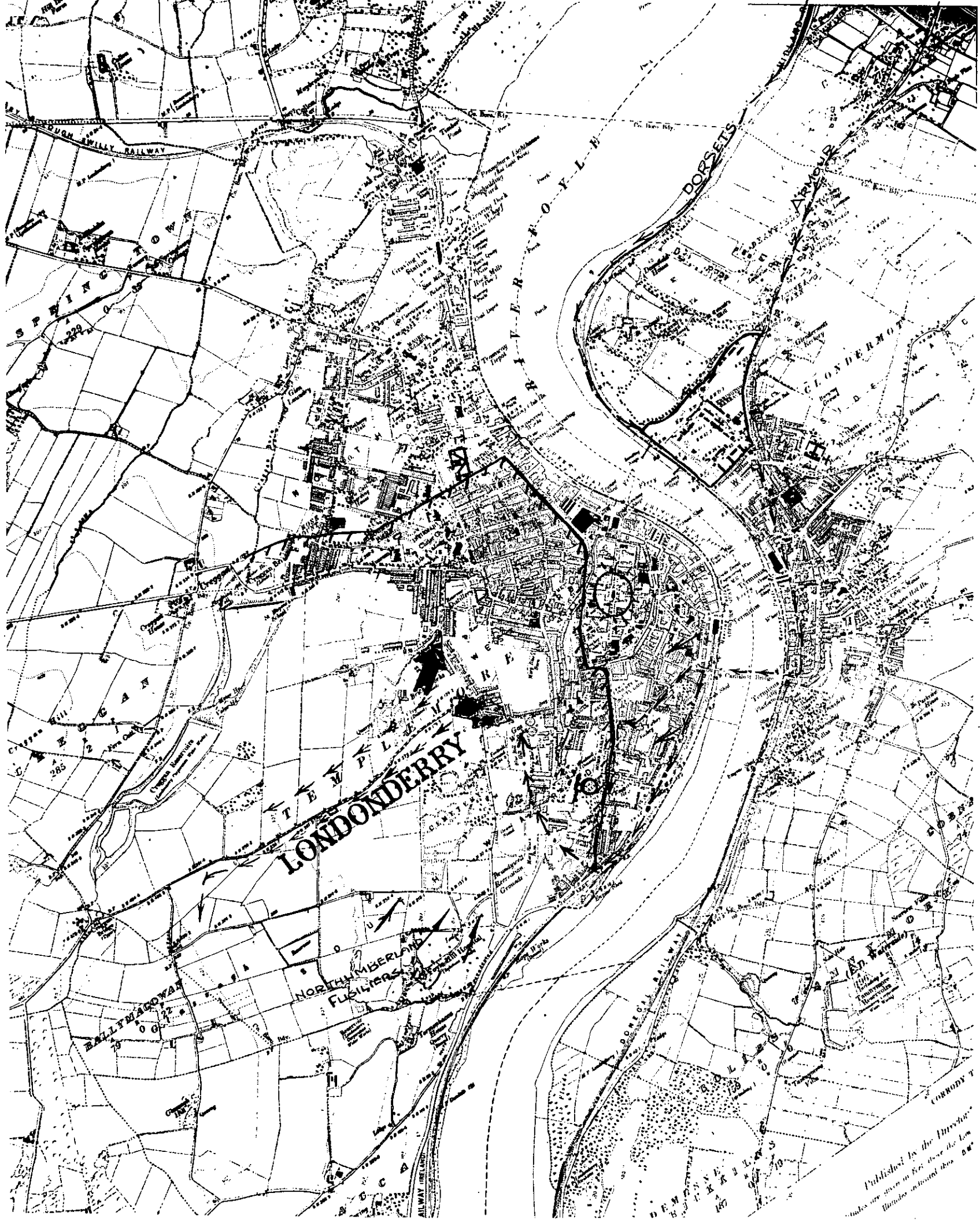
LOUGH FOYLE

LOUGH SWILLY

W FI 6-0 sec

3RD BRIGADE

BALLYSHANNON





LONDONDERRY

Published by the Director
of the Ordnance Survey
London

LEGEND

2nd. DAY :

AREA OF NO RESISTANCE 
PROVISIONAL LINES OF WITHDRAWAL 

LAST DAY:

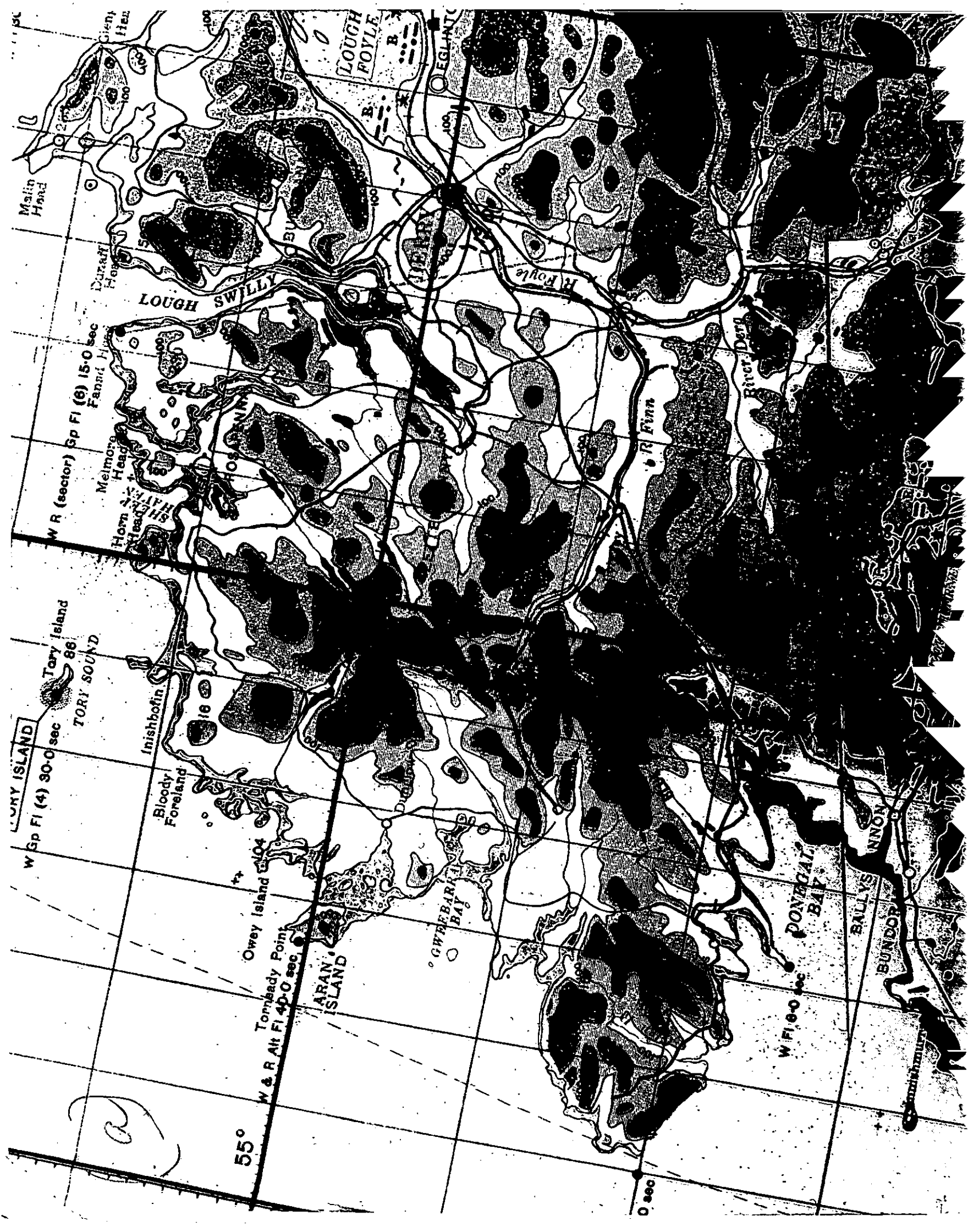
INFANTRY 

ARMOUR  . 

R.I.C. POSTS 

UNIT H.Q. ST. COLUMB'S COLLEGE 

PRENTICE BOYS 



Malin Head
Durragh Head
Great Head

LOUGH SWILLY

LOUGH FOYLE

ATLANTIC

R. Foyle

R. Finn

River Derr

LORRY ISLAND
W Gp Fl (4) 30-0 sec

Tory Island
86
TORY SOUND

Inishbofin

Bloody Foreland

Owey Island
104

Tonnedy Point
W & R Alt Fl 40-0 sec

ARAN ISLAND

GWYBERRILL BAY

W Fl 6-0 sec
PONDGAT BAY

BALLYVA
BUNDOR

55°

0 sec