ROINN COSANTA.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 821

Witness

Frank Henderson,
83 Mobhi Road,
Glasnevin,
Dublin.

Identity.

Capt. 'F' Company, 2nd Batt'n. Dublin Brigade,
Irish Volunteers, 1916;
Comd't. same Company, 1918;
Adjutant Dublin Brigade, 1921.

Subject.

2nd Battalion, Dublin Brigade, 1917-1921.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil

File No. S.169

Form B.S.M. 2

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83, Mobhi Road,
Glasnevin, Dublin.

The work of rebuilding the Irish Volunteers began immediately after the return home of the men who had been interned at Frongoch. It was arranged in Dublin that the Companies would come together as soon as the men had spent Christmas with their families. In Dublin we found that Cathal Brugha was at the head of affairs, and that a skeleton organisation had been formed of the men who had evaded arrest and of those who had been released in the summer and autumn of 1916. Cathal Brugha had been so severely wounded during the fighting in the South Dublin Union that the British authorities had released him believing him to be physically incapable of further activities. As soon as he found himself at freedom he began the task of gathering together the broken threads of organisation.

In the Fairview-Drumcondra-Clontarf area of the 2nd Battalion we found that, in conjunction with the members of the local Company of Cumann na mBan, the men who were free had engaged a hall for the Volunteers and Cumann na mBan to assemble in. The proprietor was told that the hall was needed for the teaching of Irish dancing and language classes. Céilidhthe were, indeed, held there but the hall served as the headquarters of B, D, E and F Companies (C Company used Tara Hall in Gloucester St. - now Seán MacDiarmada Street). Soon it became the 2nd Battalion Headquarters and under its roof the organisation of that Battalion was re-established on a solid footing. The hall was used for this purpose until it was raided by a large force of Dublin Metropolitan Police, probably in the early part of 1919.

The "Clonliffe Hall", as the Volunteers called it, was very suitably situated for Volunteer purposes. It was approached by a tree-lined avenue about 70 yards long - the avenue leading to Clonliffe Diocesan College on the north side of Clonliffe Road near the Drumcondra end of that road. Iron railings, 8 or 9 feet high, had been erected many years previously at the point on Clonliffe Road where the avenue began. A large gate to admit vehicles and two small gates for pedestrians were part of this structure but they were always open. At the far end of the avenue was the entrance gate to the College, but a turn to the right brought one through a short passage about 30 yards in length on the right side of which were a few small cottages. At the end of the passage was the entrance gate of the hall, which was probably a stable originally. It was two storeys high. The building was about 30 yards long by 12/15 ft. wide, and had a concrete floor at ground level. A fair-sized partitioned-off compartment was at the far end. In this compartment was a stairs leading to the upper floor which contained 4 timber-partitioned compartments. It was ideally constructed for our purpose.

As soon as we came together in "Clonliffe Hall" there began in the Companies of the 2nd Battalion - as there began likewise in the other Dublin Battalion areas - a period of unremitting intensive organising, training and planning which did not cease until the Truce in July 1921 and which continued during the Truce (and for those of us who took part in the Civil War until the Cease Fire Order in April 1923). It was hard, tedious work, but a spirit of great devotion and self-sacrifice, together with faith in the righteousness of the cause, succeeded in knitting the members of the Battalion together in a disciplined and trained force which, when the time came for action, played an

efficient part in breaking down foreign domination in the country.

I took command of my old Company, F. Company of the 2nd. Battalion. Oscar Traynor, 1st Lieutenant of the same Company, released from Frongoch at Christmas, 1916, also resumed his post. Patrick E. Sweeney, 2nd Lieutenant, had been sentenced to penal servitude for his part in the fighting at Jacob's and consequently did not take a part in the re-organisation until his release in June 1917. His place was temporarily filled. The sections were reformed, N. C. O's appointed and a Company Council formed. The Company Council consisted of the officers, Company Adjutant, Company Quarter Master and Section Commanders. The Company Captain presided at meetings of the Company Council. At these meetings, he passed along G. H. Q. orders which had come down to him via Brigade and Battalion Councils. He also arranged for parades, special services, training (including outdoor training suitable for small, mobile bodies), arming of the Company, establishing of a Company fund, recruiting and all the various matters of organisation including, of course, the very important item of an efficient plan of mobilisation. In the later periods, when the fighting had again started, the Councils were still kept in existence but, of course, on an active service basis.

The other Companies in the Battalion were re-organised on the same lines as F Company. These were B, C, D, and E. The survivors of the small G Company of Easter Week were transferred to E Company.

As accurately as I can remember, the officers of the Companies of the 2nd Battalion when they were reformed early in 1917 were as under. It would be impossible for me to name the N. C. O. s, although these were of vital importance in the organisation, but it will be appreciated that very few

written lists were kept and responsible officers had to keep the framework of their commands in their minds -

	Captain	Lieutenant	2nd Lieut.
B Company	- Leo Henderson	Patrick Daly	
C "	- Seán Colbert	Seán Meldon	Tom Burke Seán Lemass ?
D "	- Patrick Moran	Richard Healy ?	Martin Savage
E "	- Richard McKee	Seán Russell	Wm. Byrne
F "	- Frank Henderson	Oscar Traynor	Patrick Sweeney (not released from penal servitude until June 1917).

The Battalion Staff Officers were:-

Commandant: - Richard Mulcahy, who was very soon promoted to Brigade Commandant. He was succeeded by Richard McKee who became Brigade Commandant early in 1918.

Vice-Commandant: - Probably the first Vice-Commandant was not appointed until 1917 was well advanced when the organisation of the Companies was well established. I think Richard McKee was the first officer appointed to this position but he cannot have held it for long. I was appointed about autumn of 1917 and Leo Henderson followed early in 1918.

Adjutant: - Thomas Slater (C Company 1916 - he later retired summer of 1918 and became a member of D Company). Seumas Devoy (B Company 1916, nephew of John Devoy, Fenian) followed T. Slater. Devoy retired late 1919 or early 1920 and was followed by ? Harry Colley ?Patrick O'Reilly (killed at Custom House Battle).

Quartermaster: - Michael McDonnell (E Coy 1916) who retired in ill-health early in 1920 after holding the position with distinction - he was sent to America by G.H.Q. He was followed by James O'Neill (Q.M. F Coy). ? Patrick O'Reilly or his brother (both killed at Custom House) before James O'Neill.

Intelligence Officer: - Hugh Thornton during Black and Tan period.

1st Aid Officer: - Seán Doyle (C Coy 1916), afterwards Brigade 1st Aid Officer.
At a later period when organisation was perfected and the time for actively opposing the enemy approached, other Staff Officers were appointed such as - Transport and Armoury Officers. Tim O'Neill, E Coy., was the first Transport Officer. Séumas Daly, B Company, was the first Armourer and when he was arrested one of the men he had trained took his place - possibly Charles Kenny of F Company.

I have mentioned the Company Councils. Battalion and Brigade Councils were also formed as soon as the Companies got going. The Battalion Council was presided over by the Battalion Commandant, and the other members were the Vice Commandant (who was responsible for the "Special Services" i.e. 1st Aid, Intelligence, etc.), Adjutant, Quartermaster and Company Captains. The Brigade Commandant presided over the Brigade Council which was formed in addition to himself of the Vice-Brigade Commandant, Adjutant, Quartermaster, Intelligence Officer, the Commandants of each Battalion of the Brigade and any other Staff Officers (1st Aid, Transport, etc.), whom the Brigade Commandant ordered to attend. These Councils were conducted under conditions of strict military discipline. Matters of organisation, discipline, arming, training, etc., were discussed and orders from the higher councils passed on. It was, of course, understood and accepted by all that the presiding officer (i.e. Captain, Battalion Commandant, Brigade Commandant) had to be obeyed when he issued orders whether at these councils or elsewhere. The Councils were regarded as indispensable in the scheme

of organisation - in addition to enabling the commanding officer to ensure that orders of G.H.Q. were passed on to the officers or Volunteers concerned and to keep himself informed of the state of organisation, the feelings of the ranks, etc., they served as an unfailing means of passing on important information to G.H.Q. and of supplying the higher divisions of the organisation with men (and women) suitable for special posts as the necessity for such arose.

In addition to the Councils, regular meetings were also held of the Adjutants, Quartermasters, Intelligence Officers, Transport Officers, First-Aid Officers, etc. Thus, the Brigade Adjutant met the Battalion Adjutants, who later in turn met the Company Adjutants of their respective Battalions, and dealt with matters concerning their particular duties. Company Adjutants held regular meetings of either the Company N.C.O.s or, for instance, special men entrusted with mobilisation responsibilities and such matters.

The majority of the men who had fought in the Rising returned to their Companies, the general feeling among them being that the Volunteers would set about preparing for a second phase of the struggle against England. This idea had been sedulously inculcated in the jails and internment camps and indeed, it is true to say that all that was necessary as far as the rank and file were concerned was efficient leadership. The Volunteers believed that having struck the first blow the issue was knit and they were in honour bound to see the task to a finish. Some of the older men, and those who were in delicate health, retired from the military part of the freedom movement. The lack of employment forced a number to leave Dublin - some who had been born in the country

returning to their native counties where their prestige and experience were of great value to the local units. For instance, Thomas Hunter, who had been Vice-Commandant of the 2nd Battalion and who had been sentenced to a long term of imprisonment following his participation in the fighting at Jacob's factory, was a native of Castletownroche, between Fermoy and Mallow, Co. Cork - he had been a draper's assistant in Pims, South Great Georges Street, and returned after his release to his home town and became an Officer (probably Battalion Quartermaster) in the North Cork Brigade, serving during the Black and Tan period and during the Civil War on the Republican side.

Recruitment naturally became a major matter from the start. There were many applicants among the young men of the different areas for membership of the Volunteers and great care was taken that none should be admitted but those who were likely to continue when fighting restarted and who were properly vouched for by Volunteers of good sound judgment. An applicant's name had to be submitted to the Captain of the Company into which he sought entry and he was not accepted until the Captain had signified that he was satisfied as to the applicant's bona fides. Recruiting under these conditions was slow, but this cautious method was necessary and it ensured that only men of fighting calibre were admitted and it reduced the danger of the infiltration of enemy agents and spies to nought. The latter point is worth noting. No spies or British agents succeeded in becoming members of the Second Battalion and, as far as I know, as a result of my service on the Dublin Brigade Council and in the Department of Organisation and my associations with G.H.Q. and Brigade Officers, the other Dublin Battalions were able by their careful method of admission to the ranks to keep such people outside the Volunteer organisation. It is true that one member of one

of the Battalions was executed after he had taken refuge in London for betraying his comrades to the enemy, but it is also true that this man had been an excellent Volunteer up to the time of his capture by the Black and Tans and that he had, apparently, succumbed to the tortures inflicted on him by those outlaws. A Volunteer was free to leave his unit at anytime if he so desired and a small number both of the 1916 veterans and of those recruited later did fall away, some for business or family reasons, some for reasons of conscience and some just because they did not feel inclined to continue when the starkness of the Black and Tan period pervaded the city. There was a great influx of recruits in the early months of 1918 when the British Government declared its intention to enforce Conscription on the men of Ireland. G.H.Q. advised that the admission procedure should not be so strict at this period and the Companies were accordingly overflowing. This position righted itself later when the danger had passed and ardour had cooled in many instances. I use the words "righted itself" because many who proved themselves subsequently to be splendid I.R.A. soldiers joined at this period and remained when those who were only seeking safety for themselves had ceased to report for duty.

In Dublin, the arms used in the Rising had been surrendered at the conclusion of the fighting and therefore the Dublin Brigade was to all intents and purposes an unarmed body when the re-organisation started. Some arms had, indeed, been saved but the number of these was so small that it was negligible. The re-arming of the Volunteers was one of the earliest, one of the most vital and, perhaps, the most difficult of the tasks of G.H.Q. While some arms were obtained by G.H.Q. and distributed to the Brigade, the Brigade was urged to undertake the task itself for

Dublin and the Battalions and the Companies were encouraged to seek all and every means to secure weapons. Quartermasters of all ranks were soon busy throughout the Brigade area searching for sources or contacts that might yield results and almost from the start a trickle - often not a constant trickle - of service revolvers (mostly the .45 Smith & Wessons and Webleys-) and of automatic pistols (German Parabellums and Mauser Automatics or "Peter the Painters") oozed into the Company and Battalion stores. Rifles, generally only single or in very small numbers, also found their way slowly into Volunteer hands. The sources were various - soldiers returning from the European War sometimes parted with their arms willingly, sometimes for a monetary consideration, and sometimes they were relieved of them by force; contacts were established with British soldiers in charge of stores in the city barracks who were willing to hand over arms at a price; travellers for British and other arms factories were induced to take orders sub rosa; houses in which there was known to be any kind of gun or rifle were raided; shops holding stocks of sporting guns and ammunition were entered and the stocks seized. The British, of course, took counter measures. One of these was to move their military stores only in large convoys by rail or road in charge of armed escorts. Soon the growing Volunteer intelligence service was able to give detailed information about the times that such convoys would be in suitable places for attack and full advantage was taken in these instances by the Volunteers of such information, the "element of surprise" combined with quick and resolute movement generally rewarding the attackers with success. Hand-grenades were also obtained in small quantities by the same methods, and it was early recognised that they would be very serviceable weapons for the new force. In the beginning, of course, the quantities of any kind of weapon that passed into Volunteer

hands were small and indeed, even to the end, the whole question of equipping the men with serviceable weapons was a very difficult one. Arms funds were organised in all units and the usual devices of raffles and draws and subscriptions were used to build up these funds and replenish them following the frequent severe drains associated with purchases.

Training for the 2nd Battalion took the form of close-order drill in Clonliffe Hall, marching and field work on Sunday mornings, instruction in the "special services" i.e. First Aid, Signalling, Intelligence. These were carried out under difficulties as the British Government had declared such activities illegal and punishable by imprisonment, and there was also the further difficulty that men got very tired of such unexciting work, especially when repeated week after week. However, the strengthening of organisation and the inculcation of discipline demanded that these routine practices should continue and everything was done to make them as interesting as possible.

Early in 1917, by-elections took place in the counties of Roscommon and Longford to fill the vacancies caused by the deaths of a Parliamentary representative in each of those counties. Sinn Féin selected prominent republicans who were put forward as candidates. Many members of the Dublin Brigade travelled to these constituencies and assisted the local republicans in affording protection to the candidates and members of the local organisation against the hostile activities of both the R.I.C. and the Irish Parliamentary followers. The Republican candidates were successful in both areas. These elections afforded opportunities which were energetically availed of to strengthen and extend the

activities of any existing Companies and to establish the organisation of the military movement on a sound footing. Arrests of Volunteers followed these events. Those who were arrested were charged with engaging in illegal military activities. Refusing to "recognise the court" before which they were arraigned, they were sentenced to terms of imprisonment.

Demands were being made at this time from all parts of the country for the release of the Volunteers who were serving sentences of imprisonment in England imposed by courtsmartial after the Rising. About June, 1917, it appeared likely that the British Government could not much longer withstand the influential calls for the remission of these sentences. A public meeting was arranged to take place in Dublin at Beresford Place to voice the citizens' protests. The meeting was proclaimed by the British Government but was held. Count Plunkett, I think, presided and Cathal Brugha was one of the chief speakers. The police endeavoured to stop the meeting and met with resistance. A police inspector was killed by a blow from a camán. A man named Harman, who I think was a Volunteer, was arrested and charged with murdering the inspector. The trial extended over many months but the British authorities were unable to prove that Harman killed the inspector and he was set free.

Shortly after this event (June, 1917), the "convicted men" were released from Lewes Gaol, England, to which place they had all been brought from several other gaols following their refusal to obey prison regulations. On their arrivalin Dublin they received a remarkably warm welcome from the citizens. Those of them who had subsequently to travel home to the provinces experienced the same enthusiastic reception.

Major William Redmond had been an Irish Party Member of Parliament for East Clare. He was killed fighting for England in the war against Germany and an election was held in July 1917 to fill the vacancy. Eamon de Valera, just released from penal servitude, was nominated by Sinn Féin and won the election. For weeks previous to the polling, all Volunteers who could possibly go to Clare were asked to do so to assist in organising the republican election machine, to police the constituencies, protect the ballot boxes and to organise volunteer units. As I was unemployed at the time, I went to Clare. I was stationed at Sixmilebridge along with Hubert Wilson of Longford, who had also been interned after the Rising. In this district, as throughout the whole constituency, Companies were formed, drilled, brought on route marches, etc. These activities were conducted generally under the supervision of Michael Brennan, of Meelick, or one of his brothers. The campaign in East Clare was a most successful one and both the military and political organising drives were extended to Limerick City and neighbourhood.

Many arrests by the British followed the campaign in East Clare. The charges were usually those of making seditious speeches, marching in military formation, wearing military uniform, drilling, etc. Tomás Aghas, soon to die from the effects of forcible feeding during hunger strike, was arrested and sentenced to a term of imprisonment for a speech delivered in the course of the election. I think that it was during the election also that Richard Coleman, who had fought with the Fingal Brigade during the Rising and had been one of the convicted men, was arrested - he died in Usk Prison, Wales, in December 1918 while serving a term of imprisonment. The death of Tomás Aghas was the first of a series of post-Rising events which stirred the feelings of the people of Ireland tremendously and helped

to consolidate the growing popular sympathy with the Republican movement.

At this time - September 1917 - a large number of Republicans were in jail and had adopted the hunger strike as a means of forcing the British authorities to accord them special conditions while they were serving their sentences The attitude of the non-recognition of the court during trial had been generally adopted and the prison conditions which were demanded included, segregation from criminals, longer hours of recreation and association, non-locking of cell doors, the recognition of leaders elected by the prisoners to negotiate with the prison authorities, etc.

Tomás Aghas died in the Mater Misericordiae Hospital to which he had been removed when he collapsed under the operation of being forcibly fed after having been several days without food. His remains were removed in the evening time to the City Hall and a great public tribute was paid to him on that occasion and also on the day of his funeral, which took place on the Sunday after his death. Priests, public representatives, trade union executives and members marched behind the bier on both occasions and the Volunteers turned out in military formation. On the evening of the removal of the remains to the City Hall a false alarm was raised that the British military were attacking the parade. This occurred between North Frederick Street and Parnell Square and caused a temporary panic. The Volunteers, who were appearing in military formation for the first time since the Rising - thus breaking the British military regulations then in force - and who had many untrained newcomers marching with them, broke their ranks rather badly in a few instances. Officers, however, quickly got the situation in hand and restored order. Between that night and the Sunday of the burial steps were taken to ensure that Volunteers would stand

their ground in future should there be any interference with parades, either attempted or imaginary. Thousands joined in the funeral procession through the city to Glasnevin Cemetery on the Sunday. The Volunteers marched in their Companies and Battalions and, defying an order against the carrying of arms issued by the British, a picked body in uniform fired volleys over the grave from rifles secretly conveyed to the cemetery. A special party armed with revolvers acted as a protecting force to the riflemen and the main body of Volunteers was so placed as to prevent, or at any rate delay, any attempt by a large force to seize the rifles or arrest the riflemen. The firing party with their arms was safely withdrawn from the cemetery.

The death of Tomás Aghas greatly embarrassed the British Government and relaxation of conditions in the prison followed immediately and the hunger strike was called off. This was, however, only the first round.

At this time, and up to the period following the Convention of the Volunteers held in October 1917, my position was that of Captain of F Company, 2nd Battalion, Dublin Brigade. Richard Mulcahy was Battalion Commandant (2nd Battalion) after the Rising until the Convention. I was in charge of my Company at all the parades held in connection with the death and funeral of Tomás Aghas. As well as my memory serves me, a few picked men of the Company, as well as a few of other Companies, carried revolvers in their pockets at these parades and they had orders to use them in case there should be any attempt to interfere with the movements of the Volunteers. The number of men so armed would have been small as arms were very scarce at the time.

The Volunteer Convention held in October 1917 was the first since the Rising. Representatives of units from all

parts of Ireland attended. I think the unit for representation was the Company. In some of the remote or only partially organised areas it is possible that only the nuclei of Companies existed. Measures were taken to ensure that no unauthorised persons attended. As the Convention had been secretly arranged through the Volunteer Organisation, and as the names of the representatives from the various areas had been communicated beforehand to the responsible head-quarters officers (who had veteran organisers of the movement probably of the I.R.B. - at their call for identification purposes if the need for such should arise), nobody was present who was not entitled to be present. The Convention was held on a Saturday afternoon in the pavilion in the grounds of the G.A.A. at Jones's Road, Dublin. These are the grounds which are now known as Croke Park and modern buildings have since replaced the old ones which were in existence at the time of the Convention. The number attending the Convention was very large but I have no idea how many delegates there were. Efficient and successful measures were taken to protect the Convention, the chief of which were the staggering of the times of the arrival of delegates so as not to attract attention of spies or of curious people, and the posting on the approaches to Jones's Road of a ring of picked armed men who had definite orders to resist any attempt that might be made by military or police to raid the Convention. My recollection is that Oscar Traynor, at that time 1st Lieutenant of F Company, 2nd Battalion, Dublin Brigade, was in charge of the protective armed force. I attended as delegate from my Company. The only other delegate from Dublin whom I now remember is my brother, Leo Henderson, then Captain of B Company, 2nd Battalion.

Eamon de Valera presided. Also prominent among those who appeared to be responsible for organising the

Convention were Cathal Brugha, Diarmuid Lynch, Richard Mulcahy, Michael Collins, Seán McGarry. Early in the proceedings the position of Eoin MacNeill was discussed. Eamon de Valera told the Convention that he had received from MacNeill the funds which he held on behalf of the Irish Volunteers. De Valera also refused to allow any censure to be passed on MacNeill in connection with his action in Easter Week. Cathal Brugha, referring to the handing over by MacNeill of the funds of the Volunteers, said that that was exactly what he would expect from MacNeill who was an honourable man and a good Irishman, but he must never be allowed to hold any position again in the Volunteers. The meeting decided to continue the military movement to achieve the freedom of Ireland from the point where it had been temporarily checked at the end of Easter Week. Important decisions were taken in relation to the re-organising of the country from a military standpoint. Certain committees were established and appointments made. Michael Collins, who was not well known at that time, was nominated as Secretary of the Volunteer Organisation but withdrew in favour of Seán McGarry who was nominated by some of the Dublin officers. The Convention lasted for several hours. Apparently the British authorities had not the faintest idea that it was being held as they made no attempt to interfere with it.

Intense activity all through the country followed the holding of the Convention. Drilling, route marching and raiding for arms were the most noticeable forms of Volunteer activities. Frequent arrests of Volunteers were made by the British authorities and the jails were soon full again. Hunger-strikes were resorted to by the prisoners to enforce conditions inside the jails demanded by their leaders and the British Government, alarmed by the death of Tomás Aghas after the attempt to forcibly feed him, generally yielded

after a few days. Other methods were also adopted by the prisoners, such as the breaching of walls between cells to establish communication when cell doors were locked; the breaking of windows; the smashing of door locks and straining of door hinges to prevent the locking of cells.

At the end of 1917, or in the opening months of 1918, Diarmuid Lynch was appointed Food Controller by the Sinn Féin Organisation. The European War was still being fought and vast quantities of cattle, pigs and other food were being shipped to England every week and there was a danger of shortage in Ireland. Lynch decided to take action and obtained permission to use an unarmed party of Volunteers to carry out his plan. He selected Leo Henderson, Captain of B Company 2nd Battalion, who, with a picked number of men from his Company, intercepted a drove of pigs one evening on the North Circular Road while they were proceeding to the North Wall for shipment to England. The men in charge of the pigs were arrested, the pigs were brought to a large yard at the far end of North Portland Street, off the North Circular Road, where they were slaughtered by skilled pig butchers (who were probably Volunteers or members of the Irish Citizen Army) and the carcases were then carted under Volunteer escort to Donnelly's curing factory in the Coombe and eventually sold at the current prices. The owners of the pigs, who were, naturally enough, somewhat annoyed at first were quite satisfied when they received a good price for their property. A force of police was sent by the British authorities to stop the intervention of the Volunteers in the shipment of the pigs but were unable to do so. This action received wide publicity and popular applause, and a decided falling off in the export of cattle and pigs resulted. Shortly after, Diarmuid Lynch was arrested and sentenced to a term of imprisonment either for this or some other activity.

It is necessary to make reference at this point to the Irish Republican Brotherhood. I had not been a member of it previous to 1916, although most of the Volunteer Officers and men of that period had been, and I was not a member of it at this period (1917-18). During the days of the internment at Frongoch it had considerably increased its membership. I had not been approached to join since my second refusal about eight or nine months before the Rising. I was aware that the I.R.B. had planned the Rising, and believed that it controlled the Volunteer Organisation before and after 1916 in as much as G.H.Q. and other officers and key men in all districts throughout the country were members of the I.R.B. I was told long afterwards that Eamon de Valera, President of the Republic, was not a member of it after the Rising although he may have been previously, that Cathal Brugha did not remain a member of it after the Rising on the grounds, as I have been told, that there was no further need for a secret organisation as the Republic had been openly proclaimed, that its continuance would lead sooner or later to a state of dual control and that it would succeed in producing conspirators but not soldiers. Diarmuid Lynch was said to be the Head Centre after the Rising. He was a splendid type of Irishman, upright, honest, determined, unsparing in his efforts to advance the cause, of good personality, devoted to the "Gaelic and Free" conception of Ireland and somewhat stubborn. He was forcibly transported to U.S.A. while he was a prisoner in Dundalk Jail about April 1918. Michael Collins was, apparently, the next in control in the I.R.B. and Lynch's successor after his transportation. In late 1918, or early 1919, after I had become Commandant of the Second Battalion, it seemed to me that I could give better service to the Republic if I became a member of the I.R.B.

A struggle that promised to be protracted and exacting had begun, membership would bind those in the organisation in the event of defections or attempts to compromise on the part of post-Rising recruits to the Volunteers or the political organisations who might not have such sound national foundations as those who had been trained in the old movement, the term "secret organisation" did not now seem to be applicable, and I would be regarded as more trustworthy by my superior officers. Accordingly, I spoke to my brother Leo Henderson, who was Vice Commandant of the 2nd Battalion (and in virtue of that position a member of my staff) and he conveyed my wish to the I.R.B. authorities. I was admitted to membership in the course of a week or two, being "sworn in" either by Michael Collins or my brother - I forget which but it was probably the latter. In due course I approached and "swore in" the senior officers of the Second Battalion who were not already members of the Organisation. It was considered desirable that Volunteer officers should belong to the I.R.B. so that a firm stand could be taken if a national stampede should threaten or the temptation should be presented of settled conditions or political power through a lowering of the national objective.

Sometime in 1917 I became Vice Commandant of the Second Battalion and in February or March 1918 Commandant of the Battalion. The system of promotion was by election by the officers of the Battalion, the Brigade Commandant and G.H.Q. confirming afterwards. Commanding Officers were almost always elected by their fellow officers, as also were their Seconds in Command and

Company Lieutenants. Officers in charge of special services were generally appointed by the Commanding Officers - the reason being that they were generally the best judges of the special technical fitness of the appointees. Company Officers sometimes appointed their N.C.O.s and sometimes held elections in the Companies for that purpose.

At this period the following promotions were made - Richard Mulcahy, Commandant of the Dublin Brigade, appointed Chief of Staff of the Army; Richard McKee, Commandant of the 2nd Battalion, Dublin Brigade, appointed Commandant of the Dublin Brigade; Michael Lynch (who had been previously a member of the 4th Battalion) appointed Vice Commandant of the Dublin Brigade; Frank Henderson, Vice Commandant of the 2nd Battalion, elected Commandant of the 2nd Battalion; Leo Henderson, Captain B Company 2nd Battalion, elected Vice Commandant of the 2nd Battalion.

G.H.Q. Departments - those of Adjutant General, Quartermaster General, Organisation, Intelligence etc. were beginning now to take definite shape and a general perfecting of organisation was being achieved. As Commandant of the 2nd Battalion, I now attended weekly meetings of the Brigade Council which were held at No. 144 (or 145) Great Brunswick (later renamed Pearse) St. At later periods these meetings were held at 44, Parnell Square and sometimes at 41, Parnell Square, and at Árus Craobh an Chéitinnigh, Connradh na Gaelige, 46 Parnell Square. The following were the members of the Brigade Council when I first attended them in 1918 -

Richard McKee - Brigade Commandant
Michael Lynch - Vice Brigade Commandant
Thomas Byrne - 1st Battalion Commandant
Frank Henderson 2nd Battalion Commandant
Joseph O'Connor 3rd " "
Dr. Ted Kelly - 4th " "

(Dr. Kelly was succeeded in a short time by Joseph McGrath, and in the frequent absence of the latter owing to periods in prison the Battalion was represented by Peadar O'Brien, Vice Commandant)

John Shouldice - Brigade Adjutant
(Another officer was appointed to this position after some time but I do not remember who it was or the date).
J. McGuirk - Brigade Quartermaster.

Peadar Clancy sometimes attended the Brigade meetings but I do not now know in what capacity. Liam Tobin was the first Intelligence Officer of the Brigade, being eventually taken on to G.H.Q. staff. He made the first contacts with the Dublin Metropolitan Police Detective Division and used meet Detective McNamara who was amongst the early members of that force, perhaps the first, who was willing to give allegiance to the Republic.

The organising and disciplining of the post - 1916 Brigade was commenced by Richard Mulcahy and was continued by Richard McKee, under whose leadership it was brought to the point when it was ready to resume the fight for independence. McKee, a strict disciplinarian whose human heart a sincere Volunteer could discern on the outside of his military rigidness, always insisted on the necessity for punctuality, thoroughness, preparation of every detail, absolute silence about Volunteer work even among Volunteers themselves. He aimed at having an efficient Brigade. In this he succeeded and, moreover, he was, as all his officers and men knew, its efficient commander.

Shortly before I became Commandant of the Second Battalion the question of weapons became a frequent subject of discussion among Volunteers, and views were advanced as to the nature of the coming fight. Nobody exactly spoke as a rule of the "coming fight", but it was accepted that we were preparing for something which could hardly be anything else than an armed struggle. It was recognised that the hand grenade would be a desirable arm for the Volunteers. We had none except a few British or German ones obtained in one way or another from British soldiers. We began to think about making them ourselves but realised that anything of the kind that would be placed in the hands of the men now must be weapons that would be dangerous to the enemy and not to our own men as were the 1916 grenades. I think that it was in the 2nd Battalion that the first practical steps were taken - at any rate I imagine that Richard McKee first got talking about it and that it was this I found myself groping along towards establishing the manufacture of grenades when he handed the 2nd Battalion over to me. Joe Toomey of B Company, 2nd Battalion, a 1916 veteran, member of a family that gave valiant service to the country was the man on whom the initial effort centred. He was a fitter employed at the Broadstone Railway works. He fixed up a workshop at his house at Clonliffe Avenue, Ballybough Road, and having experimented there and at the Broadstone Works eventually succeeded in completing a small plant that could cast a satisfactory serrated metal casing for a grenade. This casing was cylindrical in shape, 8 or 9 inches in length, and its other dimensions were such as to allow it to hold a stick (or portion of a stick) of gelignite in its

interior and to be grasped firmly in the palm of the hand. It would have to be operated by lighting a piece of fuse cut to a length which would secure explosion in whatever number of seconds we would consider suitable - the fuse being inserted before the issue of the grenade into a detonator of fulminate of mercury embedded in the gelignite. I allowed only a very few men who would be absolutely necessary to assist Toomey at his home. Before making our first tests of these grenades I was arrested during training manoeuvres near Coolock along with Dick McKee, Oscar Traynor, Patrick E. Sweeney, Eddie O'Mahony of B Company and Christie Lynch of D Company. I served a two month's sentence, most of the others three months. On my release, Joe Toomey reported that all was ready for testing our grenades. I reported to Vice Brigadier Michael Lynch (Acting Brigadier during imprisonment of Richard McKee). He, with Toomey and myself (and perhaps Leo Henderson) tested the grenades, using a very long fuse, on a Saturday afternoon in mid May 1918 in a room in the ruins of Dunsoughley Castle, near St. Margaret's, Nth. Co. Dublin. The results were considered very satisfactory and Toomey continued for some time to cast the cases at his home. The cases were removed in small quantities to some place which I cannot remember now. I recollect though, at a later date (possibly the summer of 1919) being several times in the evenings at the workshop of Sammy Ellis - of B Company - at the rear of his residence in Eccles St. where he carried on a cabinet making industry and where Sammy, Seán Mooney, myself and a few more fitted detonators and sticks of gelignite into

grenade cases which I believe were those cast by Toomey. Although I am not certain now, I think these grenades had metal screw-in "necks" of some kind that would give automatic explosion, thus eliminating the unsatisfactory and dangerous method of igniting a piece of fuse just before hurling them at the enemy. These "necks" would have been made at the Broadstone Railway works by (among others) Seán Mooney and Peter Farrell sub rosa. The automatic striking device was the greatest difficulty encountered in the first attempts to manufacture hand grenades. The gelignite used in Ellis's workshop was portion of a large consignment captured by the 2nd Battalion at G.N. Railway Stores, Sheriff St. late in 1918 or early in 1919. Joe Toomey's house was eventually raided, he himself was arrested and sentenced, his wife as far as I can recall concealing in some manner the more incriminating portions of his plant and thus saving him from a more serious charge. Eventually G.H.Q. took the whole matter of grenade making out of our hands when it established a factory in Parnell St. which turned out hand grenades with automatic striking apparatus etc. I have dwelt on our initial effort in 2nd Battalion at some length because I feel that the experience gained by us, the avenues opened up by Joe Toomey and others in such places as the Broadstone Works as well as other aspects of our pioneering attempt with its slow output of grenades far superior, crude though they were in some vital respects, to the 1916 ones were the actual foundations of the efficient factories later operating under G.H.Q.

Sunday mornings in the first quarter of 1918 were

in the 2nd Battalion devoted to the perfecting of Battalion organisation and training. Thus on, perhaps, the first and third Sundays of each month instruction would be given to Battalion groups (i.e. groups of selected men from all the Companies of the Battalion) in such subjects as Armoury (care and repair of arms), Intelligence, Transport, First-Aid, and on the remaining Sunday mornings outdoor manoeuvres would be held in the North County Dublin. The latter attracted the attention of the R.I.C. who would pick up the Battalion at the mobilisation points - usually around Clonturk Park or Upper Drumcondra, which in those days were quiet spots in which there were very few houses, or shortly after the Battalion had marched off towards the place selected for the morning's field work. The R.I.C. used follow on bicycles at the rear of the Column and evidently kept their headquarters informed from time to time of the Battalion's activities. Many of the Volunteers were eager to prevent by force the R.I.C. following the Battalion and getting to know the officers, N.C.O.s and men, the numbers present and the nature of the activities, but G.H.Q. had issued orders that arms were not to be carried and that the R.I.C. were not to be interfered with on these occasions. On St. Patrick's Day 1918 (which I believe was a Sunday, and in any case a national holiday) very extensive manoeuvres were carried out by the Battalion in the Coolock - Cloghran (near Swords) area. Dick McKee, who was about to take up his duties as Brigade O/C, was in charge and I was second in command. After a couple of hours it was observed that the R.I.C. were in greater force than usual and that a County Inspector had arrived on the scene as well as a

Head Constable. My recollection is that the R.I.C. were armed with revolvers but I am not sure. The County Inspector after some time came up to McKee, accompanied by the Head Constable and a number of Sergeants, and called on him to stop drilling a squad of men in a field. When McKee refused and a number of Volunteer officers and men approached at the double to his protection, it looked for a while as though force would be used on both sides. The County Inspector, however, perceiving McKee's and the Volunteers' determination not to brook interference shortly withdrew, remarking that McKee was a "cheeky fellow". Following this incident the Battalion was formed up in Column of route with advance guard, rear guard, cycle scouts etc. and proceeded to return to the point of mobilisation near Clonturk. Lieutenant Martin Savage was in charge of the advance guard, and at a turn of the road close to Coolock-Ardmore cross roads he perceived a number of military lorries approaching the Column at a fast pace. They were into the head of the main body almost immediately. Although driven by military drivers in uniform, the lorries contained, not military, but a force of D.M.Police in charge of a Superintendent. The Inspector of the R.I.C. force with the Head Constable, Sergeants etc. were also on the spot. Richard McKee, Oscar Traynor, Patrick Sweeney and myself were identified as the "ring-leaders" and were arrested, as also were Eddie O'Mahony, an N.C.O. of B Company, and Christie Lynch of D Company. Lynch was not very long in the Volunteers and was very young and of small size. In accordance with G.H.Q. orders of the period we did not resist arrest and allowed ourselves to be put into a lorry.

The Volunteers were, however, anxious to prevent the arrests and it took McKee and the other officers all their time to dissuade them from attacking the police. It was only when McKee appealed to them as soldiers to obey G.H.Q. orders which were in accordance with a definite policy, that they allowed the arrested officers and men to be taken away. The arrested party were taken to the Bridewell and tried next morning in the Police Courts on charges of illegal drilling. McKee was spokesman in the court, which he refused to recognise as having any authority. He was sentenced to three months' imprisonment, as were also Traynor, Sweeney and, I think, Lynch. I received a sentence of two months. O'Mahony was young and of slight build, and the charge against him of assaulting a powerful looking constable seemed so ridiculous that it was not proceeded with after the opening stage. The sentenced party was conveyed to Mountjoy Prison where there were a large number of Volunteer prisoners from all parts of the country. The men had just won a struggle for non-criminal treatment after a short hunger-strike and the breaking of cell doors and walls. In less than a week's time all these prisoners were conveyed in batches by train, handcuffed in twos, to Dundalk Prison. They were removed in the "Black Maria" from Mountjoy Prison to Amiens St. railway station, and thence by train to Dundalk. An armed escort of R.I.C. accompanied each batch.

Dundalk Prison was guarded by a force of British military. Sentries were on duty at several points, there was a guard room etc. but the military did not come

into contact with the prisoners. There was a civil Governor, the usual warders, office staff. etc. Conditions within the prison were easy and the running of the establishment was practically entirely in the hands of the imprisoned Volunteers. Michael Brennan (of Clare) was Prisoners O/C and Dick McKee was, I think, appointed Second in Command when he arrived. Military classes were held daily and instruction given of a type tha t was considered useful for the next step in the fight for freedom. The importance of discipline was stressed in lectures. Irish language classes were held and were well attended. During our sojourn in Dundalk a Conscription Act applicable to Ireland was passed in the British Parliament. We learned through our lines of communication with G.H.Q. and the local Volunteer unit that it had been decided to resist the enforcement of this Act by every possible means. The lines of communication were constant and reliable and were easily maintained through the medium of visitors to the prisoners (who were either members of the Volunteers or Cumann na mBan) and of friendly warders. A military council was formed within the Prison for the purpose of breaking jail by force of arms and attacking the Dundalk Military and R.I.C. barracks when the British Government would attempt to enforce Conscription. The plans included action from the outside by the local Volunteers. I think Dick McKee drew up the plans and that his chief assistant was James Toal, O/C of the Dundalk Volunteers. James Toal, an excellent Volunteer officer, died shortly after his release as a result of an

attack of the virulent influenza outbreak which swept through Ireland after the cessation of World War 1. Among the visitors from Dublin who came to Dundalk on military affairs were my brother Leo Henderson, Q/M Michael McDonnell and Seán Mooney, who had several conferences as visitors with Dick McKee and other prisoners. As the supervising warders were either friendly or anxious to avoid trouble, such conferences were easy and the British Military did not enter the portion of the prison occupied by the prisoners.

One of the imprisoned Republicans was Diarmuid Lynch. He had been condemned to death in 1916 for the part he took in the Rising but the death sentence was not carried out owing to the fact that he was an American citizen. After the Rising it is believed that he became Head Centre of the Irish Republican Brotherhood. He was regarded by the British Government as a dangerous man. On the other hand the Volunteers held him in great esteem - and justly so - for he was a determined, unflinching soldier and an Irishman of clear vision and of great probity, forthright in his views with a certain stubbornness at times. The British authorities informed Diarmuid Lynch while he was in Dundalk Prison that they were about to take him from Dundalk and transport him to America. He asked that he be given facilities while still in Ireland to marry his fiancée so that she could rejoin him on his arrival in America. Under the war time regulations his fiancée could not leave Ireland or enter America unless as Diarmuid's wife. The facilities were refused. Arrangements were then made, unknown to the British

authorities, for the marriage ceremony to take place inside the prison. Ecclesiastical permission was obtained by a Dublin priest and, in due course, he arrived at the prison accompanied by the bride, Miss Quinn, and her sister and requested a visit to Diarmuid Lynch. The two ladies requested a visit to Michael Brennan and myself whom they did not know. I received intimation of this about twenty minutes before the visit, and was given instructions to put my back against the door of the visiting room, carry on a pretended conversation with the bride's sister, and if the warder, who was always present during visits, attempted to convey to the Governor what was taking place to prevent him by force from doing so. The marriage ceremony was carried out without a hitch and in the presence of the necessary number of witnesses. The warder, who was a gentle type and who did not wish to listen to prisoners' conversations, did not even know what had taken place. That night before we retired to our cells Diarmuid Lynch made the announcement of his marriage to his fellow Republicans and, of course, word was duly conveyed to the Governor who reported to his superiors. That night Diarmuid was taken from his cell on the first stage of his removal to U.S.A. Next morning Michael Brennan and myself were summoned before the Governor and questioned. The only result of which I was aware, apart from the fact that Mrs. Lynch was able to follow her husband in due course to America, was that the warder who was present during the visit was dismissed from the prison service. I was told that the Republican authorities got him employment.

I was released from Dundalk Jail sometime in May 1918. The possibility of re-arrest in Dundalk or at Amiens St. station, Dublin, was discussed by our Military Council, but it was decided that if I was not taken into custody again at Dundalk that I should travel by train to Dublin. A month later McKee, Traynor and others decided if they were not re-arrested at Dundalk Jail gates that they would entrain for Dublin and get off at Clontarf or some other station so as to avoid the possibility of being taken prisoner again at Amiens St. under some D.O.R.A. regulation. I was not interfered with at Dundalk or Dublin, but received a great public ovation at Amiens St. station. The feelings aroused by the passing of the Conscription Act and the public actions and ensuing arrests of Volunteers were the cause of such receptions of prisoners on the occasion of their release from jail, and marked a definite stage in the consolidation of public approval and support of the military and political actions of the Republican leaders.

Following my release I reported to Richard Mulcahy, then Chief of Staff, who ordered me to take charge of the Second Battalion immediately.

Men serving sentences in Dundalk Prison March/June 1918.

The following names taken from a book in which I obtained their signatures while I was imprisoned there includes all but a few of the Irish Volunteers who were then in that prison. (The prison was reserved for Irish Volunteers):

Tómas Ó Ruadháin, Coilltemach, Muigheo, 1st Lieutenant.

Seaghán Ó Corcáin (should be Corcoráin), Coilltemach.

Micheál Ó Braonáin, Adjutant, Clare Brigade.

J.J. Madigan, Captain A Coy. 6th Battalion, Clare Brigade.

Diarmuid Ua Loingsigh.

Micheál Colibhet, Luimneach.

Seamus Mac an Airchinnigh, Luimneach.

James O'Connor, Ballinderreen, Kilcolgan, Co. Galway.

R. McKee, Finglas Bridge, Dublin.

Seán Ó Treasaigh, E. Coy., 1st Battalion, Tipperary Brigade.

R. Emmet MacSuibhne, Áth Cliath.

Oscar MacTreinfhir, Áth Cliath.

Patrick Flynn, Quay St., Dundalk.

James Toal, Bachelor's Walk, Dundalk.

Peadar Ó Donnghaile, Dún Dealgain.

Vincent Hughes, 38, Emer Terrace, Dundalk.

Seamus Ó Néill ó Chaisil - Mumhan.

Benjamin J. O'Hickey, Lisgibbon, Bansha, Co. Tipperary.

James Ledden, Limerick.

Toirdhealbhach MacSuibhne.

D. Lyons, Kanturk, Co. Cork.

T.P. O'Sullivan, Cork Battalion.

Michael McKeogh, Ballyvalley, Killaloe, Co. Clare.

Michael Brady, Tomgraney, Co. Clare.

Martin O'Brien, Roughan, Kilnaboy, Co. Clare.

Eamon Ó Cathasaigh, Ruadhan, Coradh Finne.
7th Battalion, Clare Brigade.

Patrick O'Keeffe, Kahaska, Corofin, Co. Clare.

Joseph Dinan, Rathenamore, O'Gonnelloc, Killaloe, Co.Clare.

Thomas Ruane, Captain, Ballina, Co. Mayo.

Seán Ua Bradaigh, Mainistir na Corran, Corcaigh.

Michael Jos. Ring, Westport, Co. Mayo.

Liam J. Maol Shuthâin, Westport, Mayo.

Tomás MacSitric, Westport, Co. Mayo.

Stiobhâin Ó Hillearaid, Ballyvoe, Doolin, Clare.

John Breen, Kiltumper, Kilmihil, Co. Clare.

Seân Ua Maoldomhnaigh, 5, Cross Roads, Thomond Gate, Limerick.

Michael Eustace, Thurles.

Tomás Ua Foghludha, 5, Castle Terrace, Rock St., Tralee.

Murty Tubridy, Ballykett, Kilrush, Co. Clare.

Michael Noonan, Leitrim, Kilmihill P.O.

Seaghan Ua Foghludha, Tráighlí.

Andrew J. Kerin, Ranna, Carron, Co. Clare.

Michael Clancy, Rannagh, Carron, Kilnaboy P.O., Co. Clare.

Earnân de Blaghd.

Proinnsias Ó Droighneâin (Frank Thornton).

Frank Henderson, Dublin.

Names not in book above referred to -

Christopher Lynch, Dublin (D Coy. 2nd Battalion)

Hughes, Dundalk (not Vincent Hughes)

Billy Atkinson, Dundalk (? Atkins)

James (?) Sexton, Limerick (later shot dead in Limerick under mysterious circumstances.

The British Government had at this time, May-June, 1918, obtained the sanction of Parliament to its Conscription Bill under which the men of Ireland were liable for service in the British Army. The people of Ireland were aroused to fever pitch and public meetings were held in every parish throughout the country at which resolutions were passed declaring

that the enforcement of such an Act would be resisted by every possible means. Branches of an Anti-Conscription Organisation were formed all over Ireland and young men flocked into the Irish Volunteers. The sudden influx of recruits gave the Volunteers new responsibilities and duties and the nation-wide extent of the opposition to Conscription made it somewhat easier to carry out training at the beginning of the new turn of affairs. At the same time the general policy was to do the training and organising in such a manner as to attract as little as possible the attention of the police spies, and to leave them with the minimum of information in regard to leaders, meeting places, methods of organisation etc. Many of the "Conscription Recruits" proved unsuitable. Some of them not having the convictions of the genuine Volunteers were unreliable. Others were difficult to discipline, unwilling to undergo anything that savoured of hardship or sacrifice of leisure and comfort and naturally could not but feel it strange to be required to keep tightly closed mouths about Volunteer activities. However, many excellent recruits joined up and remained in their Companies and gave of their best in the subsequent years, while the unsoldierly men either fell away or were weeded out.

Richard McKee, Oscar Traynor, Patrick Sweeney and a few other Dublin officers and Volunteers returned to duty in mid June 1918 after completion of sentences in Dundalk jail. McKee left his civil occupation, that of compositor, about this time, and became a full-time officer, his position being Commandant of the

Dublin Brigade to which was added - probably a year later - that of Director of Training, G.H.Q. The work of the Dublin Brigade was now intensified under McKee's command, and officers, N.C.O.s and men willingly gave all their spare time to the various activities which still were mainly of the non-armed kind.

Plans were prepared for the offering of armed resistance to any attempt which the British Government might make to enforce Conscription. Volunteers were informed of the general intention to oppose any move of the British by a general flare up in which use of all available arms would be made and they were constantly urged to be always ready for any eventuality.

The armed opposition to Conscription Dublin was to be operated on what was known as the "Block System". Following instructions from McKee I surveyed the 2nd Battalion area and listed the blocks of buildings in it - a block being composed of the houses or buildings in a street which with the houses or other buildings of the streets, avenues, or lanes at right angles and parallel to it, form one isolated square or rectangle with four unbroken fronts. Each block was intended to be a separate fort of resistance if the British were to attempt a general movement in strength. The Volunteers who resided in each block were listed and the most suitable selected for taking command of the block. McKee informed his Battalion Commandants that it was recognised that in Easter Week too many men had been kept together in small areas and that in the next fight they would resist within the blocks in small parties as long as the buildings were tenable and would have

interior lines of retreat to agreed bases through breaches made in the inner walls of the houses. Every step of the British Military would be opposed by rifle fire and grenades, and an attempt to carry out Conscription or any large-scale offensive action to subdue the city by force of arms would be made a slow, tedious and costly operation. Difficulties that had to be overcome in the organising of the "Block System" were mainly due to the fact that Volunteers did not always live in their own Battalion areas and also to the tendency which was more general at that period than in later years for families, especially where the heads of the houses were tradesmen or labourers, to change their residences. It is also to be borne in mind that Volunteers, no matter where they happened to live, were always anxious that they should go into action, not alone in their own Battalion and even Company areas but also with the particular little group in which they would have their own associates. Recruiting was a matter of friends bringing along friends for whom they could vouch and naturally little groups of intimates resulted who gave of their best when together. These matters presented obstacles to the organising of the system, but the spirit and discipline was so good among the Volunteers that they were solved, sometimes by men leaving their residences and coming into their Battalion areas, or by evolving special group mobilisation schemes for manning certain blocks. An order was issued at this period that any Volunteer who was obliged to change his place of abode must give notice beforehand to his Company, and it was

scrupulously obeyed. When the system was put on paper and matters such as lines of communication, arms centres, etc. decided, the men in charge of the blocks were advised of the parts they would have to take.

The system was worked out in all the Battalion areas and the necessary linking up of plans made.

It would be well at this point to record the areas of the four city Battalions:

(a) The line of the Liffey divided the 1st and 2nd Battalions from the 3rd and 4th Battalions. The 1st and 2nd Battalions were on the North side and the 3rd and 4th on the South side.

(b) The dividing line between the 1st and 2nd Battalions was O'Connell St., Cavendish Row, Parnell Square East, North Frederick St., Berkeley St., Berkeley Road, N.C.Rd. from Berkeley Road to Doyle's (also known as Dunphy's) Corner at Phibsboro, Phibsboro Road from Doyle's Corner to Cross Guns Bridge, Botanic Road to Glasnevin Village. Everything east of that line was 2nd Battalion area and everything west of it was 1st Battalion area; Santry, Howth etc. were in the 2nd Battalion area. Blanchardstown, Castleknock etc. were in the 1st Battalion area. Previous to the organisation of the Fingal Brigade both Battalions could extend into north County Dublin if it was found possible to organise the units in the areas adjacent to the city.

(c) The dividing line between the 3rd and 4th Battalions was - Parliament St., Cork Hill, Dame St. to corner of South Great George's St., South Great George's St., Aungier St., Wexford St., Camden St., South Richmond St., Rathmines Road, whence the line continued in a manner of which I am not now certain towards Merrion. As far as the city portion of the line was concerned the eastern side was in the 3rd Battalion area and the western side in the 4th Battalion area, and the Battalions were all allowed to take in all the territory on their own sides of the line as far as they could.

It is possible that there are inaccuracies in the foregoing descriptions of the Battalion areas (especially in regard to the 3rd and 4th areas) and the statements of the other Dublin Commandants should be consulted.

In addition to the general plan on the "Block System" method it was also decided to seize certain pre-determined buildings at street intersections and corners which would dominate the entry to or egress from the barracks and other posts held in the city by the British troops. At these points the first delaying action would be taken and the enemy driven back temporarily to his barracks or posts and held there for as long as possible. With this in view Brigade Commandant McKee spent several Sunday mornings from 10.30 or 11 o'clock until 1 or 2 p.m. examining the positions chosen

and deciding on the spot the buildings that should be occupied and the general tactics to be employed. On these occasions he was accompanied by Thomas Byrne (1st Battalion Commandant), Joseph O'Connor (3rd Battalion Commandant) and myself (2nd Battalion Commandant). I think Peadar O'Brien, Acting Commandant of the 4th Battalion used also to be present and sometimes there were other officers whom I do not now remember. Michael Lynch, then Vice Brigade Commandant and later O/C of the Fingal Brigade was almost certainly present.

The positions inspected which come to my memory now are - Junction of N.C. Road and Oxmantown Road (South side of N.C.Rd.) and I think a position in Marlborough Road where there is an elbow. These positions were intended to dominate the exit on Marlborough Road from Marlborough (now McKee) barracks. Although I am not quite clear about it now, I imagine this position would have been occupied in conjunction with a position at intersection of N.C. Road and Aughrim St. There was also a position arranged for intercepting an advance from Broadstone Railway station which was strongly held by British troops. The British garrison in the North Dublin Union was also attended to and on the occasion of the reconnaissance there we were able to make an intimate inspection of the sentry posts, guard rooms etc. through the co-operation of attendants and nurses in Grangegorman Mental Hospital and in Richmond Hospital, the grounds of which adjoined the British position. The high grounds on the south side of the Liffey in the grounds of St. James's Protestant Church, which overlooked the Royal (now Collins) Barracks

was inspected and was considered to be of importance. My memory is not very clear in respect of other positions but I am of opinion that Kingsbridge Railway station was inspected and that the intersection of Dorset St. and North Frederick St. was considered to be a vital position and that plans were made in relation to it. I do not remember having ever been on inspections of positions on the south side of the city except the one above mentioned in James's St., although it is likely that I was.

During the period of the Conscription menace Cathal Brugha went to London and brought along with him several picked men from the Dublin Brigade for the purpose of shooting the British Ministers the moment that a move would be made to put into force the Conscription Act. As this expedition was explained to me at the time by, I think, Brigadier McKee, the shooting was to take place in the British House of Commons when the Prime Minister, Lloyd George, would announce that the Act was law and that orders had been issued to proceed with carrying out its enactments. Brugha personally was to deal with the Prime Minister and each of the other men was allotted a Minister who was to be the object of his attack. Certain arrangements were to be made for entering the House of Parliament but I was told that it was found impossible to gain admission or to get near any of the British Ministers, so extensive were the precautions taken, which included the erection of special barricades or wooden boardings around portions of the Parliament buildings and in particular at the approaches to them where all persons

entering would have to pass. Brugha and his party remained several months in London either until he was convinced that the proposed action was impossible of achievement or that the likelihood of the enforcement of Conscription by the British had become remote. Every member of this party knew that he would almost certainly lose his life in the attempt to shoot the British Ministers. I only remember the following men of the 2nd Battalion as having gone to London on this expedition: - Murtagh of B Company (he was the eldest of a family who lived about Charlemont Road, off Malahide Road. His younger brothers were also in B Company. I think his Christian name was Peter. He died many years ago). James Mooney who went to New York about 1919 or 1920 and is, I think, still alive. He lived in Fleet St. and was, I believe, a draper's assistant. He was probably a member of B Company also. Michael McDonnell, Quartermaster of the 2nd Battalion and Peadar Clancy are names that occur to me as probably having been members of the party also.

The Conscription phase of the Volunteer activities lasted until the end of World War 1 in November 1918 when an Armistice was agreed to in Europe by the victorious Allies. This event was celebrated in Dublin by the pro-British part of the population and culminated in an attack by a mob led by British soldiers from Portobello Barracks on the headquarters of the Sinn Féin organisation, 6 Harcourt St. The 3rd Battalion, in whose area Harcourt St. was, hastily got together a party to defend the premises. Under the

leadership of Seán McMahon, Vice Commandant of the Battalion, a spirited and unexpected defence was put up and the attackers were beaten off with sticks and similar weapons after having suffered severe injuries and having failed to effect an entrance to the house. This mob had intended to burn No. 6 Harcourt St. but only succeeded in breaking some of the windows and damaging the front door.

In the meantime the training, organising and arming of the Volunteers continued. Men of the more ardent temperaments urged that they be given permission to use arms against the British police and other Intelligence agents who constantly watched and followed active Volunteers. Discipline among the Volunteers however, was excellent and the instructions from G.H.Q. not to use arms until such time as an order would be issued were scrupulously obeyed.

In May 1918 the British Government declared that it had discovered that the Republican Leaders had been in touch with the German military authorities with a view to obtaining assistance for an armed rising in Ireland. A sudden swoop was made one night on the known leaders and many of them were arrested. The Republican Intelligence system organised by Michael Collins within the police and other services of Dublin Castle had begun to operate by this time, and it was possible to warn a certain number of the Republican Leaders in time to enable them to evade capture. At later dates when the Republican Intelligence service at G.H.Q. had been perfected, it was possible to have

word of an intended raid by the British conveyed to Volunteer officers and men who were likely to be rounded up. I was myself warned on two occasions late at night - at midnight or after it - of impending raids. Peadar Clancy on the first occasion and Richard Hegarty (brother of the Director of Organisation) on the second were the bearers of the word from G.H.Q. When curfew was imposed such warnings were not possible of being given, but by then everybody had to make his own safety arrangements and choose carefully the place where he would remain at night.

The Republican organisations had been declared illegal by the British and penalties had been published for membership of them. On 15th August, 1918, Sinn Féin meetings, protected by armed Volunteers were held in the open at several places in Dublin - and I think throughout the country - and a Republican proclamation was read in defiance of the British edict. The 2nd and other Dublin Battalions provided parties of armed Volunteers for the purpose of opposing any attempts by the British to interfere with the reading of the Proclamation.

One of the prominent Republicans arrested at this period was Laurence Ginnell, M.P. He had been a member of the Irish Parliamentary Party and had decided to cease attending the British Parliament when the post-1916 Republican effort was being made, and, although now advanced in years, had thrown himself most enthusiastically into the new attempt to achieve the independence of Ireland. It was decided to rescue him

while he was being conveyed from Mountjoy Prison to the police courts, in the "Black Maria". The holding up of the prison van and the releasing and conveying to safety of Laurence Ginnell was entrusted to the 2nd Battalion. Charles Saurin was appointed to be the Officer in Charge of the rescue, and as he was severely, but unjustly, criticised afterwards by some of the men under his command and by many of his fellow Volunteers for not effecting Ginnell's release, I feel I should record here the details of the event.

Richard McKee instructed me as Commandant of the 2nd Battalion to appoint an Officer for the rescue. G.H.Q. were concerned about the effect that any undue excitement or any rough handling might have on Ginnell who was an old and feeble man although one of the most enthusiastic workers in the Republican movement. I was, therefore, ordered to choose carefully an officer who would either carry out the attempt or hold back his men at the last moment in accordance with a signal which he would receive on the actual spot selected for the rescue from a G.H.Q. observing officer. Reluctance on the part of G.H.Q. to risk the taking of life at this period also influenced the nature of the orders which it was impressed on me were to be observed on this occasion. Accordingly, I carefully conveyed G.H.Q. instructions to Saurin and impressed on him the paramount importance of restraint in the event of his not receiving the agreed signal to act.

The place chosen for the attempt by G.H.Q. was that portion of the N.C. Road outside the entrance to Mountjoy Prison and extending to the corner of Berkeley Road. The reason for this was that the British, as a precautionary measure, had alternative routes for conveying Republican prisoners to the courts - thus the "Black Maria" might either proceed by Berkeley Road or over Blacquiere Canal Bridge and thence by Phibsborough and Constitution Hill or by the longer route past Phibsborough Church and via Grangegorman Road. The important part of G.H.Q. orders was that the attempt to intercept the "Black Maria" was not to be made unless and until a signal was made by a G.H.Q. officer who would be standing on Blacquiere Bridge. An important observation to be made here is that at that time Blacquiere Bridge was much higher than it is now, and a person making a signal from it could be easily seen from the roadway at Mountjoy Prison.

G.H.Q. Intelligence were informed of the day and hour of Ginnell's removal in the "Black Maria" and the Volunteer party was in position in time - about 9 a.m. The signal was never given by the G.H.Q. Officer (who I think was to have been Richard Mulcahy - I am not, however, certain, although I knew at the time) and, of course, the rescue was not carried out, much to the chagrin of the Volunteers. The prison van took the long route via Grangegorman Road and the rescue could have been successfully made by a few men in the secluded portion of that road. I was never told why the signal for the rescue was not given, but I felt that the age

and infirmity of Ginnell entered largely into the matter.

The Battalion Headquarters at Clonliffe Hall was attracting the growing attention of the G.Men or Detectives of Dublin Castle. It was frequented by the Volunteers every night of the week and on Sunday mornings. An attempt to raid it was made by a large force of policemen in lorries, but Wm. Byrne, an officer of E Company who was in charge of the Volunteers in the hall, had taken the precaution of closing and securing the gates of the avenue leading to the position, and thus foiled the raid and ensured that the Volunteers had time to escape. A second attempt by the police was successful as the gates had not been closed on this occasion and the lorries were able to drive right up to the Hall. Some of the Volunteers escaped through the grounds of Clonliffe College, but a large number of them, members of B Company, were arrested. Following this raid, which probably took place in the winter of 1918, the Battalion Council decided to abandon the use of Clonliffe Hall. Through the co-operation of Mrs. Margaret Buckley rooms in the premises of the Irish Women Workers' Union at 42, North Great George's St. were rented and used by the Companies of the Battalion. Care had to be taken not to attract undue attention from the British authorities, and at the same time to conceal the nature of the activities of the Volunteers from some of the Union Committee who might have been either alarmed or unfriendly. These premises were used until the Black and Tan phase of the struggle and were again used during the Truce. Premises in North Summer St., No. 33 (?), which were formerly a school were for

a period used by the Battalion also.

Accounts of the happenings of the period mention that a Convention of the Irish Volunteers was held in Blackhall Place in October 1918. The venue referred to is the Colmcille Hall, which belonged to the Colmcille Branch of the Gaelic League and was extensively used both before and after the Rising by the Volunteers. I am not quite clear about this Convention. I remember that one was arranged but that the venue had to be altered more than once as the British authorities had become aware that it was about to be held. Fleming's Hotel, Gardiners Place, and the Abbey Theatre come to my mind as alternative meeting places hastily arranged but I cannot say where the Convention was finally held or whether I was present or formed part of the protective force but I was on duty in some capacity. I recollect attending a Convention which I believe was the last one held until after the Truce and which met at 25, Parnell Square (then the Headquarters of the Gaelic League and now portion of Coláiste Mhuire Christian Brothers). This may have been the 1918 Convention but I am inclined to think that it was held in the Autumn of 1919. Michael Lynch, Vice Commandant, Dublin Brigade, and Joe McGrath, Commandant of the 4th Battalion, Dublin Brigade, are the only delegates whom I remember being present.

Michael McDonnell, Quartermaster of the 2nd Battalion, reported to me about late summer in 1918 that Tom Burke of C Company (later Captain of that Company) who was employed as a checker on the Great Northern Railway at Sheriff St., Dublin, had informed

him that a large consignment of gelignite (and probably detonators) was expected to arrive by rail at Sheriff St. in the near future. Great secrecy was being maintained about the consignment and great care taken that none but a very few of the railway employees would know anything about it. Tom Burke was in a position to see the advice notes and arranged to convey word to Michael McDonnell in time for a raid to be organised. I told McDonnell to pick his men, give me an outline of his plan and to be ready to move swiftly. After a rather long delay during which it looked as if the gelignite was not going to be conveyed by rail, Burke brought word one evening that a railway wagon had arrived full of wooden boxes of the explosive. The boxes had been unloaded into one of the goods sheds and was to lie overnight there with one solitary D.M.P. constable, who was unarmed, protecting it. McDonnell's plan was to enter the railway yard after dark with a party of Volunteers by scaling the walls in Oriel St., which would be then practically devoid of traffic or pedestrians, come silently on the policeman and quietly remove the boxes to waiting Volunteers over the wall in Oriel St. The men engaged were mainly of E Company. I cannot now say how many men there were on the raid but the number of boxes was so great that a large number had to be mobilised. The coup was a complete success although the removal of the boxes by hand and the transferring of them over the wall took a considerable time. It would be impossible to say now what quantity of explosive was captured - but it was very great - and the

British military searched the north east of the city extensively for several days before they abandoned their attempts to recapture it. None of the gelignite was ever recovered by the British.

Shortly after the capture of the gelignite I obtained information regarding some military stores at the North Wall. As well as I can remember they were rifles belonging to a military post at the premises near Guild St., then known as the "Belfast Boat" shed. These were duly captured, dumped, safely and eventually distributed.

These two captures from the British authorities were the first in Dublin since the Rising. The capture of the gelignite especially caused a great sensation and served as a starting off point for similar activities in other Battalion areas.

Shortly after the end of World War 1 in November 1918, the British Parliament was dissolved and arrangements made for the holding of a General Election in what was then termed by the British the United Kingdom. The campaign was conducted in Ireland with the most intense vigour and enthusiasm by Sinn Féin, which declared that its successful candidates would not attend the British Parliament under any circumstances but would, if they secured a majority of seats, meet in Ireland as the Parliament of an independent Irish Republic. Sinn Féin achieved a sweeping victory and completely routed the Irish Parliamentary Party, which was pledged to attendance at Westminster and the measure of freedom

known as "Home Rule". The Volunteers in Dublin and all over the country played an important part in the campaign, which lasted about three weeks from about the last week of November to the second week of December 1918. Interference with public meetings, with individual voters and with ballot boxes both by the British Government and the Irish Parliamentary Party had occurred on former occasions less important than this, and it was of supreme importance to take protective measures. In the area of the 2nd Battalion in Dublin there was an additional reason for making certain that there would be neither intimidation of voters nor concealment of the true ballot - as one of the Republican candidates there was Richard Mulcahy, Chief of Staff. The Battalion established its headquarters at 33 North Summer St., from which it supplied parties of Volunteers to the different divisions of the area when the necessity arose. On the conclusion of the polling, armed parties of Volunteers escorted the ballot boxes to the counting centre at Bolton St. Technical Schools. Parties of Volunteers also remained all night as guard over the boxes and were present during the counting of votes.

In the midst of the election campaign Richard Coleman of Swords, Co. Dublin, who had been sentenced for his participation in the Rising and who had been arrested and sentenced on a charge arising out of the East Clare election in 1917, died in Usk Prison in Wales. The Volunteers decided to give him a public military funeral. Word was conveyed from the police authorities that marching in military formation would not be

permitted and they were let know that the Volunteers were determined to pay fitting honour to their deceased comrade. Preparations were made by the Dublin Brigade to meet with force any attempt by the British authorities to stop the public parade through the streets of Dublin in military formation or the firing party at Glasnevin Cemetery. Tension was high as the mobilisation began early on a Sunday morning early in December 1918. Officers and men with important duties were on parade in Pearse St. before 8 o'clock a.m. The general 'fall in' was probably 10 a.m. Drenching rain fell all day. The parade was led by Richard McKee, Brigade Commandant, and the Battalions were in regular military formation. Armed parties - the arms were revolvers and automatic pistols - were with every Company. The citizens of Dublin turned out in great numbers to witness the funeral and pay their respects. Notwithstanding great apparent activity on the part of the British authorities everything passed off without interference until the Volunteers, having paid the last honours at the graveside, were preparing to march back to the city. At this point information was received that the police in great force had formed across the road at Cross Guns Bridge and had intimated that if the Volunteers attempted to march back to the city they would be prevented by force. Word was sent back to the police officer in charge that the Volunteers intended to march back from the cemetery and would not brook any interference. As well as I can remember now an appeal followed from the police officer that the

situation be reconsidered, and he was told that after a short period, ten or fifteen minutes perhaps, the column would march to the city whether his men were across the road or not. In the meantime Richard McKee obtained the key of the Prospect Avenue gate of the cemetery - a gate which was only opened on very rare occasions - formed up the column in Prospect Square and then proceeded via St. Teresa's Road, Botanic Road, Iona Road, Drumcondra, Dorset St. to O'Connell St., where the parade was dismissed by Richard Mulcahy. Whether the police were aware of McKee's manoeuvre or not I cannot say, but in any case they made no attempt to follow the Volunteers, and it was generally believed that the officer in charge was relieved that he had been outwitted and very pleased that a clash had been averted. Whether the police were prepared or not to stand fast if the Volunteers had marched back by Cross Guns Bridge there is no doubt that the Volunteers were in no mood on that Sunday afternoon to yield to the threat of force, and if there had not been the alternative route back to the city they would have pressed their way forward no matter what the consequences would have been.

1919:

The year 1919 ushered in a new phase in the struggle. An overwhelming majority of seats had been obtained by Republicans in the General Election in December 1918, and the representatives thus elected - or rather those of them who were not under arrest or

otherwise impeded by the British - met on 21st January and established Dáil Éireann, the independent Parliament of Ireland. The Declaration of Independence was issued and responsibility taken for the conduct of the struggle against England. This placed the Irish Volunteers in a more secure position from the point of view of justification for their activities in the eyes of the nations of the world. The meeting of the deputies of Dáil Éireann was held under the armed protection of the Volunteers supplied by the Dublin Brigade. The protection consisted of small parties of men (in their ordinary attire) carrying revolvers and automatic pistols and perhaps a certain number of hand grenades. There were also small parties of scouts who were on the alert to observe and report any activity on the part of the Crown Forces which might precede interference by them. Although the British Forces did not attempt on that day to suppress Dáil Éireann the renewal of the armed struggle may be regarded as coinciding with the inaugural meeting of the Dáil.
On the very night of 21st January 1919, after a day of intense expectancy, the Dublin Battalions received orders to "stand to" under arms immediately and to be prepared to receive further orders which might possibly be an all-out clash of arms on a nation-wide scale. Later communications revealed that the action at Soloheadbeg, Co. Tipperary, had taken place and that G.H.Q. Intelligence Department had been warned that Martial Law for the whole country was being contemplated by the British Authorities. In the 2nd Battalion area the

order was received probably about 8 p.m. The Companies formed into small groups which assembled in selected houses in the area; inter-communications between the groups were established and all possible preparations made. I had my headquarters with some other 2nd Battalion officers in a house at Bessboro Avenue, North Strand. This house was either the residence of Paddy Daly, Captain of B Company, or of Vincent Byrne (later of the Active Service Unit). It was possibly midnight or after it before we received orders to dismiss as the immediate danger had passed. From this day forward clashes increasing in size and importance occurred between the Volunteers and the British police and military in many counties. In Dublin city aggressive action by small groups which struck and disappeared quickly began to take place at irregular intervals as opportunites presented themselves or as certain tasks were carried out for G.H.Q. In the beginning in the city these groups although armed had orders not to shoot unless it was absolutely necessary.

The President of the Republic, Eamon de Valera, was a prisoner in Lincoln Jail, England, at the time of the General Election in 1918 and of the establishment of Dáil Éireann. He escaped in February 1919 along with Seán McGarry and Seán Milroy. In March influenza was widespread through the jails in England and Pierce McCann of Tipperary, a member of the Dáil, died. After McCann's death the British released all the Republican prisoners. It was then decided to give the President a public welcome back to Dublin, and to pay

him at the entrance to the city the ceremonial honours which had some years earlier been paid to the British Sovereign. The Brigade received orders to parade for the occasion. Meanwhile G.H.Q. Intelligence received word that the British authorities regarded this as a public challenge and had decided to use all available forces to prevent it. British officers in their messes had openly declared that at last "the fighting race" was going to be wiped out. A British officer's batman (a war-time ~~Volunteer~~ recruit not then demobilised) who occupied rooms in the same house in which I was then living and whom I did not suspect of knowing anything of my affiliations, told my wife more than once on the morning of the day appointed for the President's reception that there was no doubt but that something in the nature of a massacre was contemplated that evening. We took this as a friendly warning which I passed on in due course to Brigadier McKee, who informed me that G.H.Q. had already decided to call off the parade. The ceremony accordingly did not take place.

During the First World War the British established a military aerodrome at Gormanston on the site which the present Irish Army training camp occupies, but soon discovered that the air conditions rendered it unsuitable. Experiments revealed that the Collinstown district could supply all the requirements of an air force and, accordingly, they acquired a site there and established an aerodrome. This site has since been extended and developed and is internationally known as Dublin Airport. Collinstown, which is to the west

of the main Dublin-Swords road at Cloghran, was then unknown to practically everybody except the farming people who lived in its neighbourhood. Narrow winding country lanes led to the site from Dardistown Cross. In 1918 and 1919 the British were carrying out extensions to the buildings and the airfield, and hundreds of Dublin city and county artisans and labourers were employed there by the civil contractor who had been appointed. A large number of these - carpenters, electricians, labourers etc. - were Irish Volunteers belonging mostly to the First Battalion, Dublin Brigade, and to the unit recruited in the Finglas area. The latter unit was at the time under the special care of Michael Lynch, Vice Commandant of the Dublin Brigade, who later became Commandant of the Fingal Brigade. Tom Byrne, O/C 1st Battalion, reported to Brigadier McKee that some of his officers who worked at the aerodrome had asked permission to raid the guard-room and seize the rifles and other military equipment. They believed this could be successfully done as they had made themselves thoroughly conversant with the aerodrome, the guard-room and sentry posts and the military routine of the British Force. Patrick Holohan, then a Company Officer in the 1st Battalion and at a later date Commandant of that Battalion, was one of those who argued keenly that the raid be carried out. He had observed the essential points during his daily work at the aerodrome and reported clearly and intelligently the details. He was, as well as I can now remember, placed in charge of the operation when it was eventually attempted. There were, of course, other

officers of the First Battalion engaged in the raid but I cannot call them to mind now.

When Brigadier McKee received Commandant Byrne's report he perceived that the proposed operation would be a large scale one which, if successful, would yield most satisfactory results in the form of arms, ammunition and military equipment and of prestige. He saw that owing to the distance of the military post from the city, transport, a weak arm of the Brigade at that time, would play a vital part. It was also apparent that the removal of the captured material and the covering up of tracks were going to present difficulties. Motor drivers as well as cars were scarce at that date. The country lanes leading to and from the aerodrome were narrow and the surfaces of them were soft. One way traffic only would be possible. McKee decided that the raid would be undertaken and that the operation would be carried out by the First Battalion, which claimed it as its "job", but he ordered that detailed plans were to be submitted to him and that on no account was any action to be taken until his approval was obtained. There followed several months of planning and postponing owing to unforeseen difficulties, which at one period seemed as if they would nullify all attempts at solution.

In the very beginning G.H.Q., who had been informed of the projected raid, on account of its magnitude ordered its postponement. I was told in later years by Michael Lynch that the President of the Republic, Eamon de Valera, who had escaped from Lincoln

Jail was staying in a house in the neighbourhood of Collinstown and that the activities of the British following the proposed operation would be in danger of resulting in his recapture. A house in some other district had to be arranged for the President before the raid could be sanctioned.

As the raid was to take place in the Fingal area and as arrangements would have to be made with the Finglas Company to provide dumps for some at least of the booty, that Unit had to be informed. The question then arose as to the participation of the Finglas men in the raid and of the sharing of the captured rifles and ammunition. The resultant inter-unit discussions were so unsatisfactory that McKee threatened to entrust the carrying out of the operation to the 2nd Battalion.

Eventually this question was resolved and the First Battalion successfully raided the aerodrome. In the meantime the plans were examined by McKee at the Brigade Council. Every detail was carefully gone into, weak points observed and remedied or altered where necessary. One matter which it was feared might endanger the success of the raid was the presence of a number of specially trained dogs at the entrance to the military post. These dogs were reported to be "man eaters" which would devour any strangers approaching the post. They were also supposed to start loud baying at night-time if other people than the members of the military post were about. It was decided to poison these dogs, and this was one of the first steps to be taken immediately prior to the raid. In the actual event these dogs did not prove to be an obstacle

but I forget whether they were actually poisoned. At any rate, the men who were selected to deal with them had cultivated their friendship beforehand and were able to approach them without causing any noise that might arouse suspicion in the minds of the garrison.

McKee himself arranged the transport through, I think, Liam Cullen, a member of the 2nd Battalion who was engaged in that business. The latter's brother, Volunteer Owen Cullen, drove one of the cars and distinguished himself by successfully overcoming the danger of recapture of portion of the rifles and ammunition following the breakdown of one of the cars. The road surfaces were wet and muddy near the aerodrome and the cars were driven away for a few miles in the opposite direction before actually taking the pre-arranged routes, thus frustrating any attempts to follow them to their destinations. The capture of the guard was achieved without difficulty, the men in the guardroom being surprised and bound. The others were also taken unawares.

The raid took place late on the night of the 20th March, 1919, probably about 10 o'clock p.m. Seventy-five rifles, bayonets and sets of equipment, 6,000 rounds of ammunition and portion

of an aeroplane were captured without the firing of a single shot. The captured material was all safely conveyed to pre-arranged dumps and was never re-captured. All the men engaged were safely withdrawn when the raid had been completed.

The Collinstown raid had an important bearing on the subsequent course of events. It provided what was then a large addition to the armament of a poorly equipped army. It showed what could be done by determination, careful planning, the strictest discipline, absolute secrecy and faithful execution of every detail of orders. Its success was an encouragement to all units of the Volunteers throughout the country to look for similar targets.

At a later date when it was realised that rifles were not, except upon exceptional occasions, suitable for use by the I.R.A. in the type of warfare that developed in Dublin city, most of these rifles, as well as those captured at the North Wall and other places, were transferred to country Brigades which were in urgent need of them.

Early on Saturday afternoon, 29th March, 1919, twenty Republican prisoners, mostly members of the Dublin Brigade, escaped from Mountjoy Prison. Friendly warders had been the channel of communication and the plan of escape had thus been arranged between the Volunteer officers outside and the prisoners' leaders inside. I cannot now recollect all the details, but at any rate at a signal given while the prisoners were at exercise in the prison grounds near the wall at the canal side the warders were overpowered and the men swarmed over the wall on a rope ladder which had been thrown over from outside. Peadar Clancy occurs to my mind as have been the officer in charge on the outside. The men who scaled the wall were met on the outside by fellow Volunteers, along with whom they hurried along the canal bank to the road at Drumcondra, mingled with the passing crowd and were brought to pre-arranged houses where they lay low for a while. This escape was successfully carried out almost without attracting the notice of any citizens who happened to be on the streets near the prison at Drumcondra or Glasnevin.

In addition to periodic swoops on the residences of known Volunteers and other Republican workers, with the object of jailing or interning as large a number as possible, the British authorities had organised an intelligence system in the city which was growing in strength and effectiveness. Volunteers were watched by members of the Dublin Metropolitan Detective Division - known as the "G" Division - and information was being carefully gathered in regard to active Volunteers and their meeting places, and leaders especially were being noted. The activities of the better known of the "G" men were well known to the ordinary Volunteers, but the G.H.Q. Intelligence Department organised by Michael Collins was receiving detailed

accounts of the work being done by the less well-known and the unknown of both the "G" men and of the civilian spies. Up to April, 1919, no action had been taken against those engaged in this hostile intelligence system, but at that date orders reached the Brigade Council to take the first step towards breaking down what was threatening to become a most effective weapon in the hands of the enemy when he would decide the attempt to disrupt the whole movement. The initial action carried out by the Dublin Volunteers was the seizing in suitable places in the Battalion areas of the lower ranking police detectives who were doing the minor spying on the Volunteers. In all the Battalion areas these junior detectives were rounded up on the same night close to their homes or lodgings as they were returning from duty, taken down quiet laneways and beaten until they solemnly promised to take no further part in such treacherous work against their country's effort to regain freedom. They were told that if they did not keep their promise they would be shot, but that they would not be prevented from doing detective work against criminals. This action had the desired result and drove in the outer ring of police spies. The 2nd Battalion, which I then commanded, received, as did the other Battalions, a list of the names of these detectives who resided in its area and carried out the duties assigned to it.

The next step in the breaking up of the British Intelligence system was a more drastic one. Brigadier McKee told me that the Government of the Republic had sent written notifications through the post to the higher ranking detectives of the "G" Division in Dublin, who were employed on what was termed "political work", that they would be shot without further warning if they did not immediately

cease collecting and supplying to the British authorities information which would be of supreme importance to them in the offensive which it was known that they were organising with the object of wiping out at one blow, if possible, the whole freedom movement. Detective Smith who disregarded the warning sent to him was the first detective to be executed. He was particularly active in observing and reporting on the 2nd Battalion. Between ten and eleven o'clock on a night in July, 1919, he was returning to his home in Millmount Avenue, Drumcondra, and was shot as he passed over the Tolka Bridge at Drumcondra. Detective Hoey was shot one night in the following September at the entrance in Townsend Street to the Pearse Street (then Great Brunswick Street) Police Barracks. At intervals afterwards others were executed, including the well known "Johnny Barton" who had been an efficient criminal detective and who had only undertaken "political work" after the Republican Government had begun to exact the death penalty on enemy intelligence personnel. Barton was warned when he commenced his spying but did not heed the notices sent to him.

The executions of the detectives were not carried out directly by the Battalions. Selected men from the Battalions, who were known to have strong convictions in regard to the moral aspect of such action and to possess the necessary coolness and nerve to carry it into effect, were ordered to report to the Intelligence Department and they received their instructions from that Department. This was the beginning of the group of men who became known as "The Squad". They were directly under G.H.Q. orders - in practice under G.H.Q. Intelligence Department orders. In the beginning they were not detached from

their Battalions and were available for the after-working-hours duties of their Companies. This gave rise to a certain amount of murmuring in the Companies as the difficulty of "dual control" became apparent and occasionally caused discontent consequent on the selected men being absent from Company duties or to have been in action without their N.C.O's or officers knowing anything about such matters beforehand. However, this matter eventually righted itself when these special men became whole-time soldiers and it was recognised that their particular duties and the hours at which they would have to be prepared to go into action necessitated organisation on lines other than those then provided by the Company or Battalion.

The methods adopted by G.H.Q. to deal with the "G" Division of Dublin Castle were later extended to civilian spies who were unknown to the ordinary Volunteers. The result was that the traditional spying system of the British authorities in Dublin was completely destroyed. The British had to build up a new system which never functioned as effectively as that which had been destroyed, and while it was being organised the Volunteers were able with comparative lack of interference to complete their preparations for meeting the next phase of the struggle.

Dáil Éireann had been established as the Government of the Republic. The Department of Defence had been set up with Cathal Brugha as Minister for Defence having responsibility for the Volunteers. It was decided to publicly declare them to be the Army of the Republic and orders came from G.H.Q. that every Volunteer would be required to take an oath of allegiance to Dáil Éireann, the Government of the Republic. To the great majority of

the Volunteers this presented no difficulty as such procedure seemed to be quite natural and necessary. Hitherto a Volunteer had simply undertaken to carry out the orders of his superior officers and had not been required to swear allegiance or take an oath of any kind. Those who were members of the I.R.B. had, of course, already sworn allegiance to that organisation and some of them were temporarily confused and hesitant until the I.R.B. issued instructions that the oath to Dáil Éireann could be taken by its members.

As Commandant of the 2nd Battalion I administered the oath of allegiance to Dáil Éireann to most of the Companies of that Battalion, the Vice Commandant, Oscar Traynor, taking my place in the case of the Companies which I could not reach in the time laid down by G.H.Q. From this time forward the Volunteers were officially the Irish Republican Army and Dáil Éireann, the Government of the Republic, accepted responsibility for their actions. This took place in the summer of 1919.

Together with Joseph O'Connor, Commandant of the 3rd Battalion, and Oscar Traynor, Vice Commandant of the 2nd Battalion, I was appointed by Brigadier McKee to be one of three judges of a Republican Court to decide a civil criminal case. This took place at the time when these Courts were in the course of being formed and it must have been one of the earliest held in the country, and I believe that it was certainly the first held in Dublin. I cannot now fix the date. The whole proceedings were conducted by members of the Dublin Brigade under the authority of Dáil Éireann. The judges were informed that a man had been arrested on a charge of rape and that he was being held prisoner in the basement

of the house No. 44 Parnell Square which was the property of the I.R.A. This particular house had been purchased by the National Volunteers who were controlled by John Redmond, and Colonel Maurice Moore had, I believe, handed the deeds which were in his possession to either the Dublin Brigade or G.H.Q. sometime after the Rising, probably when Dáil Éireann was established. The arrest had been made by Seumas Kavanagh of 1st Battalion who had been made responsible for the custody of the prisoner pending the assembly of the Court. As the British authorities had closed the house under D.O.R.A. regulations, it had to be entered without attracting attention and all proceedings were conducted in the basement. There was practically no furniture in the house and the judges and officials as well as the parties concerned had to sit on improvised seats. Brigadier McKee administered an oath to the three judges before the trial began, and he remained during the hearing in virtue of his position as Brigadier and for the purpose of reporting the case to G.H.Q. Peadar Clancy was also present and I believe was responsible for the protection of the Court against hostile interference. All parties concerned having agreed to abide by the decision of the Court, the judges examined the accused and the other parties who had been summoned to give evidence. The Court took a certain view in regard to the case, but as it was thought it would be well to obtain expert advice on the moral side of the question it was agreed to defer announcing a decision pending consultation with a clerical authority. The prisoner was set at liberty on his undertaking not to leave the city and the judges, accompanied by Brigadier McKee, called on a priest of a certain Order and asked his opinion on the moral issue

involved. The priest in turn consulted a colleague who was an expert in matters of the kind and who agreed with the view taken by the Court. The decision of the Court was then made known to the parties concerned in the case.

This case was, as far as I know, the only civil case in Dublin tried by military officers.

As the first anniversary of the Armistice of 11th November, 1918, was approaching, the British authorities in Ireland announced that great preparations had been made for a triumphal military celebration through the streets of Dublin. It was to take the form of a parade of the British forces who would march from Dublin Castle to Trinity College grounds. Lord French who was a Field Marshal of the British Army and who had been appointed Viceroy and Military Governor of Ireland was to be in command of the troops. Lord French, either previous to this date - 11th November 1919 - or shortly after it, had addressed some Companies of loyalist Boy Scouts and had urged them to take their part in the effort to exterminate the members of the Sinn Féin and Republican movement whom he compared to "vermin". His appointment had heralded the starting of a campaign of ruthlessness on the part of the British. Republican G.H.Q. decided not to let the occasion pass without making the strongest possible protest. The Dublin Brigade Council discussed plans for shooting Lord French during the parade. One of the plans discussed was the placing of a rifleman in a room at the top of the building, No. 4-5 Westmoreland Street, to which access could be made without attracting notice with the aid of one of the occupiers of a suite of offices. From the window of this room it would have been possible to

shoot Lord French as he passed into Trinity College from College Green. Protective measures for the rifleman and his line of retreat were discussed. Finally it was decided that simultaneous attacks on the troops during the parade would be made by small parties armed with revolvers and possibly hand grenades, and that a special effort would be made to shoot Lord French. I was ordered to select an officer of the 2nd Battalion and place him in charge of the proposed operation. Accordingly I instructed Captain Seán Meldon of C. Company to prepare to carry out the attacks on the parade. This operation was called off by G.H.Q. on the morning of the parade, Captain Meldon receiving the cancelling order direct either from Brigadier McKee or by despatch from G.H.Q. The 1st Battalion had been entrusted with the task of seizing on the spot, and immediately destroying, all photographic plates or films of the parade. Cameras were not to be damaged if it were possible to avoid doing so. This operation was thoroughly and successfully carried out. Film and plates were taken out of the cameras of the photographers engaged by Irish and English and other newspapers and cinema companies and were destroyed. Captain Seán Meldon, who had made all preparations for the carrying out of his orders, fell into bad health in the following year (1920) and died after a rather protracted illness.

During a raid on No. 76 Harcourt Street, the headquarters of Dáil Éireann, early in November, 1919, Richard McKee, Commandant of the Dublin Brigade, was arrested with several others, one of whom was Diarmuid O'Hegarty, Director of Organisation of the I.R.A. On the occasion of this raid Michael Collins made a daring escape

by getting on to the roof through a skylight and entering the Standard Hotel - three or four houses away - from the roof of the hotel, also through a skylight. Where Collins made his entry to the Standard Hotel, he was over the well of the staircase and he was obliged to swing himself clear of his perilous position at the same time as he released his hold of the skylight opening. He then walked out into the street and proceeded to another Republican office to resume his work. McKee was sentenced to two months imprisonment.

During McKee's absence in Mountjoy Prison, Michael Lynch, Vice Brigadier, took his place as Commandant of the Brigade. During this period, i.e., on 19th December, 1919, the attack at Ashtown on Lord French, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, took place. Lieutenant Martin Savage of D. Company of the 2nd Battalion was killed in this attack which was unsuccessful. This operation was a G.H.Q. one and the Battalion Commandants had no knowledge of the preparations for it. Lieutenant Savage and other members of the 2nd Battalion acted as members of "The Squad" on this occasion. Captain Patrick Daly, 2nd Battalion, and possibly Tom Keogh, also took part in the attack. Others were Seumas Robinson and Dan Breen. Shortly afterwards I knew the names of all the participants in the Ashtown attack but I cannot now recollect any others than those I have named. Lieutenant Martin Savage was an assistant in the provision business of Kirk, North Strand Road, and he lived over the shop. Immediately after the raid Tom Keogh, anticipating a raid on Mr. Kirk's premises by the British as soon as they established Savage's identity, hurried to the shop on the North Strand Road, went to Savage's room and removed any of his belongings that were

of a military nature or that might give a clue to his associates. Keogh was only just clear of the premises when the British forces appeared.

There were some slight murmurings in the 2nd Battalion against G.H.Q. for taking away a member of the Battalion without notification. It was felt that the capture or death of a Volunteer - especially of one of officer rank - might have serious consequences, such as, the seizure of documents or arms, when the inevitable raid on his residence occurred. If the operation were planned by the Battalion, it would have been a routine matter to see to such precautions beforehand. However, the timely action of Tom Keogh relieved the tension on this point. Some officers of the Battalion, however, expressed their dissatisfaction with the decision of G.H.Q. not to organise a public funeral for Martin Savage and pay him military honours (as had been done in the case of other Volunteers who had died since the Rising in the service of their country) but to allow his relatives to take his remains away quietly for burial in his home town. Oscar Traynor, who at that time was either Vice Battalion Commandant or Captain of F. Company, made a strong protest and Seán Russell, Captain of E. Company, refused to parade for a period. However, these matters quickly became righted when McKee was released and resumed his command and the offensive against the British armed forces gradually developed.

My recollection of G.H.Q. attitude in connection with the removel of the remains of Martin Savage is that Richard Mulcahy, Chief of Staff, addressed the Brigade Council, of which I was a member, and said that G.H.Q. had decided that we would not march through the streets

of Dublin in military formation after Martin Savage's remains, but that we would pledge ourselves to carry on to the end against the British armed forces the fight in which he had given his life. We were also told that while we should not unnecessarily leave ourselves open to detection or arrest, we could be present at the Broadstone railway station on the morning that his remains would be taken by his relatives to his home on the West coast. It is necessary to state here that Savage's remains were not handed over to his relatives until late on the night before the early morning departure for the West.

As Commandant of the 2nd Battalion I addressed the Companies of the Battalion - including D. Company, Savage's Company - on the night before the removal of the remains. My impression was that the Companies accepted G.H.Q.'s decision and, recognising that the armed fight was about to recommence, silently vowed to regard their fellow soldier's death as an occasion for the strengthening of their determination to be steadfast no matter what the odds.

With my brother, Leo Henderson (Vice Commandant, 2nd Battalion), Patrick McGrath, Quartermaster, D. Company, Richard Healy, Lieutenant, D. Company, and several other members of that Company I was present at the Broadstone Station when Savage's remains were entrained. We stood to attention and saluted as the train moved out.

On one of the days immediately after the death of Lieutenant Martin Savage the 'Irish Independent' published an editorial in which it referred to him and the other I.R.A. soldiers who took part in the attack on Lord French as "murderers" or "assassins". At this date I cannot, of

course, call to mind the exact words that were used, but the reference to the men who took part in the attack was more than a disapproval of what they had attempted. G.H.Q. considered that the article was a gross reflection on the men engaged in the national struggle and an invitation to the British to treat them as criminals. Action which took the form of a raid on the printing works of the 'Independent' newspaper and the smashing of vital machines was ordered as a warning to the proprietors, and the proprietors of all newspapers, that such unpatriotic comment at the height of the fight for freedom would not be tolerated. Michael Lynch who was Acting Brigade Commandant (in the absence of McKee who was serving a sentence in Mountjoy Prison) organised this action. Men of the Brigade who were compositors and printers took part and advised as to the most vulnerable parts of the plant and the best methods of demolishing them. Patrick McGrath, Quartermaster of D. Company - Lieutenant Savage's Company - was a compositor by trade and at the time of the raid was employed by the 'Independent' newspaper. I think he was actually working in the pressroom on the night the plant was put out of action.

Thus as the year 1919 was drawing to a close the I.R.A. offensive was gradually developing in Dublin, and the men of the Brigade had reached the stage of organisation and training at which they were prepared to take the initiative in resuming the fight commenced in 1916. In fact, as I have tried to show, they had already struck in some instances and were on the alert for the carrying out of further orders. Perfect discipline had been established and, notwithstanding the natural impatience of the more ardent natures, everything that was

done was carefully planned and action was only taken when authorised by the appropriate officers.

During the autumn of 1919 McKee had arranged for the instruction of the officers of the Brigade by organising a series of lectures and demonstrations. These usually were held on Saturday evenings and, as all the Brigade officers were on these occasions assembled together under one roof, he decided to arrange for their protection by the N.C.O's of the Brigade. Accordingly a ring of N.C.O's armed with revolvers and hand grenades was formed around whatever premises was selected for the instruction, and the N.C.O. in charge on every occasion had orders to open fire on any attempt to attack the officers' meetings and to delay the enemy advance until the officers were warned and in a position to defend themselves. The officers attending these courses of instruction were armed and had orders to engage any party which might attack them. The meetings were held in different places on both north and south sides of the city. One of the places was the Plasterers' Trade Union Hall in Exchange Street, within a few hundred yards of the main entrance to Dublin Castle. The meetings sometimes were held in a house in James's Street which was, I believe, the property of the Cosgrave family and was used by the 4th Battalion. None of these officers' meetings ever attracted the attention of the British. McKee himself, Commandant J.J. O'Connell and others delivered the instruction to the officers.

A number of young men from different parts of the country who were being trained as National Teachers in St. Patrick's College, Drumcondra, had joined Companies of the 2nd Battalion. Towards the close of 1919 or in the early part of 1920 these were formed into an Officers' Training

Corps and received special instruction, most of which was given in the grounds of St. Patrick's College. Many of these men took prominent parts later in the fight in the native counties. One of the names that occur to me in this connection is Christopher (later Doctor) Macken who became an officer in Mayo or Galway. Oscar Traynor was mainly responsible for organising this Corps.

In Dublin the year 1920 was ushered in by manifestations of the hardening of the I.R.A. campaign, including the continuing of attacks on those engaged in endeavouring to continue the British Intelligence system or to re-organise it on improved lines. Richard McKee, released from Mountjoy Prison in January, 1920, led in person on the night of his release an attack on a train containing military stores and explosives proceeding to the west guarded by a party of British soldiers. For some time the Dublin Brigade had been waiting for information as to the transport of these stores by rail from Dublin. On the evening of the attack, Tom Ennis (E. Company, 2nd Battalion, and later Commandant of the Battalion) who was employed in the goods depot of the Midland Great Western Railway, North Wall, obtained information that the removal of the military, etc., would take place about eight o'clock p.m. that day. He got in touch as soon as he could with McKee, who got an attacking party together hastily and launched the attack on the train at Newcomen Bridge, North Strand. It was one of the few attacks of this kind that failed, and the reason undoubtedly was that, owing to there not being sufficient time to plan the action properly, an unsuitable spot was selected for the hold up of the train and the attempt to capture the explosives and arms.

Alarmed by all the evidence of growing I.R.A.

strength and daring in the provinces as well as in Dublin city, the British military authorities introduced curfew regulations in February (1920) for the city of Dublin. Under these regulations citizens were ordered to remain indoors and keep their houses in darkness from midnight until 6 o'clock a.m. Later the orders were issued making the commencing hour of curfew 10 o'clock p.m., and during the most intense period of the fighting 8 p.m. The penalty for being caught by the military or Black and Tan patrols on the streets during the prohibited hours was arrest and possible court-martial, with the added grave risk of being shot out-of-hands.

About midday on a Sunday in the opening months of 1920, one of Guinness's steamers on cross-channel service was raided and about a dozen rifles and revolvers which were in the cabin removed to a 2nd Battalion dump. Information was conveyed to the Battalion by one of the crew who was a member of G. Company. The steamer was docked at the Custom House, right under the eyes of a British military guard. The I.R.A. party, in charge of Oscar Traynor, walked quietly aboard in twos and threes and, aided by the accurate information given by the G. Company Volunteer, held up the sailors on board and seized the arms in the space of a few moments. A motor car seized at Croke Park, where an important match was being played, was driven up by Pat McCrea and the arms were transferred to it and conveyed safely to the dump. This action was just one of many which were carried out all over the city at this and later periods, according as information was obtained and plans made.

Robert Barton had escaped from Mountjoy Prison on St. Patrick's night 1919. He was later recaptured and

courtmartialled in February 1920. A party of the 2nd Battalion under Captain Pat Sweeney, F. Company, attempted to rescue him on the day following his courtmartial. Information had been received that a Black Maria with Barton inside would pass through Berkeley Road at a certain hour. The 2nd Battalion party blocked the road at Mountjoy Street and Nelson Street by running out a car with a long ladder on it when the Black Maria appeared. The British authorities had, however, anticipated an attempt at rescue and had sent the prison van on without Barton.

About this period G.H.Q. decided to seize British civil and military mails and thus secure valuable information as to projected measures against the I.R.A. and Republican Government, the reports of spies, etc. In Dublin a very successful raid and capture of "Castle Mails" took place in the early stages of this feature of I.R.A. offensive. Intelligence agents reported that at certain times the Dublin Castle and other British official correspondence was called for by a military party at "The Rink" in the Rotunda Gardens which had been used since Easter 1916 as the sorting office of the G.P.O. The capture of these on a certain morning was entrusted to the 2nd Battalion and the Battalion selected Oscar Traynor to carry out the operation which was timed for about 8 or 9 a.m. Before the British military party arrived at the gate on the west side of Parnell Square, at which they received the mails, the I.R.A. party had entered from the east side and, using the chutes which conveyed parcels, etc., to the sorting and despatch department, had descended like "bolts from the blue" among the astonished P.O. workers and had captured and put into a motor van at the entrance the official correspondence which was duly

delivered to Republican G.H.Q. officers. Later during that day Paddy Daly brought me word that one of the G.P.O. staff was boasting that he recognised Oscar Traynor as the I.R.A. leader that morning. This man was duly called on at his residence and warned that he would have to keep his mouth shut. Needless to say he was thoroughly frightened and gave no more trouble.

G.H.Q. issued orders in April, 1920, that the offices of all the Income Tax collectors in Dublin were to be raided and all documents in them burned. Many of these were in the 1st and 2nd Battalion areas on the north side of the city. The 3rd and 4th Battalions also had many of these offices to deal with. All the Battalions struck at the same time - about 7.30 p.m. on a certain Saturday in April, 1920. The half dozen or so offices in the 2nd Battalion area, as well as those in other areas, were entered without attracting notice, the documents heaped in piles in the rooms, sprinkled with paraffin oil and burned.

The foregoing are only some of the outstanding items of the I.R.A. offensive in the 2nd Battalion area up to April, 1920. Raids for arms, captures of documents and other varied and unexpected acts of aggression of lesser magnitude continued to be successfully planned and carried out. The British were unable to cope with these activities but initiated raids on the houses of known I.R.A. men and soon had Mountjoy and the other prisons throughout the country full of I.R.A. captives. This action of the British was countered on the I.R.A. side by the men who were at large going "on the run" (in the city this meant staying at night at the houses of friends who

would be above suspicion by the British) and inside the jails by hunger strike, refusal to obey orders and the breaking down of cell doors and walls. Hunger strikes, followed by releases of prisoners, rearrests after short periods and further hunger strikes, culminated in April, 1920, in a great public outburst of sympathy, organised public meetings and protests, mass recital of the Rosary and other prayers outside the gates of Mountjoy Prison. The resentment of the citizens increased as prisoners who had collapsed were borne out to hospital on stretchers and as it was learned from the men in hospital and from friendly warders that walls of the cells had been breached and the doors smashed in the wings of the prison where the I.R.A. men were. These things were done under orders of the I.R.A. leaders so as to ensure that the men would be in communication and could not possibly be locked into their cells and thus prevented from acting in unison. The British authorities sent strong forces of military in lorries and armoured cars to keep the crowds from approaching the prison gates. Reports were received at Brigade H.Q. that the attitude of the military had been menacing and provocative on several occasions and that there was a danger of the people being fired out. Accordingly the 2nd Battalion, in whose area Mountjoy Prison was, was ordered to prepare to send armed protective parties into the crowd which would assemble on the North Circular Road at the outer prison gates on the day of the general stoppage of work which was being organised. I was in charge of these measures and my orders were (a) not to allow the I.R.A. parties to be provoked by the jeers or threats of the British military and to restrain, as far as possible, members of the crowd from provoking the British

military, (b) to fire on any members of the British forces who might fire on members of the populace and to be prepared to prevent by force of arms any attempt to ill-treat members of the populace. The spirit of the orders was restraint unless fire was opened by the British or serious violence was used toward the people. This all-Ireland stoppage of work was called to protest against the imprisonments and to demand unconditional releases. All work was suspended in Dublin and in large centres throughout the country, and the 2nd Battalion (and probably the other Dublin Battalions also) were on duty in the vicinity of the prison continuously during the day of the strike. Some of the parties of British military were aggressive and threatening, and there were times during the day when it looked as though clashes would occur. The Volunteers carried revolvers in their pockets and were ready to draw and use them should it be deemed necessary. I think that a few hand grenades were also carried. The day ended, however, without a shot being fired, although at times British soldiers stood up in their lorries and aimed their rifles menacingly at the crowd.

On the day following the General Strike the British Government released the prisoners unconditionally. Previous releases had been conditional on men returning to prison after periods deemed sufficient to allow them to regain their health after hunger-striking, although the Republicans had not accepted that condition.

About May of this year (1920) Brigade Commandant McKee told me that the Republican Government was about to intensify the struggle and that some important appointments to higher positions in the Army had been decided by

G.H.Q. I was to be taken from the 2nd Battalion, transferred to the Organisation Department, G.H.Q., and made Director of Organisation in the course of a month or two when I would have become familiar with the work of that Department. The position would be a whole time one and I would succeed the present Director of Organisation, Diarmuid O'Hegarty, who was also Secretary to the Government and whose duties had become too onerous for him to hold both positions. Oscar Traynor, Vice Commandant of the 2nd Battalion, was to be appointed Vice Brigade Commandant in succession to Peadar Clancy who had filled the latter post for a few months and was about to become Director of Munitions. Peadar Clancy had replaced Michael Lynch as Vice Brigade Commandant a few months previously when Michael Lynch had been appointed Commandant of the Fingal Brigade, with Leo Henderson as Vice Commandant of the latter Brigade. As it is sometimes stated erroneously that Peadar Clancy was Vice Commandant of the Dublin Brigade at the time of his death (November 1920), I would like to record here that I can definitely state that he held that position only for a short period of two or three months and that Oscar Traynor, who succeeded him, was appointed to the position about May, 1920. I am not sure what appointment Peadar Clancy held at the time of his death, although I met him frequently at G.H.Q. in the period May-November, 1920, but I believe he was Director of Munitions and that he was probably also attached to G.H.Q. Intelligence Department.

I accepted my new position when I was assured by Dick McKee that G.H.Q. had recommended me as the most suitable officer for it and that the Minister for Defence had accepted their recommendation. I was further told that I was being appointed over the heads of two officers

in the Department of Organisation who had long experience of the work of the Department but who were not being promoted. I was ordered to hold myself in readiness to resign from my civil occupation at the shortest possible notice to my employer and that I was be called on to do so in the course of a couple of months. All this was confirmed by the Director of Organisation, Diarmuid O'Hegarty, when I reported to him in due course for instructions. Later in the course of my work I came across the carbon copy of the recommendation to the Minister for Defence in regard to the promotions of Oscar Traynor and myself. My reasons for mentioning this are that I was never appointed Director of Organisation and that an officer of the Department who now became junior to me has occasionally been mentioned as being Director of Organisation at this period. This officer, now dead, and myself were good friends and sometimes worked together during the period I served in the Department of Organisation.

Seán Russell succeeded me as Commandant of the 2nd Battalion, Tom Ennis taking his place as Captain of E. Company. Seán Mooney was probably appointed Vice Battalion Commandant at this period but I am not certain.

Department of Organisation:

I have already given May, 1920, as the approximate date of my transfer from the 2nd Battalion, Dublin Brigade, to the Department of Organisation, but I have since come across a reference to the raid on the temporary G.P.O. at the Rotunda Rink and the seizure there of Dublin Castle mails and the date is stated to have been 15th July, 1920. I believe that I was Commandant of the 2nd Battalion at

the time of this raid, which was carried out by a party of that Battalion under the command of Oscar Traynor whom I had selected for it after consultation with Brigade Commandant Richard McKee. Whatever the date may have been, I served in the Department of Organisation until about a fortnight after the burning of the Custom House when I was transferred back to the 2nd Battalion. My return to the Battalion was thus about the second week of June, 1921.

My work in the Department of Organisation was completely different to the active exhilarating work of the 2nd Battalion, where one was in constant association - often for almost twenty-four hours a day - with comrades of all ranks and where there was visible at every moment the courage, the faith and discipline of trained men ready to strike a blow at any moment or make any sacrifice for the advancement of the cause. There was no lack of these high qualities in the Department - from the Director and the Organisers spread throughout the country down to the typists and office assistant - but the work was of a routine kind and, as far as I was concerned, was done for the most part by oneself in the back room of a "dump" between the hours of leaving off one's private occupation and the commencing hours of the curfew imposed by the British military.

Diarmuid O'Hegarty was the efficient and energetic Director of the Department. He had offices on the second floor of No. 83 Middle Abbey Street, over the offices of Micheál Ó Foghludha (Foley Typewriting Co.), in whose name the two rooms comprising the Department's offices were rented, where he attended daily during the usual hours of

business and transacted the secretarial work of his two posts of Secretary of Dáil Éireann and Director of Organisation of the I.R.A. Diarmuid O'Hegarty used these offices continuously until about a month before the Truce in July, 1921, when,, as a result of an enemy raid during the night time in the course of which some documents were captured and much destruction was done to the rooms and furniture, he was obliged to move to new premises which were secured at No. 9 Lower O'Connell Street.

The Director was assisted in his office by a young lady who was typist and clerk (at one period I believe there was a second young lady, in order to cope with the volume of clerical work and typing) and a young orderly who was a member of Fianna Éireann. The orderly was Seán Harling and, needless to say, both he and the lady typists were trustworthy people who could be relied on not to speak about the nature of their duties. Every evening one of the lady typists took away in an attaché case the important current documents which would be required on the following day and brought them to the office again the next morning. Seán Harling or myself used to take away to the "dump" those no longer required. This was done to avoid capture of the documents during a possible night raid by the British Forces.

Eamonn (Bob) Price sometimes worked in the offices and in the "dumps" of the Department, but his duties in the Department were more often outside Dublin. Micheál Ó Loingsigh - later of Dáil Éireann translation staff - also did some of the clerical work of the Department for a short time after my transfer to it, but he was soon taken over entirely by Dáil Éireann.

The Department also had a number of Organisers who moved about the areas of some of the country Brigades and were responsible for provisionally appointing the Brigade, Battalion and Company staffs, advising the area Commanding Officers, transmitting and explaining to them the orders of G.H.Q., strengthening the lines of communication and getting the less active units into the field. Some of these Organisers were men who had lost their civilian occupations following their participation in the 1916 Rising, and some had joined up subsequently and had volunteered for this type of work. Some of them were on the I.R.A. pay roll according to the particular circumstances in their different cases. Among the principal Organisers were: Peadar McMahon (later Secretary, Department of Defence) who operated mainly in the Kildare area, Patrick Morrissey, originally of the 4th Battalion, Dublin Brigade, in the Athlone area, Patrick(?) Kavanagh in the Arklow (and perhaps North Wexford) area, Earnán O'Malley in the Kilkenny and Tipperary areas. Communication with the Organisers was maintained by their periodic reporting in person to the Director either at his office or at an agreed address in Dublin (such as, the Gaelic League Headquarters at Parnell Square, the Keating Branch of the Gaelic League at Parnell Square, etc.), or through the ordinary postal service which was, of course, at that time a British Government service. The system by which the postal service was used to convey despatches to I.R.A. Organisers was simple and, as far as I am aware, it was perfectly satisfactory. A communication for an Organiser (or for an I.R.A. officer in the country) would be typewritten in the Director's office on official printed notepaper, put into an envelope bearing the assumed name of the Organiser - for example, Patrick Morrissey was

"Mr. Thom(p)son", Earnán O'Malley was "Mr. Stewart" - the latter being then enclosed in another envelope addressed to some business man or official in the locality where the Organiser operated and posted in the ordinary way. The business man or official whose name was on the outer envelope was a reliable sympathiser, often a member of the I.R.B., who had agreed beforehand to deliver any inner packets so received by him to the Organiser or I.R.A. officer.

My routine work consisted of reporting daily during my dinner-hour to the Director and receiving documents and instructions, reporting again to him in the evening between 5.30 and 6 o'clock, or at some other time in the evening before the end of business hours that I could manage, and then going to the "dump" after my tea and working on the documents until near curfew hour. When curfew hour was 8 p.m. I used go straight from the Director's office to the "dump", or sometimes from my place of employment, and work there until it would be time to get to my home or to the sympathiser's house where I slept. The work in the "dump" was the examining of Brigade reports, which were furnished on printed forms, arranging for correspondence or visits where activity or organisation appeared to be getting lax, investigating complaints, etc. Documents when dealt with were filed in a press in one of the "dumps" so as to be easily accessible when required or removable at short notice if it was considered advisable for safety reasons. In a second room in the "dump" were filed documents of Dáil Éireann, and occasionally I received orders to convey certain of these to Diarmuid O'Hegarty. The Director himself only came to the "dump" when certain documents were urgently needed and nobody

else was available. Besides the Director, Eamonn Price and myself, the only other person who came to the "dump" was Seán Harling, the Department orderly, and he frequently came during business hours to deposit or remove documents on orders of the Director. It often occurred to me that a great risk was run by keeping so many important documents in one place, as the name of almost every I.R.A. officer and the strength and other details of his unit as well as much other vital information were recorded in them. However, great care was taken in the use of the "dump" and it was never raided, although on one occasion houses on both sides of the street were entered by the British Forces and the house next door was searched.

As well as the routine duties of the Department, I frequently interviewed Organisers and I.R.A. provincial officers along with the Director and attended consultations with other G.H.Q. officers. Occasionally I attended special meetings of the officers of a Dublin Battalion and travelled at week-ends to provincial Brigade areas to conduct inquiries into their organisation and activities, or preside at elections or appointments of Brigade staffs. There were also the "odd jobs" which frequently turned up when an officer, as in my case, was in close association with G.H.Q. officers in the evenings at such places as Vuaghan's Hotel, Keating Branch of Gaelic League, No. 41 Parnell Square, etc.

The following are some of the non-routine duties which I carried out during the period of approximately one year during which I served in the Department of Organisation. For the whole of that period I was in a civilian occupation but had orders to hold myself in readiness to leave it and take up the whole-time position

of Director of Organisation at the shortest possible notice.

Leix Brigade:

At one of the bank holiday week-ends - probably at Whit - in 1920 I received orders to proceed to Portlaoighise to preside at the election, or appointment, of the Commanding Officer and Staff of the Leix Brigade. I was briefed in advance as to whom G.H.Q. would consider the most suitable officers, and also those who were likely to be recommended by the officers of the Battalions attending the meeting. I had authority to make appointments myself, if necessary, for subsequent ratification by G.H.Q.

I was given the name and address of the Brigade Adjutant whom I was to contact on my arrival at Portlaoighise. He was Martin Lynch, formerly a member of C. Company, 2nd Battalion of the Dublin Brigade, and a veteran of the Rising. It was fortunate that I knew Martin Lynch because the officers of the Brigade were expecting that Eamonn Price would be detailed to conduct the business of the meeting, and strangers arriving in Brigade areas looking for I.R.A. officers at the time were likely to be regarded as British agents.

Martin Lynch lived on the Dublin Road, just where the main road from Dublin enters the town. We completed arrangements on Sunday evening for the meeting to be held at the house of Frank Gowing of Kilminchey on the following morning - Monday. I slept at Lynch's house on Sunday with one or two other members of the Brigade, and met the Battalion officers the next morning at Gowing's farmhouse at Kilminchey, a mile or so north of Portlaoighise on the main road from Dublin.

The opinions of G.H.Q. and of the officers of the Battalions coincided in the main concerning the most suitable Officers to command the Brigade and fill the positions on the Staff. Of the appointments made I remember:

Brigade Commandant	-	Michael Gray
Vice Brigade Commandant	-	Thomas Brady (of Lalor's Mills)
Brigade Adjutant	-	Martin Lynch
Brigade Quartermaster	-	Frank Gowing
Brigade Medical Officer	-	Dr. Thomas O'Higgins.

Laurence Brady, brother of Thomas, was also present and, I think, was appointed Commandant of one of the Battalions. It is, however, possible that I have confused their respective appointments. Dr. O'Higgins had joined the I.R.A. on his return from service with England in World War I. His appointment was popular and was recommended both by G.H.Q. and the Leix officers.

After the appointment of the Brigade Staff, I exhorted the Brigade Commandant and his officers to get into action against the British without delay and to keep up the pressure on all enemy forces.

During that morning and all during the meeting, lorries full of Black and Tans were passing through Portlaoighise which is on the main Dublin-Curragh-Munster road.

South Kildare Brigade:

During the hunger-strike of Terence MacSwiney, Lord Mayor of Cork and Commandant of 1st Cork Brigade, an order was issued by G.H.Q. to all Brigades that, in the event

of MacSwiney being kept in prison and dying as a result of his protest, a number of members of the enemy police force in each Brigade area were to be shot immediately. All members of this force had already been outlawed by a decree of Dáil Éireann. Some Area Commanders had asked G.H.Q. to be allowed to substitute some other form of action, such as, an ambush, attack on convoy or barracks, etc., but G.H.Q. insisted on the order being carried out as originally issued. I was instructed to visit the South Kildare Brigade which, I was told, had refused to obey the order. This Brigade was one which had carried on very little military activity, and my directions were to attend a specially convened meeting of the Brigade Council to hear what the officers had to say and to relieve of their commands those officers who were unwilling to make every effort to comply with the general order. Accompanied by Christy Byrne, an officer of the 4th Battalion, Dublin Brigade, and Vice Commandant later (if not at the time) of that Battalion, I went by train one Sunday morning in September or October, 1920, to Mageney Station and was driven thence by officers of the South Kildare Brigade to Castledermot where the Brigade Council met.

All but a few of the officers said that the police remaining in the area were friendly, that they received information from them in regard to enemy movements and intentions, and that under such circumstances they were unwilling to obey the order, some giving it as their opinion that the proposed action would be murder. They were quite prepared to carry out different types of operations, such as, ambushes of convoys, attacks on and destruction of enemy posts and communications. Although I felt that the statements made by the officers were

sincere, I had no alternative, my directions being to insist on an absolutely literal acceptance of the G.H.Q. order and to inform them that I was authorised to dismiss them there and then from their commands for non-acceptance. One of the officers present, Eamonn Malone, stated from the beginning that he was willing to accept G.H.Q. orders unquestioningly, and I appointed him to the command of the Brigade, with the immediate task of re-organising it and getting it into action on a more extensive scale than formerly.

This visit was a most unpleasant one for me, as I knew I was expelling from the I.R.A. some men, including Eamonn Moran of Ballysax, who had been for many years the standard bearers of the Republican movement in South Kildare. Appeals were subsequently made to G.H.Q. by the dismissed officers, but I was not in a position to know with what result.

Wicklow Brigade:

In February, 1921, I was ordered to visit the Brigade Council of this unit. There had been practically no military action taken in the Brigade area by the unit, and my instructions were to appoint officers from among those whom I met in my week-end visit who would appear to me to be likely to take the offensive in the county. G.H.Q. suggested a young officer who, it was believed, would be suitable to take command of the Brigade, re-organise it and commence hostilities. I cannot recall his name now, although I placed him in charge of the Brigade. His name was something like Gearon and I heard in after years that he had joined the Gárda Siochána when it was formed. Christy Byrne of Glenealy, a veteran Republican, was Quartermaster

of the Brigade, but G.H.Q. briefed me to the effect that, although he was a sterling Republican, he was not considered suitable to be a Brigade officer, that he was too careful and that his influence in the area would likely be used to restrain instead of urging on the unit. All decisions that were to be taken were, however, left to my own judgement.

I went by train on a Saturday afternoon (February, 1921) to Wicklow town after I had finished my civilian work. I was told that I would be met there at the station by two officers of the Brigade, whose names I was given but whom I had never met. If by any chance the Wicklow officers did not meet me, I was to proceed to the town, locate Cullen's tobacconist and stationer's shop and call in to it, not at once but a few hours later. The proprietor of this shop was a brother of Tom Cullen, a G.H.Q. Intelligence Officer, but would not be on the premises until six or seven o'clock. At Wicklow station there were two men on the platform who might have been either I.R.A. men or R.I.C. men in plain clothes. They made no attempt to approach me and, in the end, as they seemed to be as suspicious of me as I was beginning to be of them, I made up my mind to go towards the town. I saw Cullen's shop, noted its situation and, in a short time, got the impression that I had attracted the attention of two Black and Tans who were briskly moving through the principal streets, armed with revolvers which they carried in holsters. I decided to make sure on this point and went into a publichouse at the corner of two streets with doors opening on both streets. I called for a drink and no sooner had it in front of me than the two Black and Tans pushed in the door by which I had entered, walked quickly

through the publichouse and left it by the second door. This seemed to indicate to me the necessity for disappearing from view until it would be time to call to Cullen's shop and, therefore, as soon as I judged that sufficient time had elapsed to enable me to leave without exciting suspicion, I retreated into the darkness and spaciousness of the adjoining quays and railway sidings. I observed no further movements of the Black and Tans from my observation post and, when the time eventually arrived, I went into Cullen's shop. Here I established my identity and was soon put in touch with the two men whom I had seen earlier at the railway station. They explained that they had been instructed that a G.H.Q. officer whom they knew well would arrive by the train by which I had come and that, as they had never seen me before, they were suspicious of me, especially after I had delayed for a time on the platform and had a good look around. One of these men was the officer whom G.H.Q. had suggested would be likely to make a good Brigade Commandant, and I had not been long talking to him till I formed the opinion that his youth, enthusiasm, alertness and general outlook would put him high among those likely to be considered by me. I think the other man was the Intelligence Officer of the Brigade and that his name was Olohan. At any rate I met Olohan, a young Wicklow town man, the next day and I regarded him as likely to make a good officer under the supervision of a good Commandant. I had a long talk about the unit with these two officers that night and, from what they told me, I could see that I would have a difficult job in selecting the Battalion officers on the following day and that there would also be be much uphill work for an energetic Brigade Commandant.

It was late on the Saturday night before I got lodgings for the night. I had begun to suffer shortly before this from what was called by many I.R.A. men who were unfortunate enough to contract it - "the Volunteer itch". It was a skin disease of a painful nature which, it was believed, was the result of being "on the run" and the high tension resulting from overwork, frequent changing of sleeping quarters, etc. I got a severe attack of it that night, was unable to sleep and was in the worst of form for meeting the Brigade Council next day. On Sunday morning I cycled to Rathdrum with some of the officers via Glenealy. The meeting of the Brigade Council was held in the open air in a field near Rathdrum. In addition to the two officers whom I met in Wicklow, I can only now recollect Christy Byrne of Glenealy and a Volunteer named Byrne of Rathdrum. At the end of the meeting I appointed as Brigade Commandant the officer suggested by G.H.Q., and I told the Brigade Council and all officers present that they were now to consider the Brigade as on a war footing, that the Brigade Commandant had full powers to make decisions and that he was to be obeyed without question. The only other appointments made that day which I remember are - Byrne i/c of Rathdrum area and Christy Byrne (Glenealy), whom I re-appointed Brigade Quartermaster in spite of G.H.Q.'s suggestion that he be not re-appointed. Before leaving the area on Sunday evening, I had a final talk with the new Brigade Commandant and impressed on him that he had full powers to make his own arrangements and selections with a view to taking the offensive in the area, which I believed he was eager to do. I do not know how far Wicklow county was organised. My contacts during that week-end were only with Wicklow Town, Glenealy and Rathdrum and the adjoining countryside, and I passed

through Greystones on my way home. I believe Newcastle and Newtownmountkennedy had units of the I.R.A. within the Wicklow Brigade, but I cannot recollect that Avoca and Arklow had, or the western side of the county. Bray and some parts of the north west of the county had been organised by the 3rd Battalion of Dublin Brigade and at this period were in the 2nd Dublin Brigade. There had been some activity in Arklow and I recollect a G.H.Q. Organiser named Kavanagh being warned by the Director of Organisation not to enter it at a certain period when the Black and Tans had established themselves in strength there and were looking for him. Wicklow county had been heavily planted after 1798 and the goodwill of the inhabitants did not exist to the same extent as in most other counties.

2nd Battalion, Dublin Brigade:

At the request of Seán Russell I presided at the election of a Commandant of this Battalion shortly after Bloody Sunday. Russell had been Commandant and had been either promoted to the position of Vice Officer Commanding Dublin Brigade, or to G.H.Q. as Director of Munitions. The officers of the Battalion met in the hall in Upper Oriel Street (formerly a church and later the meeting place of a Railwaymen's Trade Union). Seán Mooney and Tom Ennis were proposed. Mooney wished to withdraw in favour of Ennis but, following the Volunteer custom in these matters, he was urged not to withdraw his name. Tom Ennis was elected Commandant of the Battalion by a small majority. Seán Mooney shortly afterwards was appointed Vice Commandant of the Brigade.

1st Battalion, Dublin Brigade:

I was present at consultations concerning a successor to Tom Byrne, former Commandant of this

Battalion. These took place shortly after Bloody Sunday. Byrne, who was a veteran of the Irish Brigade of the Boer War, 1899-1902, was getting old and was prevailed on to resign so as to allow a younger man to command the Battalion. G.H.Q. were anxious that either Seán Flood or Paddy Holohan would become Commandant. I am not certain now whether I attended the election, or indeed whether another officer was proposed after Holohan was nominated. At any rate Holohan became Commandant. Seán Flood was sent on special work by G.H.Q. - I think to Ulster.

Proposal to form Divisions:

I learned from the Director of Organisation that certain areas were advocating that the Brigades in the well organised areas in which the enemy was being constantly engaged should be grouped into Divisions commanded by Divisional Commandants and having Divisional Staffs. I understood that the most insistent call of the formation of Divisions came from one of the Clare Brigades - that commanded by Michael Brennan which, I think, was the Mid-Clare Brigade. G.H.Q. seemed to be opposed to the idea at first but apparently agreed to it eventually. I was accordingly ordered to attend a meeting of G.H.Q. officers to assist in the defining of the areas of the suggested Divisions. The meeting took place on a Sunday morning at an early hour - possibly at eight o'clock - at the rooms of the Keating Branch of the Gaelic League, 46 Parnell Square, and lasted for two or three hours. In addition to Diarmuid O'Hegarty, Director of Organisation, to whom I acted as Assistant at the conference, I recollect that Richard Mulcahy, Chief of Staff, and Michael Collins, Director of Intelligence, were present. There were other G.H.Q. officers there also but I do not now recall who

they were. We had large scale ordnance maps on which the tentative areas of Divisions had been marked as well as the titles of the Divisions. Decisions were made at the conference and recorded on the maps in cases where the claims of local Commandants for certain areas overlapped, or concerning which G.H.Q. Staff had different views. The Divisional Organisation had apparently been accepted at this time and I recollect that Divisional reports used to reach the Organisation Department from the stronger areas after this conference. The Dublin City Brigade was not brought into the Divisional Organisation but continued as an "independent Brigade". I am unable to say at what date this conference was held. I can only say that artificial light was not required while it was in session which would go to prove that it did not take place during the winter months. The date was, of course, between May, 1920, and May, 1921.

Meeting of Southern Officers, Easter Monday 1921:

Between February, 1921 and Easter of the same year I was very sick as a result of the attack of the "Volunteer itch" to which I have referred previously. I did not lie up but was attending the doctor for a couple of months and taking occasional nights "off duty". On Good Friday, 1921, I reported to the Director of Organisation that I was in good health again and ready to go "whole time" as Director of Organisation at any moment. I was told that there would be a very important conference with Southern Officers on Easter Monday morning at the offices of the Department, No. 83 Middle Abbey Street, and that I was to be in attendance. The purpose of the conference was, I understood, to co-ordinate activities, to review and to appraise the campaign in the areas represented and to agree on certain

objectives to be aimed at during the months immediately ahead. As the meeting was interrupted shortly after it began, I am not certain what areas were represented but I think all the officers present were from the County Cork units, although I had expected to meet officers from Kerry and Tipperary.

G.H.Q. was represented by Diarmuid O'Hegarty, Director of Organisation, Eamonn (Bob) Price and myself. Miss Leslie Price (afterwards Mrs. Tom Barry) was present and assisted at identifying the officers as they arrived. Seán Harling, the Department despatch carrier, was also in attendance.

The room was crowded with Southern officers. Liam Deasy and Tadhg O'Sullivan (brother of Gearóid, the Adjutant General) were two of these, but strange as it may appear I do not remember any of the others now.

The meeting had started and was getting well down to business when Miss Price, who was looking out the window, cried out - "Here are the Auxies, two lorries of them. They have got down and are coming in!" Many of the Southern officers, who were probably carrying revolvers or automatics, were preparing to rush down the stairs and fight their way out when I got one of those rare inspirations which sometimes save dangerous situations. The interval that elapsed between the time Miss Price saw the Auxiliaries and the moment that the officers were about to rush down the stairs seemed to be longer than was necessary for the Auxiliaries to have been at least well up the stairs, and there was no sign of them through our open room door and no noise from the hall. I appealed for silence and a few moments to take stock of the

situation. As I approached the front window, Miss Price called - "They are getting into the lorries again". When I reached the window I saw the two lorries driving away. Years later Diarmuid O'Hegarty told me that the Auxiliaries had come that morning to search Eason's, whose premises were a few doors away, for parcels of "An tóglach" which they had been informed were being sent out along with their ordinary country paper despatches. As it was a bank holiday, Eason's were not open and that was why the Auxiliaries drove away.

Following the arrival and unexpected departure of the Auxiliaries, it was deemed prudent to break up the meeting into small groups and finish the business at four or five different hastily arranged venues. I conducted a group of the officers to 14 North Frederick Street and concluded the business with them there. I cannot recollect any details of this business, but I believe the visiting officers made insistent demands for arms.

Kerry:

This county had three Brigades or, rather, as well as I can recollect, two Brigades and an independent Battalion - the description independent signifying that, as in the case of the Dublin No. 1 (City) Brigade, the unit's Commanding Officer was responsible directly to G.H.Q. and not to any other local officer. The independent Battalion was known as the "Cahirciveen Battalion", and sometimes as "Kerry 2", and I suppose had not the requisite number of Companies and men to entitle it to be classed as a Brigade. It had, as far as I knew, a sufficiently important area and was carrying out its duties sufficiently energetically to be granted this special status.

During the most crucial stage of the struggle I learned that things were not well internally in "Kerry 2", although the unit was fighting well. I was ordered to hold myself ready to visit the unit and smooth out the trouble, the nature of which I only vaguely knew at the time. Such journeys to South Munster were particularly difficult at this period as strangers aroused the suspicions of the enemy and were liable to be pounced on as soon as they arrived in a district. I remember that I was informed that I would be as likely to be shot by the local I.R.A. as a spy as by the British as a rebel.

It was eventually decided that, as I was still in civil employment and that as even a hurried visit to the area would take four or five days, it would be unreasonable to ask me to go to Kerry. I believe that Andy Cooney was sent to the area shortly afterwards and that he remained there until the Truce - in command of the unit.

Galway:

The organisation of the Galway Brigade outside the Connemara unit was causing G.H.Q. a lot of anxiety. There was evidence of a will to fight in many parts of the county but somehow the Brigade, as a Brigade, was not seriously disputing matters with the British forces. The position in the county was frequently discussed, and I remember a remark being made to the effect that the I.R.B. was weak in the county outside Connemara where the only spirited opposition was being made to the British. After many suggestions, it was decided to send Seumas (Jim) Downer to the county with instructions to visit all districts, appoint new officers, alter organisation where necessary and to get the different units on the offensive in a systematic fashion.

Downer was a member of a Kerry Unionist family. His people, with the exception of one brother who was in the Sinn Féin organisation in the county (probably Tralee), were hostile to the Republican movement. He had himself been in the I.R.A. in Tralee and had done useful work there in despatch carrying, etc., when British military invested Tralee and would let nobody in or out without a permit. He had come to Dublin to take up a post as teacher in a preparatory school for boys in Monkstown and had been brought along to D. Company, 2nd Battalion, by Captain Patrick Moran who was then employed in Lynch & O'Brien's grocery establishment, George's Street, Dúnlaoghaire. Captain Moran, later executed, frequently slept in Downer's apartments in the school at Monkstown prior to Bloody Sunday. Downer, who had perfected himself at wireless telegraphy, later became O/C Signalling, Dublin Brigade.

Although Downer spared no effort in Galway, his visit, which lasted for a few weeks, bore very little fruit. His selection was unwise in the first instance. His appearance - he was slight and delicate looking - and his accent made him suspect from the start. Communications appear not to have been satisfactory and he had difficulty in establishing his bona fides at the very start in the area of the Vice Brigadier, Commandant Broderick, at Athenry. Eventually, recognising that he was likely to do more harm than good in a county where he knew nobody and with which he had had no previous associations, he returned to G.H.Q. It is quite possible that the splitting up of the county into more Brigades than one - I think into three - which followed later was to some extent due to the consideration given to his report.

Downer's visit to Galway probably took place in the summer of 1920, during the period when his school was closed for vacation.

I.R.B. and Department of Organisation:

It became clear to me shortly after I took up duty in the Department of Organisation that there was a close liaison between it and the I.R.B. This seemed to me at the time to be quite natural. Many of the most reliable officers in Brigade areas were also the local I.R.B. Centres. The Director of Organisation was an important I.R.B. official, and his assistants and area organisers were well established in the I.R.B. which was often referred to as "the Organisation". There was, however, a tendency, as far as I could see, for some of the more active Volunteer officers not to regard the I.R.B. as seriously as they did pre-1916. I gathered from conversations with Dick McKee, for example, that he had obtained permission to be absent from Circle meetings and that he rather regarded attendance at them as distractions if not actual waste of time at this period. My brother, Leo Henderson, who was the Centre of my Circle up to the time of his arrest (on the occasion of the death of Seán Treacy), expressed the opinion at one of the meetings that it was unnecessary to continue the I.R.B. in view of the fact that a Government with functioning Departments, including a Department of Defence, had been established and that the Oath of Allegiance to Dáil Éireann had been taken. The visitor to the meeting from the superior body, who on this occasion was Diarmuid O'Hegarty, Director of Organisation of the I.R.A., left no doubt, in his very clear reply to a request for a ruling, that it was essential to keep the I.R.A. alive and strong for

fear of a compromise on the issue of independence and the danger of the acceptance by groups within or without the Republican organisations of an offer by England of a settlement which would not satisfy the Republican aims. Although there was a certain amount of feeling in favour of the discontinuance of the I.R.B., Diarmuid O'Hegarty's ruling was accepted by all present as the expression of the considered policy of the responsible chiefs of the Brotherhood, they being for the most part Ministers and other important personnel of Dáil Éireann, the Army and the "movement" generally.

The following incident will also show the existence of the close liaison between the I.R.B. and the Army Organisation Department and at the same time perhaps indicate that differing views were already causing, or had caused a widening breach in the previous solid front presented to the enemy.

I was asked by Diarmuid O'Hegarty, on behalf of the I.R.B., to go to the North Wexford area during the August bank holiday week-end, 1921, to visit the I.R.B. Circles there and to bring them a message from the Supreme Council (or it may have been the Leinster Council which was, of course, subordinate to the Supreme Council). This was during the Truce and about two months after I had been transferred back to the Dublin Brigade from the Department of Organisation, and I had to ask permission, which was given to me, from the Commandant of the Dublin Brigade to be away from my area. I received my instructions from Gearóid O'Sullivan whom I knew well and who, I was informed, was the Centre for Leinster. He was also Adjutant General of the I.R.A. My instructions were to

instructions were to visit every I.R.B. Circle in the North Wexford area on the Sunday and Monday. The members were to have been already advised to attend in full strength and I was directed to warn them that the negotiations which were proceeding between the representatives of our country and those of England might possibly conclude with an offer by the British Government of a compromise which could not be accepted by the Republicans, but which would be so tempting that there would be a great danger of its acceptance being advocated by many influential people and organisations in the country and even by active Republicans who would be misled by some of its terms. I was to impress on the members of all the Circles that they formed the back bone of the national struggle and that they were to stand firm. Before I departed for Wexford on Saturday afternoon, I was told that Cathal Brugha, the Minister for Defence, would be travelling to County Wexford on the same train as I would and that I was to avoid him. This latter instruction seemed to me to be an intimation of a serious estrangement between the chiefs, whom I had regarded up to that moment as peerless in their unity and their leadership of the resurgent nation, and I was deeply troubled.

At Enniscorthy I contacted Mat Holdbrook, a 1916 veteran, who was apparently the leading spirit in the North Wexford I.R.B. He was also an active member of the I.R.A. On Sunday and Monday I was kept busy visiting the I.R.B. Circles which seemed to correspond to the I.R.A. Companies of the North Wexford Brigade of the I.R.A. The spirit of the men everywhere seemed to be excellent and, although the area was regarded as one that should have been much more active in the Black and Tan

conflict, there were to be seen everywhere well-trenched roads, bridges made impassable for road transport except at crawling speed and all such outward signs of resistance to the enemy. Ambushes seemed to have been planned and carried out but not on such a large scale as in Cork, Tipperary, Limerick, Mayo, etc. In addition to Enniscorthy, the chief districts I went to were Ferns, Bunclody (which had been called Newtownbarry), Carnew, perhaps Gorey and the villages and smaller towns between these. In the course of the time I spent in the North Wexford area, I met all the senior I.R.A. officers of the Brigade. They were members of the I.R.B., as were also most of the junior officers, N.C.O's and Volunteers. Tom Brennan of Carnew, who was a Battalion Commandant, was among those whom I met.

Headquarters and other Offices of the Department of Organisation:

I have already mentioned that the Director of Organisation had his offices at 83 Middle Abbey Street, Dublin. The "dump" to which I made reference was at 117 North King Street, Dublin. The latter was a three storey house, the ground portion being a shop in which milk, bread, confectionery, etc., were sold. The middle storey was the living quarters of the proprietor and the two rooms of the top storey were used as an additional office by the Department and for the filing of the records and other documents of both that Department and of the Secretariate of Dáil Éireann. The proprietor was Miss McGowan. She was a relative of Martin Connellan, an important I.R.B. officer who, I believed, had an interest in the business and who occasionally visited the house while I was there. Miss McGowan was assisted by her

niece, a young lady who was then perhaps in her late teens. Both were aware that the business carried on in the top rooms was connected with the I.R.A., and they not only kept the secret perfectly but were cool and collected on the occasions when danger from the enemy appeared to be imminent.

Shortly after I came to the Department, the Director told me that separate offices and "dumps" were desirable for the Department and for the Dáil Secretariate, that a floor in the house, No. 73 Lower Mount Street, had been secured for the Department and that it was in the course of being prepared as a headquarters. The house was owned or rented by the Irish National Insurance Company. I was instructed to have the preparations completed, i.e., the fitting out of the rooms with presses, office tables, etc., and to gradually transfer the documents and records from North King Street. When everything was completed, including the transfer of documents, I was told not to use the premises until I got forther orders. Some time later I was told that there was some report about British soldiers using the house on the other side of the street just opposite the new quarters and that I was to wait until I got a definite order that the offices could be worked in. Later still I was told to go to an office in Mary Street on a certain afternoon to have the matter finally settled. These offices were over Hogg & Robertsons, Seed Merchants, and were to all outward appearances used by a firm of Solicitors. They were, in fact, one of the offices of Dáil Éireann and housed a staff of clerks and typists who worked there during ordinary business hours. On my way to Mary Street I met Michael Collins who, according to a Stop Press edition of the evening papers, had just been

captured and brought to Dublin Castle. Collins was also going to the Mary Street address which, I believe, was one of the offices of his Finance Department of Dáil Éireann. When we had entered the Mary Street offices, Collins handed me a typewritten statement of Dáil funds to read, and I was almost lost in admiration of the business-like way in which the details were presented and in surprise at the extent of the transactions recorded, when I overheard the Director of Organisation ask Collins if it would be allright to use the office in Mount Street. The inquiry was followed by a typical angry explosion on the part of Collins who, shouting at the top of his voice and stamping the floor, wanted to know why everything had not been removed from the house long ago, and finished by ordering a complete clearing of the rooms as soon as the evening got dark enough to render observation of what was being done difficult. To complete the picture of Collins which I have briefly attempted to draw above, I have to say that he ended the painful silence which followed his fierce words by coming over to me and smilingly inquiring, without a trace of passion in his voice, what I thought of the financial statement he had given me to read.

Needless to say we set about removing the documents from Lower Mount Street as soon as darkness began to set in. The time of the year was probably October. A cab was deemed the safest means of transport because in those days motor cars were not so numerous and were liable to cause suspicion. There was difficulty in getting a reliable and willing driver but eventually one was secured, and Micheál Lynch ("Micheál Ruadh"), Seán Harling and myself completed the transferring back to the North King Street "dump" almost on the stroke of curfew, which was

probably at 10 p.m. In Smithfield either the horse or the cab collapsed and we had to carry the huge parcels in our arms for the rest of the journey. As the Black and Tans frequently moved out in lorries shortly before curfew from the former North Dublin Union buildings in North Brunswick Street which they occupied, this mishap was most unfortunate but we were lucky enough to finish our work safely and in time.

Six or seven weeks before the Truce the Department's offices at 83 Middle Abbey Street were raided during curfew hours by British forces and some unimportant documents were captured. I had to report about 5.30 or 6 p.m. the following day and, as I had not been warned that the premises had been raided, I came along at the appointed time. I noticed some marks on the stairs and staircase walls but paid little attention to them. When I entered the offices there was a scene of indescribable confusion, broken furniture, damaged walls, broken panels, stationery scattered about the floors, etc. A young boy who worked about the house and who was cleaning up the raided rooms was so surprised at seeing me that he was unable to answer the few questions I put to him. After a hasty look round I left, taking care to go by indirect ways to my next place of call lest an enemy observer might be attempting to follow me.

It occurs to me now that the raid on the offices may have been in progress when the Director and his office staff arrived in the morning and that they were looking on at the proceedings for some time.

The Director of Organisation and his office staff moved into new offices at No. 9 Upper O'Connell Street

almost immediately and remained there unmolested until the Truce.

Vaughan's Hotel, Parnell Square:

When the Dublin Brigade was dismissed after having marched back to O'Connell Street from Glasnevin Cemetery at the conclusion of the burial of Richard Coleman on a Sunday afternoon in December, 1918, I went for the first time to Vaughan's Hotel along with Captain Patrick Moran. We were drenched, cold and tired and Captain Moran suggested that we should go there for some refreshment. I had never been in the hotel before and was at that time unaware that it was a meeting place of some of the senior I.R.A. officers. After I went to the Department of Organisation, I was to be a frequent caller to it. After business hours on week days it was at Vaughan's Hotel that I usually reported to the Director. It was customary for me to see there and to have interviews or conversations with Michael Collins, Gearóid O'Sullivan, Dick McKee, Peadar Clancy, Michael Staines, Seán O'Connell, Piaras Beasley, Liam Tobin, Tom Cullen and many others, including sometimes, I think, Rory O'Connor. I do not remember ever seeing there Richard Mulcahy, although I often saw him in some of the other houses on Parnell Square frequented by the I.R.A. It often struck me as being strange that Vaughan's Hotel was not raided by the British and important officers captured there. Between the day that Seán Treacy was shot and Bloody Sunday I met Dick McKee going in as I was coming out and we had a long conversation on the footpath outside. I congratulated Dick on his recent escape from death or capture when Seán Treacy met his death, and he told me that he believed that our struggle would continue for many

months longer - perhaps a year - that it would conclude by our winning at first not all that we aimed at but something that could be accepted without compromise of principle. He was convinced that he himself and many others of the military leaders who were known to the enemy would in the meantime have been killed.

I recollect being in Vaughan's Hotel subsequent to Bloody Sunday and previous to the Truce for some reason or other. The premises were raided on the Saturday night before Bloody Sunday and it was generally regarded afterwards as being a most unsafe place to be in.

On one night when I was in Vaughan's Hotel, Collins came in close to curfew hour just as I was about to depart. He said he wanted somebody to call that night to the telegraph office at Kingsbridge railway station, see Seán O'Connell and ask him whether "that telegram had come". As I was sleeping away from home and fairly close to Kingsbridge, I volunteered to call although at the time I did not know Seán O'Connell. I was told that he would recognise me and I was told what to say to him. O'Connell was one of the telegraph staff at the station and would answer my knock on the closed window of the telegraph office. This window opened on the public street and was beside the main passenger entrance to the station. I probably cycled to Kingsbridge. The streets in the vicinity were dark and deserted, and I wondered what would happen if Seán O'Connell did not recognise me or if somebody other than he opened the sliding window. O'Connell opened the window when I knocked, seemed to recognise me when I spoke to him, closed the window for a few moments and then re-opened it and said that "nothing had happened yet", or something similar. I got away at

once to my night quarters, having to pass on the way two sentry posts on the point of curfew, and reported next morning the result of my call to Kingsbridge. In later years I read a book in which a Belgian woman, who was an underground intelligence officer for her country while it was occupied by German forces, described her activities and I was struck by the similarity of the surroundings of one of her places of call during curfew hours. There was this difference, however, that in the Belgian case the female intelligence agent, fearing one night that she was being followed, passed her call-window and hid in a dark corner, only to witness two enemy intelligence agents walk to the window, knock in the arranged manner, grasp the arm of the person who answered and shoot him dead.

As well as Vaughan's Hotel there were James Kirwan's publichouse in Parnell Street and Flynn's in Moore Street, where I sometimes contacted the Director of Organisation and where I used see at the same time Michael Collins, Piaras Beasley and other G.H.Q. officers. A reserved portion of these houses was always at the disposal of these officers. Entry was from the laneways at the rear of the premises, and by using these laneways during the daytime one could proceed from one to the other and at the same time avoid to a great extent possible enemy "touts" in the main thoroughfares.

In October, 1920, I obtained permission to go to Manchester to attend the funeral of a relative who had lived alone for many years. After the funeral I decided to call on some of the old friends of my father who had been associated in some way or another with the Fenian activities of 1867 and later. I called to Mr. Doyle of

Romford Street, C. on M. (near the Church of the Holy Name, Oxford Road), whom I had known ten or fifteen years earlier, and after some careful approaches to the subject found that he was actually engaged in the Self Determination for Ireland Association. Mr. Doyle brought me to the hall attached to the Holy Name Church where I met several of the members of the Lancashire Irish Republican Organisations. On this night there was great activity in the hall, and I understood that representatives were reporting from many of the Lancashire inland towns with money for Dáil and Army, information (political and military), etc. Mr Doyle told me that his eldest son, who had been an officer in the British Army during the 1914-1918 war and had lost an eye in the fighting, had been approached to join the Auxiliaries and that he was doing his best to dissuade him from doing so.

While in Manchester I stayed for two nights at the Victoria Hotel, near Exchange Station. Shortly after I returned home an attempt was made to burn it by the I.R.A. A small amount of damage was done. About the same time the attempt to destroy the Manchester Electricity Works was being planned. I was, of course, totally unaware of this but, to my surprise, Joe Cripps - an officer of the 2nd Battalion, Dublin Brigade - told me afterwards that he had been sent by G.H.Q. with others to assist in the preparation of the plans for and the destruction of the Electricity Station and that he had seen me in Manchester and wondered if I had been sent over with a despatch from G.H.Q. Following his instructions he, like the good soldier he was, did not attempt to speak to me.

The Irish in Manchester and Liverpool were well

organised into the several channels of Republican activity. I had a fair knowledge of Liverpool previous to 1916 and on the occasion of a business visit to that city in October, 1919, had visited Niall Kerr and his son, Tom, at their home in Bootle and found them as busily engaged in I.R.A. organisation work as any Dublin Volunteer.

One of the disadvantages of my position in the Department of Organisation was that I never knew what was going on in the Dublin Brigade and was liable to walk into trouble. Bloody Sunday was over before I knew anything about it and the first inkling I got of the Custom House burning was when a charred piece of government document descended into my arms in Oxmantown Road, North Circular Road. After Bloody Sunday I decided to sleep away from home permanently and I stayed with Patrick E. Sweeney, Vice Commandant of the 2nd Battalion, at the house of Mrs. Furlong, Marguerite Road, Glasnevin. We awoke one morning to find that a military cordon had been drawn around a large area which included portion of Marguerite Road, Botanic Road and Iona Road and that several houses had been entered and searched during the night. The searches were still being continued at 7 a.m. and anyone wishing to leave the area of the cordon had to submit to searching and examination. We soon found that by crossing to the north side of Marguerite Road we would be on the outside fringe of the cordon when we entered Botanic Road and could continue unchallenged to our destinations, although people on the other side of both roads were held up for long period.

I had a few anxious moments on one occasion while bringing some documents relating to the organisation in Cork and Kerry to the office of the Director when I

found that I had without noticing it got inside a cordon of Auxiliaries which was loosely thrown around Jervis Street hospital, while other members of the forces were searching inside for a wounded I.R.A. man who was believed to be a patient in the hospital. To my horror I recognised by the coloured ribbon or cloth on their tunics that the Auxiliaries were members of the notorious F. Company who were reputed to be the worst of them all. I was lucky enough by speaking nicely to one of the Auxiliaries to bluff my way out unsearched.

Occasionally I was able to observe things that were afoot, although in accordance with the established practice I was not told about anything in which I was not to be engaged. This practice was the soundest common sense, was accepted by all and often resulted in a good laugh at the expense of one who happened to find himself in a dangerous situation through taking a short cut, or a supposed safe one, through some street where I.R.A. action had just taken place. On the eve of the execution of Kevin Barry - or perhaps the day previous to that - I was passing close to Mountjoy Prison in the afternoon when I observed an I.R.A. officer - I think it was Peadar Clancy - at the corner of Berkeley Road and North Circular Road. He made a sign to me as I cycled past which meant "failure". When I arrived at Vaughan's Hotel it was, therefore, no news to me to hear that a plan to rescue Kevin Barry had not been successful.

In March, 1921, Patrick Moran, Captain of D. Company, 2nd Battalion, Dublin Brigade, was hanged at Mountjoy Prison with four or five other I.R.A. men. The Republican Government ordered a cessation of work for that

day, or for the earlier portion of it. I assisted Patrick Sweeney, Vice Commandant of the 2nd Battalion, and other members of the Battalion in parading the Battalion area during the hours of public mourning to ensure that shops were closed. With the exception of one or two public-houses which had to be cleared, the order to cease work was loyally obeyed by the citizens.

About Christmas, 1920, and on one or two occasions during the early months of 1921, there had been suggestions in the Press that peace moves were being initiated and the names of Archbishop Clune of Perth, Australia, and Lord Derby were mentioned as intermediaries. As the whisperings persisted, I asked the Director of Organisation one day if there was any truth in the rumours or the press reports. The answer I got was rather evasive and, while I understood from it that it would be better for me to mind my own business, I gathered that a well-intentioned effort about Christmas time had been spoiled by the precipitate action of certain persons in Ireland. I realised then it would be better for the morale of one engaged in the struggle as a soldier obeying the orders of his superior officers not to allow his mind to dwell on such a matter, so that when the Truce eventually came it took me by surprise.

After the attack on the Custom House I asked the Director of Organisation to let me know definitely when I was to take over the Department of Organisation and become a whole-time officer. The answer I received was that he would introduce me that afternoon to the new Director of Organisation, Eoin O'Duffy, to whom he asked me to give all the assistance and information I could, so as to enable him to take over the duties of the Department

with the least possible delay. This was the first indication that I received that I was not to be Director of Organisation. I was naturally surprised but did my best, like a soldier, to conceal my surprise. I was duly introduced to Eoin O'Duffy and after a couple of days realised that I could be of no further use to him. Accordingly I reported to Diarmuid O'Hegarty and requested to be transferred back to the Dublin Brigade. This was done immediately.

When I reported to Oscar Traynor, Commandant of the Dublin Brigade, he told me to take command of my old Battalion - the 2nd - which had suffered very severe casualties in killed, wounded and prisoners at the Custom House battle. The Commandant, Tom Ennis, was seriously wounded and was in danger of succumbing to his injuries. Several of the best officers, N.C.O's and men were prisoners and all Companies were disorganised. My orders were to re-organise the Battalion and to get it fighting at the earliest possible moment.

One night while I was in the Department of Organisation I heard Diarmuid O'Hegarty say to Dick McKee that, after being so long a G.H.Q. officer, he felt that he would not know how to tackle the preparation for an ambush or the attacking of a police barracks, and I remembered that Dick McKee had replied that he would perhaps feel at sea at first but would soon get into the swing of things. My mind now went back over the year or more that I had been attached to the Department of Organisation and I realised how much the men "in the field" had advanced since I had left the Brigade. I felt that the officers and men could show me how to do things and that I would be strangely out of place at the head of

a Battalion which had produced such redoubtable fighters of all ranks as the 2nd Battalion had done.

With the help and advice of the officers left in the Battalion I set about the re-organisation of the Companies and Battalion Staff. After smoothing out a few minor matters I established two new Companies, "A" and "K", the latter replacing the Company designated up till then as the Cyclists' Company but which was not a cyclists' company in reality. There were a half-Company at Howth and a half-Company at Baldoyle and Sutton which were organised as one Company, known as "G" Company, under the command of Fergus Kelly. I formed these into two Companies, "G" at Baldoyle and Sutton, and "H" at Howth, and placed Bernard McGillies in charge of the former and --- Friel in charge of the latter. Fergus Kelly was in the unfortunate position of being "on the run" from the British forces and having to live on a yacht - generally kept on the south side of the Liffey - on account of the hostility of his father to his I.R.A. activities. I felt he could not properly command his Company under such circumstances. There were the nuclei of Companies at Raheny and at Artane - Santry, but I think the former was eventually attached to "G" Company and the latter to some of the older Companies.

The Battalion Council met, as well as I now remember, at the house of Tom Burke, Captain of C. Company, North Summer Street. There were probably other meeting places as well. The Intelligence group of the Battalion, under the charge of Hugh Thornton, met at the house of Mrs. O'Shea Leamy, Summerhill, and it is likely that the Battalion Council met there sometimes also.

The Battalion was soon fit to fight again and the nightly patrols were resumed and a few attacks on enemy transport carried out. Plans were made to ambush British troops but I think the Truce came before anything big of that kind could be attempted. An attempt was made by D. Company, after the O/C had submitted an intelligence report, to execute a spy. It turned out later that the information obtained was faulty. Luckily the attempt was unsuccessful and the suspect was only slightly injured.

The R.I.C. barracks at Coolock which had been vacated was examined with a view to demolishing it, but I was instructed by the Brigade Commandant to leave it as it was. The R.I.C. barracks at Raheny had not been destroyed either. It had been vacated and it was used, during the Truce at any rate, for I.R.A. and Sinn Féin Cumann meetings.

Owing to the peculiar geographical situation of Howth and Sutton, the two local I.R.A. units had not much opportunity of assuming the offensive within the limits of their areas. Moreover, as well as I can recollect, a go easy order had been issued in regard to Howth as many I.R.A. officers - including some G.H.Q. officers - and men slept there at nights and used it as a rest centre. Some of the enemy also used it for the same purpose. It would not be a very suitable place to carry out regular activities in, as it is joined to the mainland by a very narrow neck of land and perhaps it served its best possible purpose as a place of quiet retreat for I.R.A. personnel. The men of the local units had been instructed by Commandant Tom Ennis to hold themselves in readiness for quick transport to the main 2nd Battalion area as required, and I decided to adhere to his decision in this regard.

The Sutton and Baldoyle Company had occasionally held up, and on one occasion derailed (in conjunction with another Company), trains proceeding from Howth to Dublin for the purpose either of capturing mails or dealing with an enemy intelligence agent. On the morning that the train was derailed the Director of Organisation was a passenger.

Commandant Ennis had been planning to attack an enemy lorry or lorries containing military or Black and Tans which did periodical patrol work through the village of Baldoyle and on the back road thence to Portmarnock. We were arranging to carry out this attack when the Truce was called.

In the first week of July, 1921, while Brigade Commandant Traynor was on temporary leave, the Vice Brigade Commandant, Seán Mooney, summoned a meeting of the Brigade Council and announced that G.H.Q. had ordered an attack on the Auxiliaries in which the whole Dublin Brigade, together with the Active Service Unit, would be engaged. At this period it had become customary for the Auxiliaries to gather in O'Connell Street at 7 p.m. and to walk up and down in groups on the footpaths and on the roadway swinging their revolvers or automatics and accompanied by their lady friends. The task of the Brigade was to put an end to this parading and, as the Auxiliaries had been declared outlaws by the Government of the Republic, this meant that as many of them as possible were to be shot. Each of the four Battalions were to take a portion of O'Connell Street, enter that portion at an appointed time and shoot all Auxiliaries who were there. The portion of O'Connell Street allotted to the 2nd Battalion was the east side from Eden Quay to North Earl Street. The remainder of

the street was divided among the other Battalions. There was also some parading of Auxiliaries in Nassau Street and Grafton Street and this was to receive the attention of the Active Service Unit at the same time. I was warned that a motor van or lorry containing members of the A.S.U. and driven by Pat McCrae would pass through the 2nd Battalion portion of O'Connell Street at seven o'clock on its way to Nassau Street or Grafton Street, and I was to take particular care that the party was not to be mistaken for the enemy but to be allowed an easy passage through. This detail was conveyed to me by Paddy Daly, Officer in Charge of the A.S.U., and I think he told me that the driver (Pat McCrae) and perhaps some of the men with him would be dressed in British Auxiliary or military uniform. I may be wrong in this last particular but that impression has been left on my mind, although not too clearly.

The 2nd Battalion, in conformity with the general plan of the other Battalions, had arranged for groups of men to enter O'Connell Street in a kind of loose file formation (at 7 p.m.) from the streets leading into its allotted portion, i.e., from Eden Quay, Lower Abbey Street, Sackville Place, North Earl Street, to deal with the Auxiliaries encountered between the point of entry and the next street leading out of O'Connell Street and to leave by the latter as soon as it was clear that no other group of I.R.A. men required their assistance. A motor van driven by N.C.O. Begley of E. Company was to be stationed in Marlboro Street to receive any weapons that were not being dumped directly by the men who had been using them.

The Battalion groups had assembled and were about to move off when this intended action was called off. I do

not recollect now the method of calling it off, but I learned of it either as I was approaching one of the Battalion groups or from the Battalion Adjutant, Andy Doyle, who received it either from Brigade Headquarters or from a courier from G.H.Q. I think a group of C. Company had entered O'Connell Street or was filing into it when the order cancelling the attack reached it.

We received word that night, probably along with the cancellation order, that a Truce had been arranged as from midday, 11th July, which was only a few days away.

There had been renewed rumours of a Truce for a short period before this, but the arrangements made for this attack which had been ordered by G.H.Q. as we understood were so thorough that all thoughts of a Truce had been banished from our minds and we were taken entirely by surprise. I could never understand why G.H.Q. had allowed our preparations to go so far - practically up to the moment that the attack was to be launched. A delay in the communicating of the order from G.H.Q. or the accidental arriving of a group in O'Connell Street a few moments before zero hour might have created a difficult situation. It is also to be noted that (if my memory serves me right) no Auxiliaries appeared in O'Connell Street on the night arranged for the attack. Perhaps they had received a cancelling order also.

The Battalion was called on to supply a number of officers or suitable men to act as Liaison Officers for the purposes of the Truce. Andy Doyle, Adjutant of the Battalion, was one of those provided by the 2nd Battalion. We also received orders to parade the Companies regularly but not too ostentatiously and to perfect organisation,

but not to engage in the acquiring of arms on any large scale. These orders, we were told, were in accordance with the terms of the Truce.

The 2nd Battalion did plenty of drilling, lecturing on military matters and marching. All was done, as ordered, in an unprovocative way. There was a scarcity of arms and ammunition and, when Stephen Murphy, Captain of B. Company, reported to me that an opportunity had presented itself of importing a considerable quantity of revolvers and ammunition from England, I did not hesitate to accept a loan of £100 - arranged by Stephen Murphy also - from Mr. Nagle, North Earl Street, Dublin, for the purpose. Unfortunately nothing was ever received for this money. I saw Mr. Nagle later and repaid him £40 of this loan but the Civil War had broken out before the balance could be repaid. The £40 paid back on account was obtained by Stephen Murphy also.

About mid-August each Battalion was ordered to secure a suitable place for an outdoor camp and to get all the Companies into it. Men working during the day were to go to the camp as soon as they were free, and unemployed men were to remain in camp during the day on guard duty, etc. Blankets and utensils for meals were to be provided by the Volunteers individually. Military exercises were to be practised, lectures arranged and strict discipline maintained. Accompanied by Danny Lyons, Captain of F. Company, I secured a building on lands near Kilmore owned by the Christian Brothers and close to Artane Industrial Schools. As the summer and autumn of 1921 were exceptionally fine, the camp was continued until some time in October, but before that month (as the Christian

Brothers were anxious to have for harvest purposes the building occupied by the Battalion) we arranged to go under canvas in lands at Coolock owned by Mr. Cullen, a dairyman.

In addition to practising suitable field exercises, field cooking and sanitation, church and other parades, we prepared for a review of the Battalion by the Chief of Staff, Richard Mulcahy. The 2nd Battalion was reviewed by the Chief of Staff on a Sunday morning in October (1921) at the first camping site near Artane, by arrangement with the Christian Brothers, many of whom, including the local superiors, were present at the function. The Chief of Staff was accompanied by the Assistant Chief of Staff, Eoin O'Duffy, and the Brigade Commandant and his staff were present. The parade was addressed by the Chief of Staff who congratulated all the Volunteers present and, reminding them that our Government was negotiating with an enemy who had its heel on our throat, urged all to perfect themselves in every way as soldiers and to be prepared for a renewal of fighting.

The review marked the end of the camping period which ended when the Chief of Staff had taken his departure.

I attended the reviews by the Chief of Staff of the 1st Battalion at Mulhuddart, 3rd Battalion on lands near Donnybrook, 4th Battalion on lands between Terenure and Crumlin, 5th (Engineers' Battalion) at the Pine Forest and of the Blessington (5th?) Battalion of 2nd (Co. Dublin) Brigade at Mount Seskin, Brittas, Co. Dublin. The Chief of Staff addressed the Battalions on each of these reviews in terms similar to those of his address to

the 2nd Battalion.

Towards the end of November, 1921, I was appointed Adjutant of the Dublin Brigade in succession to Kit O'Malley who resigned to take up an appointment with one of the whole-time units. The post of Adjutant of the Dublin Brigade was a whole-time one and necessitated my resignation from my civil occupation. Patrick E. Sweeney succeeded me as Commandant of the 2nd Battalion.

SIGNED: Frank Henderson
(Frank Henderson)

DATE: 27th. March 1953.
27th March, 1953.

WITNESS: J. Kearns Comdt
(J. Kearns) Comd't.