

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BURO STAIRÉ MILEATA 1913-21
No. W.S. 814

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 814.....

Witness

Comd't. Patrick G. Daly, M.D.,
12 Mount Eden Road,
Donnybrook,
Dublin.

Identity.

Member of Irish Volunteers, Ferbane, Offaly, 1917 -
Member of Irish Volunteers, Liverpool, 1918 - ;
Member of I.R.B. Liverpool, 1918 - .

Subject.

Provision of arms and ammunition in Liverpool
and their transport to Ireland, 1918-1922.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil

File No. S. 2054.....

Form B.S.M. 2

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
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NO. W.S. 814

Statement of COMMANDANT PATRICK G. DALY, M.D.

12, Mount Eden Road, Donnybrook, Dublin.

I was born in March, 1898, and I was educated at Roscrea College and Trinity College, Dublin.

I joined the Volunteers in late 1917 or early 1918, becoming a member of the local unit in Ferbane, Offaly. The Battalion at that time was commanded by a man named Doyle - later Dr. Doyle. The Battalion activities mainly consisted of training, drilling, parades and organisation.

About the year 1918 I went to Liverpool where my brother was a clergyman. My idea was to take up a clerical appointment there at the time. I met there a number of Irishmen and during the course of conversation I learned that a Volunteer organisation existed there. Having expressed my wish to become a member of the local Volunteer unit I was requested to report to Thomas Kerr who was then in charge of the unit. So I went along one night and was formally introduced at a meeting held in one of the Sinn Fein halls in Bootle. I learned at that meeting that there were at least two other Companies of Volunteers in existence in Liverpool area. I was attached to the Bootle Company and within a short time I became a Squad Leader. In addition to Thomas Kerr being the Company Captain, I cannot recollect the names of the other Company officers.

We had regular meetings once a week and our activities were confined to parades and drill which we carried on in the local hall.

I was not long in the Company when I became a member of the I.R.B. Steve Lanigan administered the Oath to me as he was in charge of the Circle. I think there were about three other Circles in the Liverpool area. There were only about seven or eight men in my Circle. Meetings were held once a month and I cannot recall anything of importance being discussed.

The most important work that was going on then was the purchase of arms and the export of them to Ireland. This activity dated from before 1916 and was principally amongst members of the I.R.B. organisation. The people associated with this activity over there had a link with the Fenians, Liverpool having always been a centre of Fenian activity. As well as I can recollect the names that occur to me are, Messrs. Kerr, Lively and Gerraty. Lannigan I suppose would be a later addition. Several of the former members or perhaps members of their families had taken part in the Easter Week Rising. Some of the leaders were in the habit of coming over to Liverpool and being put up there. For example, Cathal Brugha was recuperating over there after 1916.

I was introduced to this organisation then as a member of the I.R.B. and I was sent on several jobs in this connection. My first recollection was not much of a job. It was with Dick O'Neill. Dick was one of those quiet individuals who had been working on the transport of arms for years and for him it was an every-day occurrence. So that first job was really a form of apprenticeship. We carried a bag of munitions down to the Dublin boats.

There was a vast Irish population in all the industrial towns of Lancashire and the North of England. There were always Irishmen on the lookout for weapons that would be of use irrespective of whether they were in an organisation or not. In the mining areas of Lancashire there was a considerable number of Irishmen who, in the course of their work, were able to acquire supplies of explosives like gelignite and detonators. On the more organised side in connection with the following seaports like New York, Hamburg, Antwerp, there were Irish sailors on board British vessels plying between these ports and Liverpool. They were organised to bring back munitions on their return journeys.

Apart from the purchase of munitions, Liverpool was the most important port for communications between Dublin and America

(New York), and the continent. The Liners plying between Liverpool and New York, especially the White Star and Cunard Boats, had Irishmen aboard who were employed to take dispatches from Liverpool for New York and vice versa. These sailors also engaged in the stowing away of leaders who wished to avoid arrest. The mode of procedure was for such a person or persons to go aboard several hours before the Liner was due to leave the dock for a landing stage and to be hidden away in the bowels of the ship.

The Liverpool docks extended about seven miles along the Merseyside covering hundreds of acres, not unlike our Dublin docks here. And dockland was separated from the city by a high wall. Entrance to the dock was by a gateway or a doorway at which a policeman was always on guard. On the city side of the docks resided the poor section of the population including a large percentage of working people; their residences being so adjacent were useful as dumps for arms. To carry arms into a boat it was necessary to put them into a sailor's packing bag with old clothes, if possible. The bag was carried on one's shoulder giving the policeman on duty the impression that the person carrying it was a sailor about to join his ship. Sometimes rifles - and in most cases it was the British Lee Enfield rifle - had the stock screwed from the barrel. The barrels were slung across the bearer's neck by a stout cord and the stock was placed in the pockets of one's coat. Several men might go in laden in that manner at night depending on the hour at which the boat was about to sail. The barrels, of course, were well concealed by the carrier wearing a large overcoat. That was the principal method of getting stuff in. I used a cart on occasions. These happened to be exceptional circumstances where the steward belonging to a Sligo boat used to bring a cart out for provisions for a voyage. Then we would get him his load for Sligo area. In this way we were very often able to get a big consignment of arms and ammunition on board a boat.

In connection with cargoes sent from New York we later on, instead of bringing them ashore to a dump in Liverpool, carried them directly

to a B. & I. Boat that was due to sail for Dublin. This particular type of cargo was mostly a consignment of Thompson guns with suitable ammunition. It was an awkward consignment to handle and we generally transferred them direct from the Liner to the B. & I. Boat. Entrance into the boat with the sailor's bag was a normal and frequent procedure as there were so many boats leaving the port every day and therefore so many sailors rejoining their ships before sailing that it was a very usual occurrence. Leaving the dock with the sailor's bag was more dangerous because so much looting occurred in the docks that there was always a risk of being detected by the policeman on duty; whereas inside the dock itself it was an easy matter to transfer arms from one boat to another.

Liverpool was the principal port for transferring munitions to Ireland because of the number of boats plying between Liverpool and Irish docks. For this reason most of the munitions collected in the North of England, Midlands and Scotland were brought to Liverpool and placed in dumps there until a boat was available. The dumps were, of course, the houses of sympathetic Irish people who were all working-class people. They were the only ^{people} who would take a risk over there. The carrying of the munitions from the different areas involved a lot of travelling on the part of some of the workers in this organisation. The principal areas or sources where these arms were collected were Glasgow, Motherwell, Newcastle-on-Tyne, Manchester and Birmingham. Each of these larger centres was surrounded by a number of satellite Irish centres who brought in whatever they had from time to time to the local officers.

The I.R.A. activity over there consisted of two branches of activity, namely purchase of arms and incendiary operations. In connection with the latter, a campaign of terrorism had been advocated as a reply to the Black & Tan campaign which existed at home.

The purchase of arms and munitions always appeared to us the more important of the two and I think for that reason there was less work in connection with the reprisal activity which took second place. At one time the destruction of Liverpool Docks had been contemplated by G.H.Q. at home and we had despatches from some of the General Headquarters staff in that connection. Seán Plunkett was over there. As I was only a helper I don't know in what capacity he was there but I assumed he was over in connection with operations that were contemplated. Plans for such destruction were captured in Dublin in a raid on the Chief of Staff's house (Dick Mulcahy). I don't know if that was the reason for the abandonment of such an operation.

During this period of 1919 to 1920 the collection and despatch of munitions was, to a great extent, confined to a very few people. And in fact all the members of the I.R.B. Circles were aware of this, I think, but only a small percentage of them was asked to take part.

Very active in this respect were Neil Kerr and his son Tom and Steve Lanigan. At this time Neil Kerr was, I think, a full-time paid official. And in fact all I.R.A. activity was controlled by Michael Collins by virtue of his position of head of the I.R.B. Later a separate department of purchases was established by G.H.Q. and was in charge of Liam Mellowes. However, Collins still continued to take an active part and as we continued membership of the I.R.B. we continued to receive orders from him also.

The collection of munitions from other English centres and their transfer to Liverpool was mostly done by travelling to these centres with suit cases or trunks. On one or two occasions a lorry or private car came from Glasgow to Liverpool but otherwise we depended on this travelling and suit-case method which was a great pity. A car would have been very useful. However, I did not know how to drive. On one of these few occasions on which a

lorry or car was expected I remember a tragedy occurring affecting one of our members. We were waiting in a cellar for this lorry to come from Glasgow and, as the time of arrival was very uncertain, actually after waiting all day it did not come at all. But during the course of the day a member of the I.R.A. - a son of Kerr - put, as he thought, an empty parabellum to his head and shot himself dead. This tragedy, of course, had to be brought to the notice of the police authorities. How it was explained away I cannot recall. But the police never seemed to have associated it with any of the I.R.A. activities.

My first trip was to Glasgow with Tom Kerr on a night train. It was most uncomfortable travelling all night and arriving in Motherwell near Glasgow in the early hours of the morning to the house of a man named Burke where Joe Vize was staying. As far as I can recollect we had two suit-cases each. These were loaded up for us with all kinds of material like gelignite and revolvers - anything in the nature of a lethal weapon. I still remember the weight of these suit-cases. We walked into the railway station later on in the day: some of my companions never thought of comfort or taking a taxi in these days. However, we got back to Liverpool safely next day. I think we brought the stuff to some local sympathiser's house from which, of course, it was transferred to a Dublin boat - the first available one due to sail for Dublin. Here I should mention that there were boats travelling to other ports as well, such as Dublin, Cork, Sligo and Dundalk. Consignments of munitions were from time to time sent to all these ports. As well as I can recollect the principal men concerned with the safe transporting of ammunition on the various boats were :-

Neddy Kavanagh (deceased) - steamship Blackrock. I might say this was our flagship because some of the oldest members and most experienced were working on that boat;

Billy Verner (deceased) - S.S. Blackrock;

Paddy Weafer (deceased) - S.S. Wicklow;

Morris, Sligo boat - S.S. Kircaldy;

Michael Byrne - S.S. Kildare;

Paddy Larkin was on the Dundalk boat. I do not know whether he is alive or not.

All the men on the Dublin boats were able to contact Colonel O'Reilly on arrival in Dublin. But I do not know if this was the routine procedure. I do know that there was a man called Billy Byrne who worked in the Dublin port. His job appears to have had something to do with the berthing of vessels. I know he received stuff occasionally, especially if there were British military in the vicinity or if a search appeared to be imminent.

The usual method of contacting sailors, especially of the Dublin boats with whom we did most business, was to meet in a local public house near the Liverpool Docks. At the time when I was helping Neil Kerr, the procedure was to go into the lounge and order some drinks and wait there discussing 'nothing' until our sailor friends came in as customers. Salutations were exchanged and the weather discussed across the lounge. In any case arrangements would be made for bringing in munitions, possibly that night, to the boat. The sailors on those occasions handed over despatches for Liverpool and if any despatches were available for transfer to the American boats or posted to London under covering addresses. During my term of office a despatch from Dublin to Liverpool, always from Michael Collins, with the well-known signature of "M.O'C", had on the envelope in capital letters "L.P" which meant Liverpool.

The most important point to keep in mind in carrying in parcels or sailors' bags was to be there many hours before a boat was due to sail because Customs' officials were on duty perhaps a couple of hours before sailing time and there was a great danger of police. An example of the importance of this was forcibly impressed on us. In addition to the boats which I have already

mentioned there was a Guinness' boat called "The Steamship Clarecastle" (still in circulation) with a man named McGlew on board. A man called McCaughey and myself had made two trips to this boat with parcels of ammunition on one afternoon and we were later, towards evening, sent down with a bag of rifles. Our O/C. slipped-up somewhat, I think, on this occasion. In any case it was too late to go aboard. McCaughey was a stalwart docker and when we got off the overhead railway which served the docks he had the bag on his shoulder and I accompanied him. This was somewhere around 8 o'clock in the evening and the dockers were working late putting empty casks on board. The boat was due to sail that evening. As we passed down the side of the ship by the stern to get to the other side where we were to contact McGlew, we met a Customs' officer. He stopped us and asked us our business. I cannot recollect how I tried to explain our presence but he put his hand on the bag and said, "There are rifles in that bag and I have to search it". I denied that the bag contained rifles and said that I would not allow him to search it but that I might allow his senior officer to consider the matter. The latter, I presumed, was in a cabin at the stern of the boat. So I told my comrade, McCaughey, to lift his bag on his shoulder and we proceeded to retrace our steps towards the stern. Instead of stopping at the stern I whispered to McCaughey to keep going. So we proceeded on towards the gangway despite the protests and threats of the Customs' officer. We got on the quay side and continued to make our way through the dockers past the part of the shed which was open convenient to the ship. Arriving along the quay where the shed was closed there was only room for two to walk. So I then tried to slow down the progress of the Customs' officer while McCaughey quickened his pace in the direction of the dock exit. But on seeing this manoeuvre the Customs officer became very violent in his protestations, and his gesticulations and his shouts attracted some of the dockers who came to his assistance. The narrowness of the space along the quayside was to their disadvantage.

McCaughey had made a fair amount of headway before we reached the end of the shed. McCaughey by this time actually had reached a gateway through the dockway where a policeman should have been at his post but by very good fortune he seemed to have wandered from his beat. Having got into open ground I had to run for the gate after McCaughey with a crowd of dockers and the Customs officer after me. Outside the dock gate on the street some of the dockers made an attempt to catch hold of me. I pretended to make blows at them, yet keeping out of their reach. One of them slipped off a belt with a bright brass buckle which I saw flashing in front of me. By this time the policeman appears to have come on the scene and the best he could do was to blow his whistle. However, I could not keep them off any longer so I rushed after McCaughey and both of us, encumbered with the bag, ran as fastly as we could. As our pursuers were gaining on us we turned into an alleyway containing warehouses and dumped the bag in a doorway, hoping to return later to collect it. Unfortunately the police, now reinforced, searched the area for us and found the bag. It probably contained 6 or 8 rifles. Luckily the police or the Customs Officer were not in a position to identify us. So with that the incident closed.

Mr. Kerr was very upset when we got back to the base. And I remember on that occasion on arriving back that Tom Cullen from Dublin was sitting in the kitchen. The latter informed me during this visit of a boycott which was being contemplated in Dublin, which soon after I recognised as the shooting of the Intelligence Officers on "Bloody Sunday".

My first trip on my own was with a sailor's bag. It was from a dump in a house of a man called Lawlor. The night was dark when Lawlor and myself set out from his house in the Bootle neighbourhood. Our plan was to proceed to the nearest station of the overhead railway getting off at the Nelson dock where the B. & I. Boats berthed. On leaving the house by an alleyway at the dock, I lost

my comrade and had to proceed on my own. I must have taken a bus to the railway and on arriving there I did not see him. He must have proceeded to an intermediate station. However, I went by train to the Nelson Dock and as this was my first solo job I was somewhat nervous, principally as I did not know on which side of the dock basin the boat lay. And I did not want to spend more time than was necessary in roaming around looking for the Irish boat. By good fortune I took the right direction and passing by the boat, "The Lady Killiney", I was called. I was very much relieved to find that it was our agent on board, Paddy McCarthy, who called me. Paddy had been informed by Lawlor that I was on the way. Lawlor had arrived before me. The bag contained rifles with old boots as packing for camouflage, and probably other smaller items.

In connection with the procuring of weapons in England - my account is partly assumption - the extensive Irish population, even the unorganised members associated with Irish communities or even those of Irish dance halls, somehow always knew what to do with a gun or a weapon if they managed to acquire one. Of course, members of Sinn Fein clubs and especially members of the I.R.A. and I.R.B. were always on the lookout for weapons that might be of use. The type of weapon and its lethal value varied considerably, some being very inadequate such as pin-fire revolvers, old rusty grenades from the previous world war. Revolvers, even of more modern pattern, varied very much in their calibre. I think the .44 revolver was of a Canadian pattern. Even there were Peter-the-painters. The latter were modern at that time.

On one occasion some German machine-guns were sent from Newcastle complete with the sleighs belonging to them. They had, apparently, been in use on the eastern front of the world war. Unfortunately the sleighs were kept in a backyard - one of our dumps - and in a raid by police one of our best men, Séán Fitzgerald, was arrested. Fortunately the guns had been despatched to Dublin before that. Sean Fitzgerald had been a very active worker. He was an associate of Tom Clarke and the pre-1916 group. He was an elderly

man and had a link with the Fenians. He knew O'Donovan-Rossa and other Fenians during his youth. On that occasion only two or three machine-guns came into our hands. I don't know how they were procured in Newcastle.

In connection with the procuring of arms abroad, New York was our most important source in that respect. Other ports of call were Hamburg, Antwerp and very occasionally Buenos Aires and Genoa. At the latter port, Mr. ^{Hales} ~~Hayas~~ a brother of Tom ^{Hales} ~~Hayas~~ of Cork, gave us whatever assistance he could but our visits were very infrequent because there was no regular service to this port. As far as I remember there was only one trip. Since we could not develop a regular service there he didn't try to organise any source of supply. Our messenger on board contacted him and he gave him some small supply on one occasion.

In connection with representation on board boats we had friendly agents in the Seamens' Unions. These men had quite a stock of sailors' books belonging to former sailors who had ceased that occupation and it was possible for the friendly agents to forge new papers or change particulars to suit one of our men who would need a job on a ship. This did not happen very frequently during my administration but I knew it happened before my arrival on the scene and I knew the men concerned. There was a man called Barney Kiernan who was a Seaman's delegate. He would actually arrange a job for a sailor and supply him with the necessary papers. There was another man called Ned Hoare. I am not quite sure in what capacity he worked but I think it would be in a similar capacity to that of Kiernan. Hoare was also a sympathetic agent on our behalf and one episode in that direction stands out in my mind. It concerns the escape of Liam Mellows to America after 1919. This was during the first world war period when sailings to America were perhaps a trifle irregular. Hoare on this occasion had the job of supplying or collecting the crew for a certain boat sailing from a South of England port to a North American Port. Liam Mellows was then in Liverpool

and Hoare arranged to get him a job as a member of a crew. The usual sailor's documents had to be supplied and Liam's worries in this connection he related to me some years later when he had returned to Liverpool. They had set out from Liverpool to the port of embarkation by train and yet the personal papers necessary for Mellows were not forthcoming although apparently all the other men, being regular seamen, were in possession of theirs. Actually they were contained in a little leather bag which Hoare carried with him on the train from Liverpool to the south of England to the port from which the boat was to sail. Liam told me that he was very worried about this although Hoare kept reassuring him that everything would be all right, so as they were passing through a tunnel Liam took the bag and threw it out the window. This ensured that everybody was in the same position - without papers, and there were no documents for any men sailing on the particular boat on which Mellows was to travel.

As far as I know this was Liam's first experience of deep sea sailing. This probably was a further worry for him, in connection with his job as a member of the crew. He told me that when the crew got aboard they broke up into little groups of men surveying and appraising the virtues or defects of the boat. He listened to one little unit of sailors and then joined another group and repeated the remarks of the former group. In this way he gave the impression that he was an experienced sailor himself. I cannot recollect the particular job he did on board but I imagine it was that of fireman. But by the time he arrived at the American port, he informed me, he was never in such a fit condition.

He mentioned something about another man escaping to America at the same time but who didn't fare off so well as he was not so clever in regard to the crew and was really very badly handled by the crew.

Other persons of note whom I know to have travelled as stowaways or as bogus seamen were - Ned O'Brien of Limerick, Mr. De Valera and a man called O'Donovan. I met Ned O'Brien after the Knocklong ambush

in Liverpool and I cannot recall whether he was travelling as a stowaway but my impression is that this was the manner in which he travelled. Liam Mellowes, incidentally, came back to Liverpool as a stowaway about September or October, 1920.

As I have said, New York was our best foreign source of supply for ammunition. Weapons there were standard and had their supply of ammunition to suit, unlike our sources in England and Scotland where we got everything in the way of obsolete weapons as well as weapons of more modern type. There were other Irish Americans there who worked internally. I think that the principal dump for ammunition and guns ready for shipment was at the Carmelite Monastery in this city. Apparently shipping munitions or transferring them to the Atlantic boats there didn't involve much risk, but required secrecy on account of the intense activity of the British Spies.

The Irish organisation in New York were not satisfied with the relatively small supplies which they were succeeding in getting across the Atlantic on Liners to Liverpool and considered that if a boat with a sympathetic crew could be procured to sail direct to Dublin or some other Irish port a consignment of arms could be forwarded in that way. A Customs Officer called Gleeson was also concerned in the organisation of this venture. A Moore McCormick Boat was eventually chartered in New York and a suitable crew employed. When all arrangements had been made for sailing, about 480 Thompson guns with ammunition sewn up in sacking in different lots were put on board. Their delivery on board took place on Sunday morning, and Boland and Pedlar watched the procedure from a safe distance as they didn't wish to be associated with the venture or to be seen nearby in case of British Secret Service agents having them under observation. In the early hours of the next morning Pedlar was rung up and informed that the Federal Police had discovered the arms. I think even to-day the explanation of this misfortune is not fully clear. The arms were eventually recovered by them from the police and the original purchasers were able to get them back again. From

thence onwards it was necessary to revert to the old system of smuggling arms across the Atlantic in small quantities. While I had nothing personal to do with these consignments of guns I learned the details as given above from Liam Mellowes and Pedlar.

The Atlantic route was our most important route both on account of the source of supply at New York and because of the fact that sailings were very regular and frequent. Our best boats on that line were the Celtic and the Baltic. As a seaman's life is a casual form of employment, the personnel changed occasionally but I would like to mention in connection with the Celtic the names of Barney Downes, Dick O'Neill and Billy Humphries, an Englishman. Billy had a job on board as Lamp Trimmer and was a member of the permanent crew. He had a cabin to himself which was very convenient for our work. He was the principal agent in saving Mr. De Valera on his return from New York when British detectives were looking for him on board. There were also two other seamen whose names I am unable to remember and who were outstanding men. In connection with the Baltic the only name I can remember is that of Billy Goggins. We knew beforehand the approximate time and arrival of these boats into Liverpool. When the boats had docked we would contact the men concerned. In the early stages when we contacted the men we brought the stuff ashore to a dump but later on when I had an Assistant - Tim Sullivan - we would go aboard the ship in the early morning and by previous arrangements with members of the crew, with their assistance would have the load transferred direct to the Irish boat. I should mention that Tim lived in the neighbourhood of the docks. His place was known to all the seamen concerned in the shipment. He was easily contacted and often acted as a go-between, sometimes with myself and the seamen. With the assistance of perhaps another worker in the Movement locally they were able to deal with most of the work in connection with carrying arms aboard. I should mention that as far as I remember the number of men engaged in this work never exceeded a half dozen

although we were supposed to draw on members of the I.R.B. and Volunteer Companies in general at times for assistance during my period of office. Anyway I deliberately confined the work to a few, thereby keeping the business as secret as possible. During my administration we didn't get very much material from continental ports. Possibly it was difficult to get men to take the risk there. Our best source on the continent was Hamburg. During the earlier periods Glasgow was about the best source and I remember one trip there during which I contacted a man called Harry Coyle who was in charge in Glasgow on the permanent staff. Because Glasgow was situated in a mining area it was a fairly good source for procuring gelnite and detonators in addition to other weapons. On one occasion Coyle decided to drive a lorry down to Liverpool with a load of munitions and Kerr asked me to go to Glasgow to guide the lorry to Liverpool. Kerr had previously rented a garage in a very respectable residential area. I arrived in Glasgow and was accommodated in the house of a sympathiser there. I think one of the sources of supply was a drill hall which was to be raided. My part in the job was to wait until the lorry called for me with this load. I think on the night in question the raid was abortive and I think it was on this occasion a policeman was wounded.

I was forced to remain in Glasgow for some time to await another cargo by road and on this occasion drove an Austin car belonging to a Provision Dealer. Coyle was not a very expert motor driver and unfortunately knew nothing about the mechanics of a car, a fact which led to his arrest later on when he was forced to leave his car in a garage for repairs and the mechanic noticed lethal weapons in the car and notified the police.

On the night of our departure for Liverpool I awaited his arrival in a small flat sitting on a couch beside a coal fire with a large sack of gelnite beside me. Eventually the car arrived and we loaded up. It was an old Austin with a hood. The back of the

car was packed up to the level of the top of the front seat. In addition to the driver and myself there was another member of the local Volunteers. One of us was forced to recline on the top of this load at the back and it was a most uncomfortable position, but we changed around as we proceeded on the journey. About twenty miles outside Glasgow the car broke down and we were forced to spend the whole night there in the car until the next morning when a mechanic was procured. While we stood on the roadside he did whatever was necessary and drove the car up and down the road but apparently didn't look under the rug behind him, where our cargo was concealed.

Going through Carlisle, smoke began to come out of the gearbox. As we were in a town we were able to have this rectified. Passing through Cumberland Mountains Coyle managed to get into a rut on the mountain road. The car wobbled very much. On one side was a steep mountain and on the other a precipice. I became so alarmed that I made a grab at the wheel but fortunately we didn't go off the road. We were all armed with guns. Our next spot of bother occurred in Preston when the lighting system failed. This included the horn. Luckily the shops weren't all closed so we purchased a policeman's whistle for the driver and two bicycle lamps. The man seated in front beside the driver held out a bicycle lamp as well as he could and the man on the top of the load at the back of the car was able to hold one out at the rear as a further protection. This lighting system worked very effectively. As we travelled through Liverpool a policeman whistled us up but we didn't stop and we arrived safely at our destination approximately 24 hours from the time we had set out from Glasgow. Next day in the garage we had rented in Liverpool, we were able to sort out our consignment which consisted of gelignite and a varied selection of small arms and ammunition.

With regard to despatches for London, I was supplied with covering addresses to which I mailed or forwarded these despatches through the post. The addresses were those of sympathisers who

would not be fully associated with the Movement. The only one of these addresses I can remember and I think the one which I most frequently used was that of Lady Claire Annesley. I cannot recollect the address at the moment but she lived in a very exclusive neighbourhood. I talked with Art O'Brien about her, years later, and he informed me that she was sympathetic. I was intrigued by her title but I did not make any effort to trace her family connections or how she became sympathetic to our cause.

At the time I knew Neil Kerr he was a man of about 55 years of age. He was of medium build. His hair was prematurely grey. And he had a very pale complexion which was accentuated by a black hat which he habitually wore. He always affected a military bearing which was negated by a slight stoop. In temperament he was rather irascible which made him sometimes feared and perhaps disliked by some of the other colleagues of the I.R.B. At the time I knew him he was a salaried agent for purchasing munitions. His occupation previously, I think, was as a labouring man in a local Gas Works. I don't think his education was too extensive. And I think any complicated communications might need the assistance of his colleague Steve Lannigan - an officer in the Customs & Excise. But he had a very high standard of intelligence and was much thought of by Michael Collins. He had the capacity to get things done and to inspire people to do them effectively. I think I previously mentioned that his three sons participated in the Easter Week Rising.

Steve Lannigan, on the other hand, was a fairly-well educated man. He was something of an agnostic, the origin of which I never tried to ascertain. Presumably, he had been a practising Catholic at one time. During my association with him he was in the confidence of leaders in Dublin. He had less time for activity than Neil Kerr as he had to look after his work during the day. For this reason he had not so much to do with I.R.A. and I.R.B. activities. But he would occasionally after work assist in carrying munitions to

the boats. As far as I know his position as Customs Officer was not of great value to us for our activities.

In the month of November, 1920, prior to the burning of the Liverpool Warehouses and timber yards, the Volunteer organisation in Liverpool consisted of approximately four Companies. One of these Companies, I think, was situated in Birkenhead at the other side of the Mersey. The three remaining Companies operated on the Liverpool side of the Mersey. I could not give any idea of what the precise strength of each Company was but the total strength of all Companies was in the neighbourhood of 100 - 150. I might say here that the strength of the I.R.A. in Liverpool area fluctuated very much as it was mostly composed of labouring men coming across from Ireland. And some of these perhaps stayed only for short periods.

The I.R.A. was controlled by the I.R.B. The head of the I.R.B., as far as I know, was Neil Kerr. And Kerr deputed leadership of the I.R.A. to his son Tom. Neil was an oldish man and I think Tom did the administrative work in connection with the I.R.A. There was also in existence there at least one Company of Cumann na mBan. One of its officers was a Miss Doran, now Mrs. Tom Kerr.

My Company operated in the Bootle end of Liverpool and Tom Kerr was the officer in charge. But apart from that, as I lived convenient to Kerr, I assisted him in his work in connection with munitions.

I think the first operation of the I.R.A. was originally intended to be the destruction of Liverpool Docks. How that was to be effected I am not quite certain. I think the blowing up of gates connecting the Dock Basins with the River Mersey and thereby flooding the basins was the principal objective. I may have previously mentioned that the plans for the operation were discovered in Dublin during a raid on Mulcahy's house. So probably for that reason these plans were never put into effect. I could not say who drew up the plans. I think that Seán Plunkett had something to do with them.

Tom Kerr should be in a position to give more information on that point. On the abandoning of that plan it was decided to set fire to cotton warehouses and timber yards. The cotton warehouses extended along the whole dockside convenient to the docks and separated from them by the dock wall. They ran almost parallel to the docks. They were tall buildings with narrow floors and had iron doors. And since Liverpool was, I think, then headquarters distribution centre of raw cotton the warehouses were always fairly well stocked. I cannot say who drew up the plans for the burning of these warehouses but I think that the I.R.B. officers were responsible as they considered it would be a suitable alternative to the burning of the docks. According to the plans, entrance was to be effected to the warehouses by severing the locks with bolt cutters and carrying in quantities of paraffin oil to start the fires. The bolt cutters were at least 3' in length and they were purchased in England, presumably in small lots. They were distributed to small groups of members of the I.R.A. who were given the task of setting fire to the warehouses in different areas from the north of Liverpool to the south. Each group detailed for burning operations was about four or five strong. I cannot say how each party received detailed instructions regarding the job they were told to take. But in my case I was told that I was to take a party of four or five men to a warehouse in Bootle. I was instructed to force an entrance by cutting the lock on the main door and then start the fire with the aid of paraffin oil. I should say the paraffin oil was collected by the Cumann na mBan some days previously and stored at their houses from which it was collected by the different groups. The operation was timed for a certain hour on the night of the 27th November, 1920, which happened to be a Saturday night. I cannot say why Saturday night was selected but I believe there was some very good reason for it. Perhaps the strength of the police force might be reduced for week-ends and that people in general would be relaxing on this night. There would be a little more drinking taking place on Saturday night.

I cannot remember the name of the street in which the warehouse was situated which I was detailed to destroy. At about 8 p.m. on the night in question I took my group to the warehouse concerned. We cut the lock with the bolt cutters and effected an entrance. The procedure consisted in opening bales of cotton by severing the steel pins binding them. The cotton was scattered as much as possible and saturated with paraffin oil. This was done on several floors. It started from the top floor and each bale of scattered cotton was set alight. Our task was accomplished by the time we were leaving the place. And we got safely away before my particular warehouse was well alight. A similar effort at incendiarism extending over an area of over seven miles corresponding to and parallel to the docks, with varying degrees of success in each area, was made. In some places, where greater success was attained, fire brigades were kept busy for some days extinguishing fires. I could not give an approximate estimate of the value of the material that was destroyed. It was fairly considerable. This led to very marked police activity and a considerable number of arrests were made one night. These included Neil Kerr, his son Tom and Stephen Lannigan. There were many other arrests but these three were the most important from our point of view.

There was no one left to direct operations. So I was asked to come over to Dublin some days afterwards when matters had quietened down somewhat. I travelled over in the steamship "Blackrock" in fore-castle with the crew.

Arriving in Dublin I was put in touch with the late Colonel O'Reilly who took me to see Collins at his office in Mespil Road. As I entered the house I heard typewriting activity in the front room and Joe Reilly and I went into a room at the back where we chatted for some time awaiting the arrival of the 'Big Fellow' (Michael Collins). Miss Hoey, I think, was the name of the lady who owned this house. Eventually Michael Collins came in and he discussed the situation in Liverpool with me. Finally, he told me to carry on in

the place of Nail Kerr and the other leaders who had been arrested.

My talk with Collins filled me with enthusiasm to carry on with any work that was to be done or any work that he wished to have done. As I went down the steps of this house I was struck by the favourable situation of the house for such work.

I returned to Liverpool by the Hollyhead boat, making plans to take up the threads of the organisation where Neil Kerr left off, particularly in connection with communications and munitions. The organisation of seamen on board the boats working for us was intact, as they had taken no part in the burnings.

On Collins' directions I assumed control of the I.R.B. immediately I returned to Liverpool. There was no controversial arrangement about it. I just assumed control, principally in connection with the buying and dispatching of munitions. And I forget if I explained to other members of the I.R.B. there my new position, but I assumed they were aware of it on account of my visit to Dublin.

Tom Kerr had been acting O.C. of the I.R.A. units but, being a member of the I.R.B., that organisation was almost in direct control of the I.R.A. The next prominent officer associated with the I.R.A. after these arrests was a man called Early. He was second in command to me in connection with the I.R.A. But he had nothing to do with our work in connection with munitions. Later on I gave him authority to carry on as acting O.C., I.R.A. units over there. This relieved me of responsibility. I wanted to keep in the background as much as possible.

This work in connection with the boats and seamen had been confined to a few people and I felt that any further arrests would completely disrupt our communications. But I still continued to discuss plans regarding I.R.A. activity and visited general meetings of the units.

The police activity continued long after the burning of the warehouses. Private houses were raided. I left my regular digs to stay in another house for safety. And, whether for comfort or some other reason, I decided to return after a couple of nights to my former digs. This was fortunate for me because on the night of my return the house in which I had temporarily stayed was raided.

In the C.I.D. in Liverpool there were a number of Irishmen holding important positions. These were known to our organisation and they probably knew some of our leaders.

Before Kerr had been arrested he had been informed that Mr. De Valera was returning from the United States and that it had been arranged for him to travel as a stowaway on the Celtic. Kerr had kept this information very secret and when he was arrested he realised that there was nobody left to make plans for the arrival of Mr. De Valera in Liverpool. Kerr was confined in the local gaol where his wife was allowed to visit him occasionally. During her visits he managed to convey this information to her. So Mrs. Kerr informed me of the facts. My second Christian name is Gabriel but I was known to all in Liverpool as "Paddy". Neil Kerr knew that in my home I was called Gabriel. So when speaking to his wife in the presence of warders he referred to me as "Sister Gabriel" and Mrs. Kerr was quick enough to understand who he meant while the warder, no doubt, was under the impression that Neil was speaking of a nun.

About the time the facts were conveyed to me I think the Celtic was on the high seas and the responsibility of having such an important job thrown upon me when I was almost alone worried me considerably. However, I arranged a house for Mr. De Valera to stay in, that of Mrs. McCarthy, 27 Guildhall Road, Aintree - I think. Mrs. McCarthy was the widow of a former I.R.B. officer who was possibly the leader of the I.R.B. in Liverpool. She lived in this house with two sisters and all three went out to work every day. She was always eager to help by keeping I.R.A. leaders passing through Liverpool.

As far as I know she never got any monetary reward for her services. I think Cathal Brugha stayed there for a considerable time after 1916.

I also made arrangements about stowing away Mr. De Valera on the B. & I. boat from Liverpool to the North Wall, Dublin. When the Celtic arrived in Liverpool I waited for it to berth in its dock, previously having landed its passengers at the landing stage. It is customary when a liner has tied up at its dock for the casual members of the crew to leave for their homes. I waited at the dock knowing that one of our men, Dick O'Neill, was on board. He eventually came down the gangway and I waited amongst the crowd of officials and spectators who are usually present at the berthing of a big liner. So I managed to attract his attention as he mingled with the crowd. He told me not to hang around or stay about as British detectives were on board and that they had him under observation. I forget the gist of the conversation after that and what plans were made for the taking off of Mr. De Valera. However, there was an Englishman on board called Billy Humphreys. This man had for some time been associated with our men on board. He had, apparently, played a very active part during the voyage in looking after Mr. De Valera since O'Neill had been kept under observation by the detectives. My assumption is that when O'Neill left the boat the detectives gave up the search for De Valera, coming to the conclusion that he was not on board. Later on, when the coast was clear, Humphreys brought Mr. De Valera ashore and took him home to his house. He kept him there for the night. But before retiring they smeared butter on the bolts of the backdoor so that they could be opened noiselessly if the house was raided during the night. Next day Mr. De Valera was conveyed to the house of Mrs. McCarthy in Guildhall Road, Aintree. There I contacted him. We chatted about things in general. He told me he was glad to see a young man in charge in Liverpool. And he told me all about the American system of elections for President which I did not follow very clearly at the time.

Arrangements had been made to have De Valera brought to Dublin on the Lady Carlow in charge of a mate by the name of Hackett. We had not used Hackett up to this for our other work and I think he had been contacted in Dublin for this particular job because he was the only man in that service who had any position of authority on board and who, presumably, had a comfortable cabin for 'first-class' passengers.

In conveying Mr. De Valera down to the boat we were accompanied by an old member of the I.R.B. called John Fitzgerald. We travelled by tram and bus across the city. When going down to the boat I asked Mr. Fitzgerald to accompany the Chief. I did this as a tribute to Fitzgerald, giving him this honour, because he had been an older worker in the Movement than I. I walked a few paces behind them and I remember Mr. De Valera wearing a rather short raincoat. He looked anything but a sailor and he could not be disguised very effectively as a sailor. We delivered him aboard anyway without any misadventure and left him in the safe keeping of the mate - Mr. Hackett. I understand that preparations for his arrival at the North Wall were fairly elaborate and I learned that on his arrival he had breakfast at Fleming's hotel where he was welcomed by Michael Collins.

I should have mentioned that in the course of my conversation with Mr. De Valera at Mrs. McCarthy's house he told me that his principal worry of being arrested on English soil was that the British authorities might suggest that he had really come there to try to open up negotiations for a settlement.

Following the arrests of leaders such as Neill Kerr we proceeded to reorganise our purchase for munitions organisation. Kerr and his associates, meanwhile, were undergoing trial in Liverpool and were, of course, 'written-off' and we did not expect to see them for some time.

Somewhere around this time Mellows came into the picture as Director of Purchases. This would be sometime in the beginning of

1921. He had returned from the United States, as far as I remember, in the autumn of 1920. Somebody made that point a matter of importance. The reason I think it was at that time is that if it had been after Kerr's arrest I would probably have brought him down to the boat myself as a stowaway across to Dublin.

After Mellowe's appointment as Director of Purchases he paid us numerous visits from time to time in the course of his visits to different centres in England. But I was still under Collins' department by virtue of the I.R.B. organisation. There was a little overlapping there. Collins controlled everything by virtue of the I.R.B. and Mellowes controlled Purchases by virtue of his position on G.H.Q. staff. However, I managed to obey the orders of both.

About this time I was deputed to select an assistant to help me with the work in connection with munitions. This was a very big work. My first assistant was a man called Hogan who was an ex-seaman and a very old worker in Irish underground organisations. Later on a more permanent appointment was that of Tim O'Sullivan, formerly of Farranfore, County Kerry. Tim, as a wholetime assistant, was a great help. He lived convenient to the docks and knew most of the seamen on the boats and he could visit one at a moment's notice. Occasionally he would get the assistance of another Irishman who lived locally called Paddy Walsh to help him to carry munitions to a Dublin boat prior to sailing. But otherwise he and I were able to manage between us. This meant that almost all activity in connection with the supplies was confined to ourselves and we rarely had to call on other members of the I.R.B., so that a considerable number of people in the Volunteers did not know that such an organisation was in existence at all.

I think about this time we started to improve business both in the number of sources and frequency of shipments.

Prior to Sullivan's appointment, which was at the suggestion of Liam Mellowes, - I should say here in parenthesis - I was in the habit

of visiting the liners myself to collect any parcels, guns or munitions. One such visit to the Celtic, I remember, was connected with the first Thompson guns which came into Ireland - numbering seven. They came from New York in the care of Billy Humphreys, the man who was responsible for De Valera's safe journey. He had a prominent position on board as a lamp trimmer and appeared to be entitled to a small cabin. This was very convenient from the point of view of secrecy. But with other members of the men working for us on ships we would never meet in privacy except ashore.

Thompson guns were rather awkward and bulky and, as I have previously recorded, we later decided to transfer them direct to the Dublin boats without taking them out of the dock at all. O'Sullivan was of wonderful assistance. He always knew when any particular boat had arrived or was soon due to sail. He was a great help in travelling occasionally to other English centres to convey messages or perhaps to collect parcels of guns or ammunition.

Expenses in connection with the purchase of munitions were operated by me. On several occasions I remember having £500 notes at my disposal. I received notes of very large denominations from G.H.Q. I remember the difficulty of changing these into ones of smaller denominations and the danger of bringing suspicion on myself by going into the Bank with notes of such large denomination. So I was accustomed to put them through a sympathiser called James Moran of Scotland Road, Liverpool, who had something to do with an Insurance organisation.

We never possessed a motor car in Liverpool. I did not know how to drive one at the time. This was a handicap as it meant that we had frequent rail journeys with fairly heavy and awkward parcels. Other centres occasionally were able to borrow cars from business people of Irish extraction. It may be that such sympathetic businessmen existed in Liverpool. I never came across any of them. Nearly all the workers in Liverpool were of working-class origin.

As far as I remember an occasional car came from Newcastle-on-Tyne, from Manchester and from Glasgow. On one occasion an old Ford car arrived from Manchester and I remember we were being driven someplace through Liverpool in it when the engine stopped. We were not able to start the car - I think owing to the absence of a starting handle. So we were trying to start the car along the street when an Orange procession came into view. Members of this procession very kindly gave us a push until we got started.

Supplies from Glasgow when I took over command continued to come by rail and for this purpose we purchased a trunk capable of taking rifles. There was in Liverpool at this time a man called Paddy Supple who had taken part in the 1916 Rising. Paddy used to travel up to Glasgow with this huge trunk as luggage, have it filled there with anything available in the line of munitions and return in a couple of days.

Sometime early in 1921 we opened a new source of supply in Birmingham. A man called Cunningham called to my digs one morning. He had just arrived from Dublin where somebody had put him in touch with G.H.Q. So he was directed to report to me in Liverpool. He was in touch with one or two gunsmiths in Birmingham and was able to get unlimited supplies of brass cartridges which, I understand, were filled with buckshot over in Ireland. He was also able to get some boxes of gunpowder and occasional revolvers and ammunition. He organised a small Company of the I.R.A. in that area and I think their principal activity was in connection with munitions. On one occasion he had a very successful raid on a public school - the Oratory School - which I think was the famous Catholic school established by Newman. A man working in this school was of Irish birth and was in touch with the organisation. He arranged to admit Cunningham and his associates one night to the drill hall attached to this school where there were about 20 Lee Enfields stored. They unscrewed the stocks of these rifles and took the lot away with them. These were later conveyed to me in Liverpool from where I had them transferred to Dublin.

Apart from procuring arms and ammunition there were other items of necessity for carrying on the struggle at home, and a request reached me from G.H.Q. to try to procure crucibles for them. These, I understand, were used in the production and manufacture of bombs.

One of our men in Liverpool named Horan had some experience of foundry work I think. So in company with him I visited firms in Liverpool which dealt with such productions. We found the Englishman always ready to do business. And the handing over of two or three crucibles, if it did give rise to any suspicion, at a reasonable profit, did not worry the firm in question. I think we eventually procured them from a firm called Dowlton Brothers. Acquiring these, however, did not give us much trouble and we brought them down to the Nelson Dock for shipment in the ordinary way as goods through the B. & I. Company. One bright official there did query their proposed use and held us up for some time. Eventually and suddenly he withdrew his opposition and we were allowed to ship them to some business firm in Dublin. They arrived safely at their destination.

Another item of importance was grenade springs. The staff officer in charge of munitions at the time (Seán Russell) sent us a sample of a grenade spring which he wished us to procure in large quantities. These we eventually procured in Birmingham.

Sometime early in 1921 I accidentally got a bullet in my thigh. I was in the habit of carrying a loaded .32 revolver. One evening I called to a house where I had been informed there were a few revolvers awaiting me. One of the revolvers there was similar to the one I was carrying and I placed it in my pocket. I had a habit of pulling the trigger of revolvers - maybe from sheer habit or to test their mechanism. Unfortunately I pulled the trigger of this one. It being the wrong revolver I shot myself in the upper part of the right thigh. Fortunately at such close range the discharge did not penetrate so deeply and caused no bone damage. The bullet, however, lodged fairly deeply in the muscles of my thigh. We got in touch with Dr. O'Keeffe of St. Helen's, who came down to Liverpool and took me to Providence Hospital in St. Helen's where he had me x-rayed.

On the following day, I think, the bullet was extracted. The incident was not reported to the police authorities. Collins sent over a message to get me out of the hospital immediately. He did not realise that the staff in the hospital were friendly, including the nuns and doctors. I was there for about a fortnight.

During this time I used to make a lot of rail trips to the different centres supplying Liverpool. Most of these have already been noted. I paid visits to Irish centres endeavouring to organise centres for collecting munitions. I made fairly frequent trips to Dublin. On one occasion I remember taking with me dispatches which had arrived the previous day from America. This trip was unnecessary and indiscreet. I remember on this occasion arriving at Dúnlaoghaire with the dispatches tied round my waist with cord and seeing Auxiliaries on the Pier as the boat arrived. I had a vague idea, should any bother arise, of posing as an Insurance Agent. But, as far as I can recollect, I had no papers to establish my identity as such. However, I was not held up on any occasion; although on these visits I usually stayed at Fleming's Hotel, Gardiner's Place, and I was often the only boarder in the hotel. The place was frequently raided. I generally reported to Michael Collins on these visits, having first made contact with Colonel O'Reilly. I reported to him in a general way, usually about the conditions generally in England. Collins would give me special instructions when he wanted anything special done. I remember on one occasion he invited me to lunch with him at Batt O'Connor's house in No. 1, Brendan Road, Donnybrook. I think at that time this house was being used by him as his office because I heard the usual clack of typewriters in the front room, as I entered the house.

At the time I joined the I.R.B. organisation there were about four circles in existence on the Mersey-side. I think it was a direct successor to the Fenian organisation and many of the older men, who were members of the I.R.B., had some direct contact with Fenianism in their youth and with Fenian leaders in England when the bombing activities formed the physical force effort of that period.

When I joined the I.R.B. then, the Volunteer units were established and possibly had displaced that organisation in physical force activities. As an organisation it still controlled the Volunteers, and perhaps other less militant organisations, through its connection with G.H.Q. My impression during my period of membership was that it was composed mostly of old people who had become, in some cases, guileless old men who did not wish to give up their power. We carried on our periodical meetings of circles. But the great difficulty was to have something to talk about at these meetings. They knew, of course, that the traffic in arms was going on, but no problems ever arose in that connection to merit a discussion and the Volunteer organisation was able to solve its own problems. However, we kept up the routine of our meetings. But apart from that activity its power as a secret organisation was very much on the decline.

Personally I was glad to use the I.R.B. organisation and its connection with Dublin to control the Volunteers.

Soon after I had acquired an assistant in 1921 we shifted our main activities in connection with dumps as near as possible to the Nelson Dock where most of the Irish boats berthed. In that neighbourhood lived a man called Hughie Morris who possessed a little corner shop. I think it was in a street called Boundary Street. Hughie lived there with his wife and two sons, one of whom was a steward on a boat to Sligo - the "Kircaldy". But I think I mentioned that boat already in connection with the Sligo run. It was not a very progressive type of shop - a few empty cigarette cartons in the windows. And Mrs, Morris herself did all the work behind the counter. We rented a little room behind this shop for our stores. The rent was a nominal one and would not have compensated Morris or his wife if it had ever been discovered by the police authorities. The little shop in the front served as a cloak for the frequent passing in and out - perhaps of strangers. From the point of view

of secrecy I think it was an additional safeguard because it saved us the inconvenience of going into private houses where we could not be certain of the discretion of the occupants. From this step-up we had a convenient run to the boats in the neighbourhood. I remember one night, incidentally, we had a surprise visit of a car from London. Apparently some sympathiser had bought a car in London and was taking it over to Ireland via Liverpool. The organisation in London asked the driver to take along some parcels of revolver ammunition and deliver them to us in Liverpool. The car arrived somewhere about midnight at my lodgings and I accompanied it down to the house of Mr. Morris. As I was passing in the parcels to Tim O'Sullivan through the doorway a policeman suddenly appeared just as the last parcel was handed in. O'Sullivan, on seeing him arriving, closed the door and remained inside. He questioned us about the presence of the car in that neighbourhood in the small hours of the morning and summoned his neighbouring policeman by blowing his whistle. Apparently he was looking for stolen cars and this being a respectable-looking one in not so respectable a neighbourhood aroused his suspicions. The driver was able to prove that the car was his property and the police eventually seemed satisfied, and so we were all happy. Morris' place continued to be used as a dump for an indefinite period. Very often stuff did not come direct to the house of Mrs. Morris. We had several addresses to which it was directed and from there transferred to the dump at Mrs. Morris' place. To these other dumps, which were businesses in a small way, we had boxes of material sometimes sent, particularly from Birmingham. We found this convenient and a fairly safe method of having stuff despatched. And it was not until our activities were almost finished up in connection with arms' traffic that any suspicion was ever directed towards that method of forwarding supplies.

I have referred to St. Helen's as being a very good source of explosive material. And I should record the occurrence of one episode there which produced quite an exceptionally good result. During a coal strike our men, of course, were unable to have access to

the usual sources of material and decided on raiding the depots for explosives. These depots (I forget the official name for them) were, of course, situated outside the mines and on a particular night, raids were made in various areas and a considerable quantity of gelnite and detonators removed from them. It was all conveyed to us in Liverpool by St. Helen's Volunteer Company. No suspicion arose of any I.R.A. activity in connection with that event because the coal strikers in many areas raided these depots in order to obtain explosives for working small surface deposits of coal for their own use, and for their families. The local Volunteer Company was well aware of this and took advantage of the position. This was one of our biggest shipments of explosives. This coup was organised by the local I.R.A. leader - McDonagh, who is now dead. I gave details of this venture in a despatch to Collins, and he expressed great pleasure at our success.

I remember when Liam Mellowes took over as Director of Purchases we went up to visit Paddy O'Donoghue in Manchester. Liam, apparently, wanted to organise things in a thorough manner and during each day he was trying to formulate a code, particularly with reference to munitions. He started off making a few suggestions but we never got anywhere with the project. O'Donoghue was not enthusiastic about changing his system. He said as things had gone so well to date there was no necessity to introduce any secret code which might complicate things. O'Donoghue's method of communicating with me was through a messenger. O'Donoghue was arrested early in 1921.

The North of England, including Scotland had representation on the Supreme Council of the I.R.B. Previous to my period of office I think our representative was Neil Kerr. After his arrest at a meeting of the heads of I.R.B. Circles I was appointed to represent the North of England on the Supreme Council. Subsequent to this election I had a certain amount of friction with some of

the older leading members of the I.R.B. Without going into details the principal complaint was that I was not taking them into my confidence. Perhaps I was indiscreet in not keeping them on my hands but their assistance was unnecessary as far as activities in connection with arms were concerned and they were too old for military operations. We continued to have our meetings in the I.R.B. organisation and perhaps they did feel they were being ignored. However, later on some of them decided, probably amongst themselves, that my election was irregular. They apparently now regretted their choice. About this time I was summoned to a meeting of the I.R.B. Supreme Council in Barry's Hotel. Before the meeting I sought an interview with Collins and put the situation before him. I told him that I would prefer not to attend the meeting under the circumstances. I was rather over-conscientious then and my abstention was I think unnecessary. Collins agreed with my line of action.

Early in 1921 Collins intimated that he was very interested in having an I.R.A. officer from Dublin being a stowaway to New York, and asked me to arrange a berth for a particular passenger. He didn't mention the name of this individual but from his conversation and enquiries about facilities he appeared to place much importance on this proposed stowaway. As I said he didn't give the name but my impression at the time was that it was Collins himself. I cannot recall any particular reason for basing this impression. I can only say now that my impression at the time was that it was Collins himself. Years later somebody suggested it was Dan Breen. I cannot say what is the source of that suggestion and if it was reliable. I made arrangements with our men on the S.S. Baltic. At that time there was a boatswain on the Baltic who though not active on our behalf had some vague sympathy with us. I think now not sufficient to take any risks. I remember mentioning Collins' name to him after some previous discussion about being a stowaway. On hearing the name of Collins he appeared to show unwillingness to involve

himself any further in the matter. I think that incident in itself bears out my impression that it was Collins himself was in question. As far as I remember this boatswain's refusal to participate had no connection with the fact that the contemplated passage was not availed of. The person for whom arrangements were being made didn't travel. In any case the assistance of the boatswain was not indispensable except with a view to providing more comfort for a very particular passenger.

I should mention that men working on the Trans-Atlantic boats always received payment for any risk they ran even though they were Irishmen. The payment was not, however, in proportion to the risks taken. This custom was not started by me, and it may have been started to compensate them for any expenditure incurred in connection with the work.

With regard to communications with the U.S.A., Mr. de Valera on one occasion suggested that we should not rely completely on Liverpool and asked me to come over to Dublin to discuss the question of opening up some other line of communications such as Southampton. I remember cycling with himself and Liam Mellows out to Humphries of Anglesea Road, where we had a discussion on the matter. I cannot recall the details of this discussion but he repeated his wishes that he would like to see communications opened up between Southampton and New York. On returning to Liverpool I thought over these suggestions. I presumed that it would be difficult to do this as I imagined that the Irish population in Southampton would not be very great. I hadn't heard of any Irish organisation through which we could contact somebody there. Later I sent a man called Supple down there to make enquiries but this didn't lead to anything.

There was no cessation of activity in connection with arms purchases during the Truce. I continued to be supplied with funds from Dublin and to receive orders from Collins and Mellows. Even up to and during the period of the negotiations in London, Collins

showed interest in the purchase of ammunition. My activity on that work did not cease until the beginning of 1922.

I remember on one occasion a messenger arrived from London to see me. He had a letter written by Collins, who was himself in London in connection with the negotiations with the British, to Neil Kerr's wife who was to contact me. Actually I have that letter myself now. This man who arrived from London during the period of negotiations was an officer in the British Army. I should mention that during some previous talks with Collins he expressed some interest in the purchase of some such weapon as a Trench Mortar but my knowledge of such weapons then was very vague but I got the impression perhaps from our conversation (or perhaps it is more than an impression) that the object of acquiring such a piece of ordnance was to lob some shells on Dublin Castle. This officer who arrived in Liverpool to see me had some official duties in connection with a Military Camp in Aintree. I remember meeting him and proceeding to this Camp. We walked down a long avenue on both sides of which were collections of field guns of all sizes. I remember particularly that he was terribly nervous during our walk through the camp. I can quite understand and excuse his nervousness because he had never met me before and didn't know whether I was known to police authorities or not. And also he was a member of the British armed forces on which depended his livelihood. This visit never led to any results in the acquiring of a trench mortar. I think that the change on the political situation at home following the Treaty terminated the need for this course of action.

The major I.R.A. action was the Warehouse fires previously referred to. After that the principal efforts at incendiarism consisted of attempts to burn farmhouses or rather the out-offices and haysheds etc. in the area surrounding Liverpool, and the dislocation of telephone services by cutting telephone wires. This was not such an easy job as might be imagined, having regard to police supervision

and investigation. I could not say definitely how many efforts at burning of farmhouses were made. I should say that there were four or five occasions on which farms on both sides of the Mersey were attacked and burned. The purpose of these burnings was as a retaliation for the terrorism that existed at home in Ireland. The farms selected were fairly extensive. This resulted in increased police activity and organised defence on the part of the farmers. On one occasion, I think, one of our men was slightly wounded and he was arrested while engaged on this work.

As regards the wire-cutting, I cannot remember how many of such episodes were attempted. Actually it was not the farmhouses themselves we burned but the outhouses and stacks of hay and corn. There were occasional arrests due to the increased police activity following these incidents. I think Early, who was in charge of Volunteers and who was assisting me in that department, was one of the first victims and he was succeeded by a man called Fleming.

There was a visit I should note in connection with this activity from Rory O'Connor. I had a discussion with himself and Fleming on the subject of future activities of a similar nature. I think he wanted to draw our attention to similar activities on the ships in the Port but I thought that would interfere with our activities in respect of arms. I do not remember the result of our enquiries or our discussions with him. But I think we just did what we could or what appeared feasible to us. I had been supplied with a list of addresses of Black & Tans serving in Ireland, who were from Liverpool, by Collins. I do not remember getting any instructions but I presumed that he agreed with our ensuing activities in trying to burn the homes of these people. I cannot say how successful this may have been. But all the addresses given were visited and fires started. I cannot remember the details concerning these burnings. We may have told the occupants of the houses concerned why we were engaged in incendiarism. These activities, I think, represented the sum total

of military operations on the part of the local I.R.A. units in Liverpool.

As I have already stated, police activity continued and fairly numerous arrests were made. I should mention here that one of our men by the name of Brady was arrested following one of those farm fires. I remember his room-mate, a man called Byrne, was also arrested at the site of one of these fires. In expectation of a police raid, Brady, when he got home transferred any weapons he had to the luggage of the room-mate and removed all trace of suspicion from his own person. The police raid took place later that night. On Brady's release later on he wrote a book entitled, I think, "Secret Service in England" or a similar title. I read this book and except for a certain knowledge of the Movement it was, for the most part, a misrepresentation of fact and an exaggeration of his own personal part in connection with the Liverpool activities. I refer to this publication principally because it has already been quoted by responsible writers such as Dorothy McArdle.

One incident I have in my notes was the raiding of lodging houses patronised by immigrants from Ireland. The emigration of young men from Ireland during the Black & Tan period was very much resented, it being implied that they should stay at home to take part in the fight. One raid was carried out on lodging houses and the intending emigrants relieved of their passports. This, I fear, merely embarrassed intending emigrants as the emigrant authorities supplied them with fresh documents later on. But we hoped that the prominence, if any, given to this might deter further intending emigrants.

The foregoing gives an outline of the activities of the Volunteers in this period.

About the period of February, 1922, there were some prisoners in Derry gaol who had been sentenced to be hanged. I think Collins had made protests to Sir James Craig and his colleagues in connection

with these impending executions. But these overtures or protests were unavailing. I don't know who suggested the shooting of the two hangmen who were to be employed in the executions in Derry gaol but Collins appeared to think the idea a good one. I remember discussing the matter with him in the Gresham Hotel. In the course of our conversation I referred to the fact that Pa Murray from Cork was over in Liverpool at the time and would give us a hand in carrying out these executions of the hangmen. (Murray had been a frequent visitor in Liverpool and I think was on the look-out for munitions for his unit in Cork City). This unfortunate remark of mine was highly irritating to Collins (I could not say why) who thereupon insisted on my taking over with me two men from the Dublin area, namely Joe Dolan and Charlie Byrne. I remember travelling on the boat from Dunlaoghaire to Hollyhead in company with these two men. I cannot recollect details after our arrival. I had previously made inquiries about the locations of the two hangmen, Ellis and Willis. Ellis lived convenient enough in Rochdale near Manchester and Willis lived in a place more difficult of access - Burslem. This was some distance from Birmingham and was near Stoke. A photograph of Willis and Ellis with a former colleague called Pierpoint hangs in the 'snug' of a public house in Rochdale. We visited this public house and, as far as I remember, made ourselves familiar with the appearances of these gentlemen. I cannot recollect the further details in connection with this effort but I remember that one party was to go to Rochdale and the other to Burslem. We boarded a car in St. Helen's for the Burslem journey. The car, unfortunately, broke down. The Rochdale party arrived at their destination and visited Mr. Ellis's house but the latter was not available, although they waited some time. It later transpired that both the hangmen had already left for Belfast. Anyway it was just as well that these men were not eliminated as the Derry executions were not carried out. I should like to record the attitude and apparent lack of concern of the two Dublin men whom Collins sent over with us. As far as I know they had never been in

England and they had no knowledge of the difficulties and dangers there in connection with the carrying out of such a mission. But this did not seem to worry them. They were completely unconcerned on the trip over. Perhaps I should also note that Collins' order to me to take them along was given in a fit of mild temper.

I cannot give very much assistance in connection with the mystery of the Henry Wilson shooting in London. I had met Dunne sometime previously in Liverpool but no discussion then relative to that matter came up. I remember on the occasion of a visit to Sam Maguire in London we were standing outside Mooney's public house in Holborn when I saw Maguire in close conversation with a man of, I think, medium build. This man turned out to be O'Sullivan and Maguire remarked to me, "This fellow is very keen on shooting Wilson". Wilson was subsequently shot and the two men concerned in his shooting were Dunne and O'Sullivan.

As regards the visit of Dunne to Liverpool, he came in company with Seán Flood of Dublin. He had been made O/C. of Britain, I think, at some period, the date of which I cannot recall. It was rather late during the Black & Tan struggle and I do remember that he had no part in the direction or planning of any of the I.R.A. activities around Liverpool and certainly no connection with the purchase of munitions. I make this observation because Pierce Beaslai in his "Life of Michael Collins" gives him a certain amount of credit and responsibility in directing I.R.A. activity in these areas.

We had Seán McGarry over for a while previous to the Truce. He was sent over to organise or reorganise the I.R.B. in England and Scotland. He did some routine work in connection with that organisation but no effort could have put life into that defunct organisation. Sean gave up in despair.

One of our stowaways was a man by the name of Dan Donovan, a member of one of the Cork I.R.A. units - I think he belonged to Cork No. 1 Brigade. He was being sent out to New York by his unit with

another comrade travelling by a different route to execute an informer from the Cork area who had been spirited away by the British and whom the I.R.A. had traced to that city. Donovan approached me in Liverpool under what circumstances I cannot recall. But he was not sent by anyone of authority in Dublin to me. He was fairly well supplied with bonds in the hope of travelling as an ordinary passenger. I remember going with him to the American Consul's Office to get a visa. In this we were unsuccessful. About that period it was difficult to obtain a visa. His appearance belied the fact that he was a stranger. However, the visa was refused and we decided that he should travel as a stowaway. This was later accomplished on the S.S. Baltic. We contacted a couple of the crew and made the necessary arrangements. Some months later Donovan returned via Liverpool - by what manner I cannot recall - but I think it was in the way that he went out to New York. He told me that they located their man and tried to execute him but evidently they only succeeded in wounding him. So the informer was later patched up in a New York Hospital. I recall Donovan remarking that there were over 1,000 cars in the St. Patrick's Day Parade in New York but that they were unable to procure one of them.

I had up to the beginning of 1922 managed to avoid the suspicions of the police authorities and the same applies to other active members of our organisation. I think that during that period in Liverpool the suspicions of the authorities had been directed for a long time towards the local political leaders and those who took part in public meetings. The authorities seemed to think that some of those fiery orators must be the leaders of other sections of Irish activity, at least on the Mersey-side. About the spring of 1922 a detective came to live on my road a few doors away from me. I knew him to see and met him at least on one occasion as I walked along the road but did not betray any concern at his appearance in our neighbourhood. About this time I had been in touch with Jim Cunningham, our agent in Birmingham, about a raid on a local munition dump. This munition dump was really a factory where .303 cartridges were being broken down to extract the brass. It was, apparently, surplus after the world war. Cunningham told me what

was being done there. Up to about now we had been getting some small irregular supplies from the factory by one of the workers. The worker was an Englishman and it was said he was a Communist. I cannot recall how much we were getting but Cunningham thought we should go in ourselves in force and get a good haul. So I went down to help him in this effort. We stayed at the house of an Irishman called Staunton. I cannot remember how far we had to travel to this factory which was situated in a place called Haymill. We planned to proceed to it in pairs at intervals of a few minutes. Cunningham and some other man had arranged to be first on the job to have the gate open to admit the remaining members of the raiding party as they arrived. The time of our arrival would be about 8 o'clock in the evening. I remember it was dark so it must have been fairly early in the year. The approach to this factory was off a main thoroughfare and the factory itself was apparently divided into two parts, one on either side of the road which led to it. As we came near the grounds of the factory I thought I saw figures moving on one side of the road in an extension of this factory but did not pay any attention to the fact. So I proceeded towards the gate of the main portion of the factory on the other side of the road. I went up to the gate and knocked, calling "Jim" in a low voice. According to our pre-arranged plans Jim should have been there to admit us. Instead, I heard the noise of what sounded like boxes being hammered inside in the grounds of the factory. I then began to suspect that everything was not as it should be and I told my companion to leave the gate and walk along the road to await developments. A few minutes afterwards a figure climbed up over the gate and ran up the road in the opposite direction. This person appeared to be wearing a white armlet. I was certain now that something was wrong. My companion and I retraced our steps towards the main thoroughfare and we noticed then that there were uniformed policemen distributed at intervals along the road. We talked about current topics in our best English accents so as not to attract

suspicion. We were allowed to pass through unmolested.

Apparently the police had learned of the intended raid and had laid a trap for us. Cunningham, being the first to arrive, was immediately removed. The detectives had been supplied with white armlets in order to distinguish them from raiders. The noise made with the boxes was to give us the impression that Cunningham and his friends inside were busy breaking open boxes of ammunition.

I returned to Staunton's house where Cunningham boarded. I was accompanied by a local member of the I.R.A. and we both foolishly decided to remain there for the night. At about 2 o'clock in the morning the house was raided by detectives and we were brought down stairs for interrogation. This was the first time I was questioned by police and I was very nervous. They questioned us about our business in Birmingham and about our occupations. I said that I was a labouring man and one of the detectives informed me that I did not look like one. In further explanation I said that my father was a well-to-do shopkeeper in the West of Ireland, that I had run away from home and labouring was the only work I could get to do. The detectives looked me all over and none of them was unpleasant but one of them said, "You are lucky you are not with your friend Jim tonight" (meaning Cunningham). So they allowed us to return to our room. I remained in Birmingham I think the following day and night but I left Staunton's house early in the morning. This was fortunate because I understand the detectives returned again looking for me. My first thought was to obtain legal help for Cunningham and his associates in the trial which I knew would ensue. I could not say how many were arrested with Cunningham at the factory. In the case of legal defence in the event of charges being preferred, our policy was to approach the Irish Self Determination League for the necessary funds. This was an extensive Irish organisation and one of its activities consisted in collecting money for the Irish Government at home. I decided to go down to London in connection with this matter and to interview Art O'Brien who was chairman of that organisation. The necessary arrangements were

made with him and I then visited Sam Maguire previously referred to. Previous to my arrival there a man called Cremin from Dublin passed through London on his way to Liverpool to see me. I wired to my assistant, Tim Sullivan, in Liverpool, to hold Cremin until my return and I awaited a reply from Liverpool. But although I waited until the last train from London this reply did not arrive. I did not wait any longer and proceeded to Liverpool by a late train. I took the ferry across the river and on reaching Liverpool I proceeded to walk to my lodgings a distance of about three or four miles. After about a mile or so I became less desirous for a long walk and hailed a taxi which took me the remainder of the journey. On arriving at my lodgings at about 12.30 a.m. I met my landlady coming downstairs in a state of great agitation and she informed me that detectives had raided the house. They had arrived at 4 a.m. the previous morning and had only left the house about a quarter of an hour before my arrival. They had thus waited for over 20 hours in expectation of my returning. Then they decided to return to their own homes. The detective who lived on our road told my landlady that when I returned if she would just go up to his door and knock he would understand what the signal meant. I need not say that she had no intention of doing so. I did not remain in the house that night but proceeded to the house of a local Irish couple where I stayed for the remainder of the night. In the raiding the detectives took some documents of unimportance and some money. Years later the money was returned to my solicitor in Dublin. During my absence a man called Kirwan, a teacher in a secondary school in Yorkshire, had called with a letter of introduction. The detectives found this letter and later arrested Kirwan and had him embroiled in a general charge of conspiracy.

For some weeks after this I remained in the house of Mrs. McCarthy of Aintree and prepared to leave for Dublin, having reorganised the Purchase Section of the I.R.A. This was

undertaken by the then O/C. of Liverpool I.R.A., Denis Fleming, and a man called Curran. Some weeks later I travelled in the fore-castle of "The Blackrock" to Dublin believing that this was my final break with Liverpool. I realised that it would be impossible to be of any further use there on account of my coming under suspicion of the police authorities. The trial of the men arrested in Birmingham took place sometime later. I think they were allowed out on bail and I lost further contact with them.

I would like to stress the fact that Collins' attitude up to the Treaty was that of preparedness for continuation of the fight. He gave me that impression as far as we were concerned in the purchase of munitions and in the matter of secrecy.

I have given to the best of my recollection a full account of my activities in Liverpool. If I have omitted any matter of importance it must be attributed to memory. I should like to add that when I took over charge in Liverpool the national effort had almost become popular in comparison with the time when my predecessors there, namely Neil Kerr and his comrades, had been working very much alone previous to 1916 and the immediate years following the Insurrection. A considerable number of men from the Merseyside were encamped in Kimmage Camp prior to the Insurrection and took part in it.

Signed: *P.G. Daly*
(P.G. Daly)

Date: 21. 3. '53
21.3.53

Witness: *W. Ivory*
(W. Ivory) Comd't.

