

W.S. 891

# ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21
No. W.S. 891

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21:

**STATEMENT BY WITNESS**

**DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 891**

**Witness**

Maurice Meade,  
Emly,  
Co. Tipperary.

**Identity.**

Private in the Casement Brigade, Germany;  
Section Commander, East Limerick Flying Column.

**Subject.**

- (a) Casement Brigade in Germany, 1915;
- (b) East Limerick Flying Column, 1919-1921.

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

Nil

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Form B.S.M. 2

STATEMENT OF MR. MAURICE MEADE,  
Emly, Co. Tipperary.

CONTENTS.

	<u>Pages.</u>
1. Early life. ... ..	1-2
2. Beginning my military career by joining the British Army in 1911. ...	3-5
3. Athletic training with the British Army in the Channel Islands. ...	6
4. My experience as a member of the British Expeditionary Force to France in 1914.	7-8
5. A British prisoner-of-war in Germany.	8-10
6. Formation of Casement's Brigade at Limburg Camp. ... ..	10-11
7. Mutiny incident at Soissons on New Year's Eve, 1915-1916. ... ..	11-13
8. Casement advises the members of the Brigade to volunteer for service with the German forces in Egypt. ...	13
9. Working in Berlin until the Armistice, November, 1918. I am then arrested by a British Provost party. ...	13-14
10. Shipped as a prisoner from Danzig to the Tower of London, I am condemned to death, but awarded a Royal pardon.	15-16
11. Home in Elton I am arrested by the R.I.C. and handed over to military custody at Clonmel. ... ..	16-18
12. Escape from the military detention barracks at Clonmel. ... ..	19-20
13. Returning to Ballylanders, I join the newly formed East Limerick Flying Column of the I.R.A. Ballylanders and Kilmallock Barracks attacks....	20-21
14. The ambush of British forces at Grange.	21-23
15. The Glenacurrane ambush. ... ..	24-26
16. The Drumkeen ambush. ... ..	26-28
17. Surprise of I.R.A. Column by British forces at Shraherla. ... ..	28-29
18. The fight at Lakelly. ... ..	29-31
19. I.R.A. party escape from a British round-up cordon at Kiltteely. ... ..	31-33

CONTENTS - Contd.

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	<u>Pages</u>
20. Death of the Brigadier Commander, Seán Wall, at Annacarthy ... ..	33-34
21. Hot pursuit of the East Limerick I.R.A. Column from Annacarthy to Ballycahill - West Limerick - and back to BulgADEN	34-35
22. The breaking up of the Column into smaller units near the date of the Truce. ... ..	35-36
23. A trap laid for the Column during our stay in West Limerick. ... ..	36-38
24. The fight at Ballyhahill and death of Brigadier Seán Finn. ... ..	38-41
25. I.R.A. raid on Major O'Grady's house at Kilballgown. ... ..	41-42
26. The recapture of Seán Forde's (Thomas Malone's) car: after the Truce. ...	43-45
27. An incident where Malone, posing as a British officer, escapes a British military party and receives a supply of petrol from them. ... ..	45-47
28. Appendix "A". Copy of translation of a letter from General G. Blumentritt to Lt. Col. MacCarthy, bearing on the German forces in Egypt in 1917.	2 pages.

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STATEMENT of Mr. Maurice Meade,

Emly,

Co. Tipperary.

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I was born on the 11th May, 1893, at Ballinvana, Elton, Co. Limerick. There was a big family of us in it and, having gone to school to the local national school until I was twelve years of age, I had then to leave school and go to work with a local farmer. All my pay was taken up by my father to help in keeping the family, so that I never saw a halfpenny of what I earned. My father kept me fed and clothed but I never had the spending of any money. I had no interest in, nor did I know anything of the national movement at the time. My time was fully occupied in helping to make ends meet and any private thoughts I had were probably given up to the hope of gaining my own independence.

In 1911 - I was about seventeen years of age then - I thought I saw some prospect for gaining my personal independence by joining the British Army, and I made up my mind to do this. I had a sister who was working as a barmaid in a place in Coburg Street in Cork. She wrote to me about that time to invite me to come on an excursion that was coming off, to Queenstown, as it was then known (Cobh). This railway excursion was half-a-crown return and she thought I might be able to raise that much. The excursion was on the 15th August. I wrote to my sister and told her I would go, though at the time I did not know how I would get the money. I was working with O'Sullivan's of Hospital, the arrangement being that I was paid nothing but my father drew all my wages together at the end of the year. Just at

this time my father had bought me a new suit and a pair of boots, and this gave me an idea. I went along to Mr. O'Sullivan and I said to him, "Sir, my father is after buying me a new suit and a pair of boots, and he wants the money to pay for them, he asked me to get the money and to bring it up to him on Saturday night". Mr. O'Sullivan said it would be all right and, when I went to him on Saturday night, he asked me how much my father wanted to pay for the clothes and boots. I told him £3.

On the following day, Sunday, I got up very early at 3 a.m. so as to have the cows milked and everything done in time to allow me to catch the excursion train at Knocklong, but early as I had got up, I missed the train. However, they told me at the station that there was a second train following and that they would allow me to travel on it with the half-crown excursion ticket. I got on this train and, in due course, I arrived in Cork where I met my sister and we went on to Queenstown (Cobh). When coming back to Cork my sister asked me if I could stay the night in Cork. I said I could; that I had got three days holidays from the boss, which of course was not true, but actually I had in mind to join the British Army and had no intention at all of going home again. However, I did not want her to know anything about this, and that is why I told her I had three days holidays. We went to the pictures that night and, having enjoyed this novelty, we went back to the hotel where she was working and she managed to put me up there.

Next morning, being normally an early riser, I was up at six o'clock and, after I had a bit to eat, walked around the city. A little later I saw a recruiting sergeant with red, white and blue ribbons flying from his cap. I was admiring this recruiting sergeant, when this

fine big fellow came over to me and said, "I say, young man, why don't you join the British Army?" "Begorah, sir", said I, "I was just thinking of doing that!" He had a greatcoat on him at the time, so I said to him, "Let me see your tunic", and he opened up the greatcoat to let me see what he looked like. He was a fine man, well set up and weighing perhaps sixteen stone. As I admired his tunic I asked him would I get the same and he told me I would. I asked him would there be the same buttons and belt and all that sort of thing with it, and he said, "You'll get everything that is there except the stripes. These are rank markings and you must work for them. To obtain stripes is a matter for yourself." So, having agreed to join, he asked me to wait a few minutes while he collected a few more recruits. After an hour and a half, or two hours, the recruiting sergeant came back to me and by this time he had a number of others. At any rate, he marched fifteen of us up to the barracks in Cork, that is, Collins Barracks now. We were medically examined and had all other formalities completed except to be sworn in. We were all fifteen of us waiting in this room to take the necessary oath, when I heard a lot of noise and a loud female voice outside. It was my sister demanding that I would be released from there, that I was under age, which of course I was.

Somehow or other, my sister had discovered what had happened and had followed me up to the barracks to get me out. She arrived just in time and got me out. She took me back to the hotel with her and she abused me severely for attempting to do such a thing as joining the British Army. Having got me back to the hotel, she left me in charge of the yardman there, while she went on with her work. I was helping this yardman during

the day to pile cases up against the wall and, in doing so, I got an idea. I built the cases very high against the wall under the window of the room I had slept in, with the idea that this would serve to let me out before anybody else was astir in the hotel the next morning. I used some of my money to buy a watch as I was bothered to know the time, and I got a very fine watch for, I think, 12/6d.

Next morning I was awake at 3 a.m. and, having got up and dressed, I discovered that high as the boxes came, they did not come high enough to reach them from the window. I tied the two sheets of the bed together and, pulling the bed over to the window, I tied the sheets to the head of it and lowered myself on to the boxes, from where I was able to scramble down, climb over the gate and away down the town. I went like a hare up to Collins Barracks where, rushing past the sentry, he halted me and asked me where I was going. I told him that I had been there the previous day, and he called out the Sergeant of the guard who, in turn, called out the Orderly Officer. The latter appeared with a sword hanging on him, which impressed me very much at the time. I explained to him that I had come up to join the army the previous day but had not completed the formalities owing to the mistaken anxiety of my sister, and that I was now ready and anxious to join the army. He said to me, when I explained that I had already passed the medical examination and all that formality, "Come on up and I will swear you in", which he did, and gave me a railway warrant to take me to Clonmel which was the depot for the Royal Irish Regiment. The officer told me that, having got the warrant, I could report to Clonmel any time I pleased within the coming week and that, in fact, I was now due a week's pay which

he gave me.

Returning to the hotel, I was very friendly towards my sister and she was very concerned about me, telling me that I ought to go home. She came with me to the station and bought me a ticket to Knocklong, though of course I did not want the ticket as I had the warrant to Clonmel which, however, I did not want her to know about.

When the train reached Knocklong Station, I got under the seat for fear that my father, or anyone who knew me, might see me in the train. In due course I arrived at Clonmel where I reported to the Barracks. They kept me there for three days in civilian clothes and at the end of that time I was given a number and a uniform.

I was only four or five days in Clonmel when my sister, Mary, arrived there from Cork. She had discovered that I had joined the army and where I was, and she had come up to claim my discharge as I was still under age. The military could not hold me. So they discharged me and I went home with her. My adventures had created a little stir in the family and my arrival home became the occasion for a certain amount of festivity. I was referred to by my father, in the words of an old song, as "the rambler from Clare."

The novelty of all this wore off after four or five days. Getting up one morning at three o'clock, I got out the window and dressed myself outside, whereupon I cut across country to the railway at Limerick Junction from where I made my way to Clonmel. Having explained my situation and related my exploits to the military authorities there, I was taken in, again attested and



uniformed.

There was a fellow there named Hayes who was related to Jerry Callaghan's wife of Hospital. He came to me and spoke to me about my ability as a cross-country runner. I was a very good runner at the time. He suggested that he would get me sent to the Channel Islands where I would have a good time and where my ability as a runner could be exploited.

When I went to the Channel Islands, we were in training there for cross-country running, but every night I came second to a Police-Corporal named Mansfield. A Colour-Sergeant named Wills called me in about this and said, "Look here, Meade! Surely you're good enough to beat Mansfield in these trials?" I admitted that I could beat him any time but explained that, if I did, Mansfield, being a police corporal, would revenge himself on me afterwards by putting me in the guard room for something or other. Wills told me not to mind about that, that he would see that I was not victimised. Accordingly, I went out on the following Saturday and beat the Police-Corporal. When I was being congratulated by Wills, I said to him, "That's all right, Colour-Sergeant, but I'll get the works from Corporal Mansfield tonight, even though I'm not drinking and I have a late pass up to midnight. He'll manufacture a charge against me somehow or, at the very least, trip me and knock my head off the Belvedere steps". They used to do that kind of thing at the time and no explanation or appeal would help, but in this case the Colour-Sergeant brought me to the Company Captain who was a man named Hopkins, and this was explained to him. As a result of all this, I had the protection of the Company Commander and I went ahead in my running, finally winning the shield for cross-country running at Guernsey that year.

Soon afterwards came the outbreak of the 1914-1918 war, and I was a member of the First Expeditionary Force that landed in France. We were organised at Devenport which was our Battalion lines before leaving for France. The story of this expeditionary force is well known. When we landed in France, we moved on until we reached Mons. At that stage we were so close to the German lines, some of which were within thirty yards of us, but we did not know it at the time. Our scouting must have been pretty poor. We were after a long route march of twenty-five or thirty miles when we reached Mons, and so when we bivouacked that night we were so tired that everyone slept soundly. Next morning there was no one afoot but the cook-sergeants and their staffs who, having lit up the field kitchens, were busy getting the breakfast ready. We were all starving with the hunger when we awoke and were anxiously awaiting breakfast, when German shells began to fall around the camp. Apparently the smoke from the field kitchens had been the German gunners' ranging point because shells were falling thick and fast around and upon the field kitchens. We put up the best fight we could at Mons but right from the start it was a matter of getting out of it as quickly as we could. There is nothing much that I can add to the stories already written about that retreat. My experiences from that on in the trenches of Flanders were no way different to that of any other soldier there.

In 1915 the British trench lines in France had settled down in a sort of permanent form. Sometimes they moved forward here and there, and at other times they moved back. In the place where we were, we had advanced too far, that is, our part of the trench seemed to have become a deep salient in the German lines and,

on the other hand, we had little support behind us, and the result was that a German attack eventually surrounded us at Le Basse. Our battalion, having been cut off for three days and nights and being without rations or ammunition supplies, was forced to surrender. The officer commanding the battalion - Colonel Cox - was killed the day we surrendered. After his death, as there seemed to be no prospect of getting out of our predicament, the remainder of the unit surrendered to the Germans. We were in such a bad way at the time and surrounded by dead bodies that, in fact, we used the dead bodies as barricades, heaping them up to give us cover from the German fire.

The Germans moved us back to a town in France behind their own lines, which I don't remember the name of. From there we were moved to Hamelin-on-Weser. It took us seven days to reach our destination in Germany and the only food we got during that time was a couple of raw eggs. Our treatment by the Germans was no way gentle. When we were being issued with the eggs, they were placed in the railway carriage where we were and we had to march past in file, each man grabbing a couple of eggs as he passed, while a German N.C.O. standing by kicked at any of us who made the slightest delay. This German N.C.O. was a Feldwebel and he had lost an arm in the war and apparently felt very bitter towards us in consequence.

When we reached Hamelin-on-Weser we got dry bread and black coffee and we were so hungry that we filed past the issuing centre two or three times in order to get enough to satisfy our hunger. We were kept there quite a long time. This was in the depth of winter and the camp we were in was merely a barbed wire enclosure

without buildings. We had to sleep in the open and we were only allowed three blankets each to cover us. Consequently it can be easily imagined we suffered very much from the cold and it was difficult to get any sleep. Our rations in the camp were very skimpy. Each man got a small loaf of bread which was supposed to last him for seven days. In addition to that, we got a basin of black coffee morning and evening, and at midday a basin of soup which seemed to have been made from anything that came handy, because we used get pieces of rabbit skins and even horse hide mixed up in it from time to time. We were not allowed to smoke and, in any case, we had nothing to smoke except butts of cigarettes that we picked up when they were thrown away by the German soldiers. We carefully watched for these being thrown away and picked them up with pins. One of the punishments applied to us when, for instance, anyone was caught smoking, was to have our hands tied to a line above our heads so that we had to stand with arms stretched upwards for at least a couple of hours. If we were there during dinner time, they would bring along our basins of soup and leave them under us where we could smell it but could not reach it. When eventually we were let off, the bowl of soup would be spilled out and we were often so hungry that we would get down to eat the ground that the soup was spilled on. We suffered very much from hunger all this time, so that sometimes we would eat all of the loaf of bread when we got it and having no bread left for the remainder of the week, we would go down to the cookhouse where we might steal the potato peelings. These we would secrete in the straw palliasses we slept on and would eat them when we went to bed at night.

Soon after we came to the camp, the Germans began to provide us with the materials for the building of huts for ourselves. German overseers were there, of course, to direct us as to what was to be done, but we provided all the labour. Eventually we had huts to house us. When the huts were built, we had to work in local quarries producing stones and bricks for building work around.

It must have been some time coming up to Christmas of 1915 that some German officers came along and called for all Irishmen to stand out. It was announced that all the Irishmen were to be sent home in time for Christmas. This was how they sorted out the Irishmen among the prisoners from the others. We were all sent to a new camp, which was Limburg. Before we left Hamelin-on-the-Weser, we were in a very bad way and, amongst other things, we were crawling with lice, but when we got to Limburg we were much better treated. We got extra underclothes and extra food and were generally made to feel comfortable.

Soon after our arrival at Limburg, we heard about the formation of Casement's Irish Brigade. A priest named Father Crotty spoke to us about it and I think the matter was mentioned to us also by Keogh, Quinlisk and Beverly who apparently had some contact with Casement or Monteith before the rest of us had. In this way we learned the general idea for the formation of the Brigade, and so when one day Casement, Monteith and Father Crotty, accompanied by four or five German officers, entered the camp, we were not taken by surprise. We were assembled in a big hall where Casement addressed us, appealing to us to join this Brigade, which the Germans had agreed to being formed, and in this way strike a blow for our motherland.

After Casement and Monteith had left, the German N. C. O's came around the hut to take the names of those who were willing to join the Irish Brigade. They were assisted in this by Keogh, Quinlisk and Beverly, three fellow-prisoners of ours, whom apparently Casement had made contact with and were trusted by him to help in the formation of the Brigade.

Soon after that, Keogh, Quinlisk and Beverly went to Berlin where they were fitted with a new uniform that was specially designed and made for the Irish Brigade, and they came back to the camp to show it to us. It was a lovely uniform and looked very well. I wore such a uniform myself later and I also went to Berlin where we were presented to the Kaiser who came around and shook hands with each of us.

In that camp at Limburg there were about 5,000 prisoners, but all that agreed to join the Irish Brigade were 57. Those of us who joined the Brigade were then moved from Limburg to Soissons where we were trained as Lewis gun teams, using material and weapons that the Germans had captured from the British. These guns were familiar to us and we needed very little training in them to become much quicker in stripping and assembling them than the German N. C. O's who were supposed to be teaching us, so much so that the German officers who were supervising became very abusive to their own N. C. O's for appearing to be inferior to us in this way.

On New Year's Eve, that is, 1915-1916, we were still in Soissons and we had a big blow-out in the canteen. When the Germans were singing, we applauded them whether we liked their singing or not, but eventually when one of our fellows - Billy McGrath was his name - was singing,

the Germans present indicated their disapproval, at which we took offence and, one word borrowing another, a fight began. Glasses were thrown and the fight then moved out on the square, where the Landstrum (the 3rd line troops) came along with their rifles to quell the disturbance. We turned our attention on the Landstrum then and took the rifles from them, bayonets and all. Retiring into our own barracks (this was a special barracks that had been built for us), we defied the whole German army. This incident, which had begun simply enough, had now developed into a serious mutiny and we refused to allow any German soldier or officer into our camp. The next thing we knew was when the next day or so Casement and Monteith, accompanied by about twenty high-ranking German officers, appeared on the scene. We had our own Lewis gun covering off the entrance to the barracks and we had announced that anyone attempting to enter without our permission would be shot down. When Casement arrived, we sent out a sentry of ours to inform Casement that only he and Monteith would be allowed to enter. Monteith and Casement therefore came into the camp and we closed the gate behind them, leaving the Germans outside. Casement demanded an explanation of the situation and this was given to him, our attitude being that this situation was forced upon us by the Germans, that we had not been looking for trouble but that, having been forced into this situation, we would not surrender our right to defend ourselves. Casement accepted our explanation and said that we should allow the German officers to come in and hear what we had to say. They were accordingly allowed to come in and the situation was explained to them as it had been already explained to Casement. The upshot of all this was that the German personnel who were responsible for the starting of the row got nine

days' detention and three of us, including myself, got three days' detention. This disposed of the whole mutiny.

Following this, we carried on with our training. Shortly before Casement left Germany for Ireland, he again came to see us and addressed us. He pointed out that, though he had hoped that an effective fighting Brigade might have been built up in Germany to go to Ireland, now the Brigade was too small to go there but that we could give useful service elsewhere for, he said, a shot fired for Ireland's freedom in Egypt could be as good as a shot fired in Ireland, encouraging us to volunteer for service for the German expeditionary forces in the Mediterranean.

We all agreed to take Casement's advice but, when it came to the point of volunteering for service with the German army, no one - only myself - actually did volunteer. I joined the 203rd Regiment from Berlin and I served six months' with this Regiment in Egypt against the British forces. That would be in 1917. I spoke to some of the British prisoners captured in the course of the fighting in Egypt and they were very surprised at me, being as they thought a German, being able to speak English so well. (See Appendix 'A').

On my return to Berlin I was released from the Regiment and I got a job in Dershar with a firm named Polete. They were wholesale liquour distributors. The proprietor of this firm was an ex-feldwebel, which is equivalent to what we would call a sergeant-major. Besides liquour, they also sold coal and timber and things like that. I got a job there delivering stuff around the streets and earned a hundred marks a month as well as my keep in the hotel belonging to the firm. I remained in this job for about nine months and I was still working



there when the war ended in November, 1918.

Coffee was scarce in Germany at that time. In the firm where I worked there were tons and tons of it stored upstairs. Farmers coming in to do their shopping were very keen to get any coffee they could. I gave them odd packages which I took from the stores and so was in high favour with them. I was invited out to their houses in the country and on occasions they would bring me in a piece of bacon or something like that. In this way I got on very well while I was there. I still held the Casement Brigade uniform that was issued to me and when I wanted to feel dressed up, I would put on this uniform and go around the town. A uniform of any kind in Germany commanded some respect. Sometimes I used take out a girl for a drive in a cab or a taxi.

On this particular holiday we had just got into the taxi when I found I had no cigarettes, and I went back to get some in the bar. The proprietor invited me to have a drink before I went which I did, and following this I could do no less than buy a drink in return. It was while having this schnapps that a British officer tapped me on the shoulder. This was after the armistice and the British occupation forces were in Germany. This officer said to me, "You are 10271, Sergeant Meade of the Royal Irish Regiment?" When I admitted my identity he informed me that I was his prisoner. I was placed with an escort in a Crossley tender and the next place I found myself was in Danzig, where I was placed in custody aboard a British warship. The Provost-Marshal and his party went off then to hunt for some other men of the Irish Brigade.

At the time I was arrested by the British provost party, I was holding on in Germany hoping that the promise

that had been made to us by Casement would be fulfilled by the Germans, that is, that we were to get each a hundred pounds and to be sent to America but, when the war finished up as it did, we did not know what was going to happen.

On the ship in Danzig with me was another prisoner, another member of the Casement Brigade, whose name I am not sure that I can remember, but I think he was a man named O'Neill from Dublin. We were allowed on the upper deck of the ship while we awaited the return of the provost marshal's party. We knew a little of the German language which we had picked up during our stay in Germany and we were conversing with some Germans who stood around on the quayside, swapping pieces of soap and things like that with them, which were in short supply in Germany, for foodstuff and smokes.

The provost marshal's party, we learned, had been given the job of rounding up all the members of Casement's Brigade, but we were the only two they succeeded in capturing at the time. When they returned to the ship after three days, the ship put to sea for London and we were put down to the bottom of the ship where we were locked up. The uniform we wore was taken from us and we were dressed in Marines uniform, the badges and buttons of which, however, were cut off, and we were given some plain black buttons to sew on in replacement.

Having arrived in London, we were marched under very heavy escort of about 300 to the Tower of London. I suppose the very strong escort for the two of us was in case the general public would get to know who we were and we would be mobbed. Having been lodged in the Tower, we were placed in cells there, where we remained for about a fortnight before being courtmartialled. We

were tried for high treason and, having been convicted, were sentenced to death.

We were about a fortnight more in the Tower awaiting execution when one day - it was the day before we were supposed to be executed - a Tipperary man, who was a member of the guard, came to us and told us that we would not be hanged at all, that the King's pardon had been given. Now, we had taken no steps to procure any pardon, so that all this happened without our knowledge. On the following day we got an official notice of our reprieve and a short time later we were sent home. O'Neill (if that was his name) was sent to Dublin and I was sent on to Elton in the County Limerick.

I was not long home when one day my mother asked me to go to Knocklong to get a bit of meat for the dinner. I took my brother John with me. On the way back I called in to O'Sullivan's of Elton for a drink, and while there the local R. I. C. Sergeant in Elton - Sergeant Lydon - came in and invited me to his home for a bit of dinner. I had known him before I left Ireland. I asked him to have a drink with me but he refused, saying that he would come out and have a drink with me afterwards but first I should call in and see his wife. Telling my brother to wait there for me, I went with Sergeant Lydon into the Barracks. When I got inside the door, the Sergeant closed and locked the door behind me and informed me that I was a prisoner. I asked him with some surprise whether he was joking, hadn't I merely come in to see his wife and wasn't he going to come out and have a drink with me. He said, "You know the law as well as I do", and that I must remain there. I asked Constable Cogan to tell my brother, who was waiting for me in O'Sullivan's, that I was unable to return and to bring a drink in to me; so he

brought me a bottle of Bass. I was held prisoner in the Barracks until the following day when a military escort arrived from Clonmel to take me over.

The escort consisted of a Sergeant and two soldiers. I don't remember the names of the soldiers but the Sergeant was a Sergeant McCarthy, a cross-country runner whom I had known very well. When he had presented his credentials to the R.I.C. and claimed me for return to Clonmel with him, Sergeant McCarthy said, "What about a drink?", to which suggestion I agreed and informed him that there was a very good publichouse adjoining the barracks, but that I was unable to go out while I was a prisoner there. McCarthy, not knowing what the charge against me was, could see no reason for this and demanded that I should be allowed to accompany him to the public-house. At that time there was no way of getting back to Clonmel until the following day, so we would have to remain there. The R.I.C. Sergeant claimed that he was responsible for my safe custody in the meantime. McCarthy, on the other hand, argued that I was his prisoner and, having handed the necessary documents to the R.I.C. Sergeant, took me with him out of the barracks. We went into Sullivan's where we were joined by all my relations and friends and we drank until ten o'clock that night, at which stage the R.I.C. Sergeant Lydon with Constable Cogan came in and demanded the return of the prisoner to the barracks. Everyone objected to this and a pint tumbler was slung at Cogan, knocking his hat off. Both of the R.I.C. men left hurriedly. We came out then and the whole crowd marched down in front of the R.I.C. Barracks and began singing the "Soldier's Song", after which Sergeant McCarthy, the two soldiers and myself went to my father's cottage where we stayed for the night. Unfortunately, the soldiers had left their

rifles in the R.I.C. Barracks when we went into the pub, as otherwise I would certainly have made away with these. As it was, however, I did not want to get Sergeant McCarthy into trouble and I returned to the Barracks with him next morning. When we got on the train for Clonmel, Sergeant McCarthy had a letter given to him by the R.I.C. Sergeant at Elton for handing over to the military authorities in Clonmel and, for fear that this had any reference to what had happened the night before, he opened the letter and we both read it, but there was nothing in it except a glowing recommendation for myself from Sergeant Lydon.

When we arrived in Clonmel, we went into a publichouse near the station before we went into the barracks and had a few drinks there, so that when we arrived in the barracks, the Sergeant was placed under open arrest, the two men of the escort were put into clink and I was sent into the detention barracks.

After I was about three days there I was paraded one day before the Commanding Officer and I was charged with high treason, but I explained that I had already been tried in London on a charge of high treason and had obtained the King's pardon. Apparently they did not know of this. The Commanding Officer instructed Colour-Sergeant Wills to march me out and back to the detention barracks, pending, I suppose, some inquiries into the matter.

In the meantime I was held in the detention barracks where I remained for a further couple of weeks, during which time I was very friendly with the guard. I used go in and make up their beds, make tea for them, polish their boots and suchlike. They

in turn would bring me in a few bottles of beer - on pay nights perhaps nine or ten bottles - and when I had my drinks, I would go back to my cell and go asleep. However, I began to think that, under those conditions, it might be possible to make my escape. The time stretched on until I was nearly four weeks there and still there was nothing happening about the charge against me.

One night, which was pay night, I made up my mind that, if they came in that night fairly boozed as usual, I would make some move. When the guard arrived, they were, in fact, pretty drunk, so I took off their puttees, put them to bed and boiled the kettle to make tea or coffee for them. The Sergeant had a little bunk to himself and used leave the keys up on the mantelpiece. In a short time they were all asleep and I lay down myself as if to sleep, but I waited till things would be quiet - about three o'clock in the morning - when I got up and walked quietly around to see that the Sergeant and the guard were all still asleep, which they were. Noting that the keys were still on the mantelpiece, I quietly and silently took possession of them and, letting myself out by the door, locked the door on the outside. Then there was the barrack door, which had a wicket in it, and I went through that, also locking it on the outside, after which I felt reasonably safe. The barracks was surrounded by a fourteen-foot wall which had broken glass on top of it, but I felt able to get over this if I could do it quick enough while the sentry's back was turned. There was a sentry marching up and down. I had my boots off so as to make no noise in walking and I threw these over the wall first. The sentry, when he heard the thud of the boots falling outside, became alarmed and stopped to listen but hearing nothing further,

he carried on with his marching up and down. I was hidden in a clump of laurels watching the sentry. When I saw my chance - his back was turned to me and he was about fifty yards away - I climbed quickly up the wall and, protecting my hands from broken glass with my cap, vaulted over the top and down on to the pavement outside, which was at least twelve feet of a drop. Picking up my boots, I quickly put them on and then headed for the Suir bridge. When passing over the bridge, I thought it would be a good place to park the keys I had taken from the Sergeant, and so I threw them into the river.

Heading out the country as fast as I could, I came to a farmer's house in the early morning. I decided I would take a chance here to secure some clothes to replace the khaki uniform I wore. It was not too safe to approach anyone around Clonmel as most of them were by reputation pro-British. However, I was lucky in this case as the farmer gave me an old pants and a coat, several sizes too large for me, but good enough to serve the purpose for the time being and, having donned these, I got out of the uniform and left that behind. At another house I called to I got a hard hat that must have made me look rather like Charlie Chaplain. At any rate, my appearance must have been a fair imitation of the beggarman role I had to adopt for the next couple of weeks while working my way back towards my home country. It was three weeks before I reached Ballylanders.

In Ballylanders I was accosted by David Tobin who enquired who I was. I told him who I was and all that had happened to me. He brought me to Donncaadh O'Hannigan and I explained the whole situation to Donncaadh. Then Donncaadh told me that I was the very man they wanted, that

they had formed a flying column and a man like myself, who was familiar with military training, could be very useful to them. I agreed immediately to join the column, which I did there and then, and I remained with the column from that date until the Truce in 1921.

O'Hannigan appointed me, after a while, as Training Officer for the column and I was responsible for the training of Liam Hayes, Tom Howard (who was killed later) and the whole lot of them.

In April, 1920, the attack on Ballylanders R.I.C. Barracks took place. The 26th April it was, I believe. I took part in that attack, being stationed in the house where Tom Crawford was. The story of the attack on Ballylanders has been well described by several people, so I need not go into the details. The police eventually surrendered and we took all their arms and burned down the barracks.

I also took part in the Kilmallock Barrack attack. There is nothing I can add to the accounts already written about that either.

There were numbers of other ambushes and actions of one kind or another, the details of which I cannot remember at the moment, but I remember the Grange ambush which was, I believe, in November, 1920.

In Grange the column, with the mid-Limerick column and some of the local Volunteers, was placed to ambush a couple of lorries that were expected from Bruff, bringing two prisoners into Limerick. The East Limerick column was in position behind the demesne wall on the west side of the road, the mid-Limerick men being on the other side of the road nearer the bend, and the local Battalion Volunteers being further around



the bend towards Bruff on the higher ground.

When we got the signal that the lorries were coming, we were ready for action and we attacked the first two lorries that came around the bend into the ambush position, killing most of the soldiers that were in these lorries, but we did not know at the time that these two lorries were only the leading two of a convoy of thirteen or so. The remainder of the lorries did not come around the bend at all (seven came almost to the bend) and they were, therefore, not within our view or within reach of our fire. The first lorry that came around the turn into the ambush position was a Leyland lorry filled with soldiers, and Davy Tobin threw two bombs which exploded in the middle of that lorry, blowing everything in it to bits.

There was a quarry on the south of the road around the bend, where the seven lorries halted, and the Volunteers who were there had charge of our reserve supply of bombs and ammunition. It was some of these that fired a shot too soon and alarmed the rest of the lorries, thus preventing them from running into the ambush position. The quarry was attacked by the police or military from the lorries and they captured all our reserve bombs and stuff there. The Volunteers who were in the quarry had been placed there as a guard on the reserve bombs and stuff and should not have disclosed their position there by firing but, having done so, they were unable to protect the stuff which they were left there to guard.

We had three men wounded in this fight. One of them was Liam Bourke of Bellindangan, Co. Cork, another was a Tobin of Glenbrohane and a third man whose name I forget for the moment.

Owen O'Keefe was in the post office with some other East Limerick men when the military entered there and they had to fight their way out the back way, but they managed to do this and got away.

Concerning enemy casualties, I know that there were seventeen soldiers in the first Leyland lorry, and David Tobin put two Mills bombs into that lorry as well as the other fire that was directed on it; so I don't think anyone was left alive in that lorry. When the second lorry came on to us and we opened fire on it, an officer jumped from it, came through a wicket gate in the wall and tried to fire on us behind the wall, but Davy Clancy caught him and shot him dead. I was near him at the time and I took the revolver and the Sam Brown belt he wore from him, and I wore that belt until the Truce.

At this stage the military had dismounted from the lorries around the bend and were advancing on our rere across the fields. So the half of the Column, which was nearest the turn with Seán Forde, turned about and advanced at the double towards the advancing soldiers to a place where we could get some cover along the bank of the stream, so that we could cover by our fire the retreat of the remainder of the Column to a point on our right and where they could cover our retreat afterwards. When the soldiers saw us running towards them they must have thought we were charging them, or something like that, because they immediately beat a hasty retreat to their lorries on the road, and we were able to keep them pinned there until the fire of the other half of the Column enabled us to get back. From there we went past the demesne house and along the avenue to the front gate where we were able to cross the road and away.

I should have given particulars of a number of smaller actions which took place before Grange, but I am not clear just at the moment in what order they occurred. For instance, the Kildorrery ambush was before Grange, in August 1920, in fact, where we attacked and captured a patrol of R. I. C. and Black and Tans. We killed two of them and wounded the others, but I am sure Donncadha O'Hannigan and other people have given all the details of that. I was with the East Limerick Column since soon after it started early in 1920 and was in all the actions and activities of this Column from then until the Truce. The Grange ambush would be November, 1920, and so the next thing I remember that follows is the ambush at Glenacurrane. This was meant to be a big job and the North Cork Brigade were brought into it to help.

We travelled to Glenacurrane from Kilclooney where we met the North Cork men who were under Tom Barry. I had a Maxim gun which had been captured at Major O'Grady's house. I know that Barry had a position near the barricade, around the bend of the road, and I was sent up on a height further up in the Mitchelstown direction near a house, with my Maxim gun and a section of five men who helped to carry the ammunition belt boxes for the gun. I had a clear view from there of the whole road. Some of the men asked me what I was going to do and I told them that I had instructions from Donncadh O'Hannigan not to fire unless the enemy tried to retreat from the ambush position and I should be able to fire on them then from the rere to compel their surrender. There were old trunks of trees thrown down and I had my gun placed in the crotch of one of these, for we had no tripod for it. We waited in position when we had everything ready, from about five o'clock

in the morning until ten.

At about ten o'clock along came two lorries and a touring car. As they passed along into the ambush position, the men with me urged me to fire but I would not until I made sure that the cars were all well into the ambush position. Then I decided to have a few shots at the last one which happened to be the touring car. Having fired a burst on the car, we saw them, soldiers and officers, jumping from the car and lorries and calling out their willingness to surrender. I jumped up and grabbing my gun by the handle with my right hand, and resting it on my left arm, I began to run down the mountain towards the road but I struck my foot against something and fell so that myself, gun and all rolled a considerable distance towards the road. Picking myself up, I limped on to the road with the gun balanced on my arm and levelled towards the enemy troops. I called out loudly to them for everyone of them to get out on the road with his hands up, or I would wipe them all out with a burst, though I realised that it was more than doubtful at this stage whether my gun would fire at all or not, after our fall and the awkward way I had to handle it. I had originally five belts filled with ammunition for the gun. These belts held 250 rounds each, so that this represented about 1,250 rounds of ammunition, but this amount would not keep the gun working for very long. Barry of the Cork Brigade came up to me then and remonstrated with me for having fired on the lorries. He said, "Why didn't you let them come on down to the barricade where I could have handled them?" I told him it was all the same now - they had surrendered - and it was immaterial who had done the shooting. We captured a lot of mails with this patrol as well as their arms and ammunition. There were two or three of the British

killed and a lot of them wounded, and Donnadh O'Hannigan was looking after getting their wounds dressed and all that sort of thing.

The Drumkeen ambush, which occurred in February, 1921, was the next important action I can remember. The various accounts that have been written of this, and published, give the general outline pretty correctly but a lot of the details are wrong. For instance, it was stated in a recent book that somebody - I forget his name now - from Limerick had been responsible for shooting a Tan that was under a lorry. Foley, that was. It was I actually who took this fellow out from under the lorry and shot him on the road. And two Tans who came up from the barricade were captured alive. Then, again, the book said that four or five Black and Tans remained behind in Fedamore, and I think that is wrong, because thirteen Tans left Pallas that morning. That is the number that reached the ambush position.

The general layout of the Drumkeen ambush, that is, where the men were placed and how the Tans came into it, is given pretty correctly in the articles written by Colonel MacCarthy and others. I was in charge of a party of about twenty-five men, and we were on the other side across from the graveyard. Bill Hayes, that is, lately Adjutant-General of the National Army, and Davy Guerin were in the graveyard. When fire was opened and we could see that all the Tans appeared to be dead, I gave our fellows the order to cease fire. I noticed then that Bill Hayes was holding his hand out and I asked him what was wrong. It seems that he had been struck in the hand by a bullet which had smashed a finger. We had relaxed at this stage and lit up cigarettes when I heard a shot and I saw a puff of smoke off the stones

near where Davy Guerin was. Looking out from the window of the house we were in, I saw that someone was firing from beneath one of the lorries. I shouted to the other fellows to get out, that there was a man shooting from under one of the lorries. I fired a shot from the window myself. Then I got out on the road where I was better able to see and to shoot, and I fired at this fellow under the lorry. I could see my bullets striking the road very close to him and, after a minute or so, he came out holding his left hand up but carrying a carbine in his right hand. Davy Guerin had him covered and shouted to him as he came out, "Drop your ---- rifle, or I'll blow your brains out". Dropping his rifle, he came out to me with his two hands over his head but, considering his action had been treacherous, I shot him.

Then O'Hannigan and someone else went walking down through the position, past where the lorries and the dead Tans were lying. They found two Tans still alive and apparently uninjured, down at the end, and they brought them back with them up to the farmyard where a courtmartial sat upon them on the spot. Five officers constituted the courtmartial. Two officers voted against shooting them, but three, which was a majority, voted for their immediate execution. We were standing nearby at the time. Donncadh O'Hannigan called me and said, "Here, Maurice, will you shoot one of them?" I agreed to do so. He gave Stapleton the job of executing the other. I took my man down the road and shot him. Then I went down to see how Stapleton was getting on, and found that he disliked the job and did not want to do it, so I took this fellow over and executed him also. The reason for shooting these Tans after they had surrendered was that

O'Hannigan had an order from G.H.Q. in Dublin that we were to shoot all Tans and peelers who fell into our hands. I think this order may have been issued as a counterblast to a similar order that had been issued by the British regarding I.R.A. men who fell into their hands, but I do know that Donncadh O'Hannigan definitely produced this order at the trial of these Tans and that we knew of the existence of such an order before that. Probably Donncadh told us about it whenever he got it.

The Shraherla incident occurred on the 1st May. The East Limerick Column, with a number of the West Limerick men, were billeted there, spread around a bit. The place is alongside Kilclooney Wood. There is a long straight road leading away up the hill from where we were to the left and, looking at it about two miles away, I could see two black objects coming along. I called Donncadh O'Hannigan's attention to this and we wondered what they were. We waited for a while to make sure of what they were. When it became apparent that they were two lorry-loads of Tans, they were almost upon us, and the next thing they had opened fire with Lewis guns. I ran down the road to a house where some of our lads were, including Liam Hayes, and I shouted in the door to them, "Come out quick, or you'll be riddled! The Tans are on us". We came up then as far as the chapel of Shraherla and got in by a boreen there. We were under fire all the time and, just as I passed the shop, a burst of fire from a Lewis gun almost tore the coat from my back. Several bullets had struck my clothes, though none of them had touched me otherwise. However, we got across into cover - two men with myself. Of the remaining four men who had been in that house, two were shot out of hand by the Tans when they burst into the house, a third man was taken

away with them and shot on the way to Cork, and the fourth man was shot by them in Cork on the following morning.

The retreat of the Column that day was a long drawn out affair. The Tans tried to follow us closely but we held them off. We kept going for about ten miles until we came to Lakelly. Again the Column being numerous, between ourselves and the West Limerick men, we were billeted over a fairly wide area - Knocklong, Lakelly and Ballindrinagh.

We had only just settled down when firing started and we realised that we had another fight on our hands. I had twenty-five men in Ballindrinagh at the time. We had started on the day before with the fight in Shraherla and we had been moving all night. I remember that, as I was coming through Tom Burke's yard in Knocklong on this morning, the Angelus was ringing in Knocklong - that was seven o'clock in the morning. By the time I had arranged for the billeting of my men and gone around to see that they were all fixed up, it was ten o'clock. I was just about getting into bed when the fight started.

A despatch reached me from Lakelly to say that the remainder of the Column were attacked there, so I had to mobilise my men again to go to their assistance. One sympathiser of ours was old Patsy Kelly who handed me a bottle of whiskey, which I divided between all the men. It was something to ease our weariness, as we had been disappointed in getting a few hours' rest after our night-long march. We headed up for the railway and the first thing we saw was soldiers carrying out four dead bodies, apparently some of our fellows who had been



killed by them. We opened fire on this party and they dropped the bodies and ran. The soldiers had started to load these bodies into a motor car - Mick Callaghan's car. They had been mounted on bicycles themselves - thirteen of them - and so, when they ran away, we captured their bicycles and also the bodies of our comrades. This military party made their escape to Scarteen. Seán Carroll and about thirty men were across their path and should have intercepted them, but they allowed the military party to go through without firing a shot at them, for some reason which was never very clear.

A peculiar thing about this was that I heard the other side of the picture from one of the British soldiers who had been in this party. He had been discharged from the army sometime about the end of 1921 and, when the Civil War began, he was taken into the National Army by Colonel Jerry Ryan, who, of course, did not know who he was. This fellow was an Armourer Sergeant in Tipperary Barracks in 1922 when I went in there as an officer. When I came into the place to inspect the men, I knew by the way he called them to attention that he was a man who had had military training. I asked him if he had been in the British Army and he admitted he had been. He told me in reply to my questioning that he had been discharged in 1921 and that, previous to that, he had been stationed in Galbally, Co. Tipperary. He belonged to the regiment known as the Green Howards. To my further questioning as to what engagements he had been in, he admitted that he had been in Lakelly where they had shot a couple of our fellows and he gave me the rest of the details about how lucky they were to get back to Scarteen. I told Commandant Owen O'Keefe, who was i/c of the garrison there at the time, that this fellow

had admitted to me as having served in the British Army with the unit that had hit up our fellows in Lakelly. Accordingly, this fellow was paraded, his paybook taken from him and he was peremptorily discharged from the National Forces on the spot.

We followed this military party towards Scarteen as far as a place called the "Black Ditch" where we left off the pursuit and returned to where the bodies of our comrades had been left, and we collected these. We took them to the house of Father Humphries who was a curate in Knocklong at the time. He was friendly to us and his house was a favourite place for us to call. When he had blessed the bodies and said the prayers for the dead over them we placed them in some straw in a cart and removed them to Kiltteely. At least, we went on through Hospital towards Kiltteely and we buried them in a field belonging to people named Day, near Herbertstown. They were only left there three days because the cattle on the land began stamping round on the fresh turned earth and, as the graves were shallow, there seemed to be some danger of the cattle turning up the bodies. We removed them to the graveyard in Herbertstown and they remained there until soon after the Truce when they were moved again, the bodies of the two East Limerick men being re-interred at Ballylanders and those of the mid-Limerick men in their home districts. The names of the East Limerick men who were killed were Tom Howard and Liam Riordan. The other two men from mid-Limerick were Jim Frahill and Pat Ryan.

On the 6th May there was to be a Brigade meeting, or it may have been a Divisional meeting. At any rate the various members of the Brigade staff were

attending this meeting which was to be held in a house at Annacarthy. I was not attending the meeting but I, with 12 others, travelled there on the 13 bicycles we had captured at Lakelley, as a kind of escort or protecting party, in case of an attempt to raid or surround the place where the meeting was being held. Before we reached Annacarthy we were surrounded by an enemy cordon at Kiltteely. I believe the date on which we were surrounded in Kiltteely was the 5th May and my memory establishes the sequence of events in this way:- The ambush at Lakelley was on 2nd May, and on the following day, the 3rd, we were burying the bodies at Herbertstown. It was on the day following - the 4th - that we travelled on the bicycles to Kiltteely where we billeted for the night. It was next day - the 5th - that the Tans surrounded the place before we had left the house.

When we arrived in Kiltteely on the 4th May we billeted ourselves around Davy Guerin's place. Next day - the 5th - we found ourselves surrounded by a very large force of military and Tans. There was a telegraph linesman working on a telegraph pole and as we suspected that he might be acting as an enemy observation post, we took him prisoner and took him with us so that he could give no information. There was also an aeroplane flying over the area to watch for our movements and the Tans had actually got into a paddock where we were in a ditch at the other end of it but, not discovering our presence, left it again. It began to look as if we would have very great difficulty in extricating ourselves from our surrounded position if, indeed, it would be possible to do so. A fortunate circumstance, however, delivered us from this predicament. On a hill about

a mile above Kiltteely - The Hill of Dirk - there were a couple of young boys with field glasses, who were watching with great interest the movement of troops and the general activity around Kiltteely. Apparently the glint of the field glasses they were using was observed by the military party or the Tans who, thereupon, decided that this was some of our party and proceeded to withdraw their forces hurriedly and move to surround this area. It would seem as if they had received some information of our presence in the area but were a bit uncertain of our exact location. Consequently, when they had completely encircled us they then hurriedly recast the circle in another direction which allowed us to make our escape. So close were we to having our complete force captured, that in a few cases military lorries drove into the yards of houses where some of the men were in bed but before they had time to dismount and enter the houses, the hurried counterorder withdrawing them towards the Hill of Dirk saved our men from discovery, as the military did not, therefore, enter the houses concerned. I believe the military arrested these 2 young lads on the hill and questioned them very closely, but by that time we had made good our escape and we lay low in the bottom of a blackthorn ditch until nightfall, when we proceeded on our way to Annacarthy where the Brigade meeting was being held.

We were in the house in Annacarthy the next morning - that would be the 6th May - when we suddenly found the house being surrounded by R. I. C. and Tans. They were in the yard of the house and on the road and John Wall tried to assure us that this was not a raid on the house but merely a checking of dog licences or some such thing. Some of the other men tried to

persuade him to stay where he was until we saw how the situation would develop and, if necessary, defend ourselves from the house. But Wall would have none of this. I think he felt that it would be wrong to fire from the house and thereby bring the enemy fire and other consequences upon the house and its owners. Some of us got out the backway and sought cover in the back garden but Wall, who was unarmed, rushed out to the front where he was taken prisoner. They opened fire on him when they saw him but he was not hit and we, in turn, opened fire on them and the Sergeant in charge of the R. I. C. party was killed by our fire. They took Wall with them down the road and we continued to fire on them for a while.

I think it was Davey Clancy who shot the police sergeant and he may have been in a position to see Wall being shot but I cannot, of course, be certain about this. The fact is, however, that Wall was captured alive and uninjured but when the police sergeant was shot the others shot Wall, who was their prisoner, in retaliation. At any rate, soon afterwards, we were told that Wall had been killed by the Tans and we also knew how it had occurred. Having extricated ourselves from the position, we left there without any further casualties.

We returned to East Limerick from Annacarthy and we joined the rest of our column at Ballycahill from where we moved on to West Limerick. The move to West Limerick was, I think, intended to rest the column and throw the enemy off our track. In the previous couple of weeks we had been hotly and constantly pursued and from Shraharla, Lakelley,

Kilteely and Annacarthy it had meant fighting, day in, day out, with the result that our ammunition supplies were very much affected and we wanted time to rest. +I cannot remember at the moment the name of the place in West Limerick to which we went but it was supposed to be a quiet area. Still, when we had arrived there and were settling down for the night we were warned that we were being surrounded: that the enemy had learned of our presence, and were preparing to surround us. We left there immediately and got out before the cordon had closed and returned to East Limerick. Things were getting so hot at that stage that it was absolutely essential that we should get some rest. We could not even lie down for an hour's sleep at any point without being disturbed by some alarm or other.

We returned to a place called Bulgard<sup>EN</sup> near Kilmallock and we remained there for a day or two. From there we went to Stephenstown and Donnchadh Hannigan then issued orders that from this on we would not seek shelter in houses but would sleep out. From that onwards we slept in ditches where we could get some shelter until, after a while, Donnchadh disbanded the column. The breaking up of the column was due to a number of factors. Besides the active enemy<sup>EN</sup> pursuit, there was the scarcity of ammunition which prevented our undertaking any prolonged engagement. There was also the difficulty, when we had a large party, of trying to feed and house them. This was a considerable strain on the people of the district in which we might happen to be, as they had to provide our accommodation and food. When Donnchadh decided to break up the column he divided us into small parties of about 7 or 8 each, with orders to undertake such small operations as we might find possible with our small numbers and

limited ammunition supply - for instance, sniping attacks. This brought us up to the Truce.

Actually, about five or six of us, including myself and Tomás Malone whom we knew at the time as Seán Ford, were in the house belonging to a Mrs. Marshall of Howardstown - a great horsewoman - when we heard of the Truce about the 11th July. The Truce was to take effect from 12 o'clock the next day and at 11.55 a.m. we all drove into Kilmallock where we experienced the novelty of walking about the town freely and carrying our arms.

I am afraid that, in the course of this story, I have omitted a number of incidents which I did not remember to put in their chronological order. There was, for instance, a fight at Ballyhahill in West Limerick which was, I think, some time in May, 1921. The day before that, however, we were on our way to Ballyhahill and had arrived at a place, the name of which I cannot recall, but which is in a mountainous area and about ten miles from Ballyhahill. There was a schoolhouse there and the children were coming from school. A military lorry stood on the road, apparently broken down, and the soldiers who were there asked the children as they passed "Are there any Shinners round here? Our lorry is broken down and we cannot move." This information was passed on to us and we naturally began to make arrangements for attacking it. But we learned that this lorry had been lying there for two or three days and it seemed rather peculiar that they had been unable to do anything about it in the meantime. Donnchadh gave orders then for the attack but I suggested to him that this appeared to be a trap. Donnchadh pooh-poohed the idea

although I pointed out to him the highly peculiar fact that the lorries had been lying there for 2 or 3 days without any effort being made by the British authorities to recover them. However, as Donnchadh accepted the local information on the matter, I fell in with his views and we started our move to surround the place where the lorries were. Donnchadh had told me to take my 6 or 7 men, my own section, up to a point where there was a cottage and to surround it. Other sections had been given similar objectives, the whole idea being that we would quietly and unobtrusively creep up so as to surround the lorries from a line as close as we could get to them. As we moved up under cover we observed section upon section of Black and Tans also moving as if to surround our sections. It was clear now that the lorries were set as a trap and that when we would have got ourselves into position of attack we ourselves would be attacked from front and rear. I sent a message back to Donnchadh to inform him of what I had seen and he himself came forward to where I was to see for himself. When he realised that what I had told him was true, he gave the order for retreat, and we pulled out of the position as unobtrusively as we had come into it, without firing a shot. If we had fired so as to warn the surrounding Tans, I think there is little doubt that none of us could have escaped. As it was, however, we got clear away and were out of sight before the enemy realised that they had lost touch with us.

We came back to the place we had started from and the officers of the column were inside in the small house discussing the situation. Seán Finn, the Brigade Commander of West Limerick, was with the party.



He, also, was at this meeting in the house. The meeting did not finish until about 1 o'clock in the morning, after which we moved on towards Ballyhahill, having first been issued with a glass of whiskey each as a means of sustaining us on this night march. Seemingly, somebody had got hold of a case of whiskey which was in the house at this time and as we had been walking about all day and now had to continue walking for most of the night we needed something stimulating. That morning, before we had started to surround the lorries, we had sent on all our spare equipment and ammunition to Ballyhahill where it was being looked after for the time being by Father Dick McCarthy. At the time we had a certain amount of mines, bombs and spare ammunition which was carried around in cars we had commandeered or captured and, of course, we could not keep this stuff with us all the time. We had to send it along from place to place in anticipation of our subsequent movements. The immediate destination of this material was a big farmer's house a couple of hundred yards from Ballyhahill village and which is known locally as "Whiskey Hall". The men who had taken the stuff there told us afterwards that they had passed a tramp on the road nearby who had not returned their salutation as they passed and afterwards it was suspected that he was a spy or an enemy agent. At any rate, when they had turned into Whiskey Hall the tramp disappeared and was not seen there again. It was about 6 o'clock on the following morning when the rest of us arrived after our march. I can remember that night march very clearly, because on the way it was snowing very hard although this was the month of May, and the incident sticks in my mind in that way.

When the column arrived, it had to be spread out

for billeting purposes - a few men going to each house. Four of us - Tobin O'Rourke of Kilmallock, Liam Burke of Ballindangan, Davoren of Ballylanders and myself - were quartered at Whiskey Hall and others were sent elsewhere. The question of boot repairs was exercising our attention that morning because after our march our boots and spare boots were showing signs of wear and so much talk and grousing about this had gone on that Donnchadh Hannigan issued an order that the Section Commanders would collect the boots of their men which needed repairs and we would try to have them done there as there was a shoemaker on the spot. We were all in bed in Whiskey Hall at 8 a.m. - with the exception of Tobin O'Rourke who was walking about the room and singing the old ballad in which occurs the line "Bold Robert Emmet, who died with a smile". On looking out the window he saw four military lorries containing military and Tans pulling into the yard. Breaking off his song abruptly, he remarked, "Will you look at what is here! Who is going to die with a smile now"? We had no time to dress further than to pull on a pants and grab a rifle, and dressed only in shirt and pants, with our rifles in our hands, we dashed out the back. O'Rourke fell into a sink hole which swallowed him up to his head, and fire was opened on the remainder of us as we dashed for shelter. We were unhurt except that the rifle in Davoren's hand was struck by a bullet and the stock split off from the barrel. There were some other members of the column in the vicinity - Dave Guerin and Mick Mortell - and others in a house on the other side of the road, and they also had dashed out. At this stage Jim Finn was with us and we were able to stave off the pursuit by

firing an occasional shot at them as we ran on. Donnchadh Hannigan, the column Commander, and the remainder of the column who had been billeted some distance away, heard the shooting and were coming to our assistance. We could hear Donnchadh's whistles playing and recognised them. These famous whistles were often joked about then and since, but they were very effective. He had 2 whistles, one of which was an ordinary police whistle, and the other a different type which gave a different sound. He always blew the two together by placing them together in his mouth, the effect being a peculiar sort of note which could generally be identified from any other sounds.

Tobin O'Rourke had had a marvellous escape for, when he sank in the boghole, he was wearing his hat and there was nothing visible but this. One of the Tans stood on the hat to try to cross, thus pressing O'Rourke further down in the hole. However, our fire had sent the Tans scampering for cover and O'Rourke managed to crawl out.

We had moved towards the sound of Hannigan's whistle and joined him. Quane from Anglesboro, Seán Finn and Jim Finn and somebody else I can't remember at the moment were with him. I know that there were seven of us altogether and we had left Tobin O'Rourke behind in the hole. The Tans had run across it so that both they and we were sure he must have been drowned. The enemy, I suppose, were using the sound of our fire to pinpoint our location and up to this Donnchadh, with the others, had not fired so they were not being taken into consideration by the enemy. We were in a field when a Tan climbed up on the ditch and fired at Seán Finn who fell mortally

wounded. The Tan who shot him was killed by a shot immediately afterwards. Jim Finn, who was only a young lad, ran back to recover Seán Finn's rifle under the fire that was being directed on him, and when he got to where Seán Finn was, and stooped to pick up the rifle, Seán said to him "Fight on, lads, I'm done". We carried on for a while, doing the best we could, until it was beginning to become apparent that a network of roads encircled our position and that military and police lorries were on all these roads. We had another casualty then when a bullet struck Quane in the throat, making its exit through his jaw, from which wound he bled profusely. Quane, heroically, kept going for another four hours after he was hit though he was bleeding most of the time and, in consequence, could have very little blood left. Later that evening we had to cut the clothes away from him as they were caked with blood. The next thing was that we saw an old man standing in a gap. This man called us and explaining to us how we were encircled by the roads, pointed out a means of escape which was open just at that moment. The patrolling lorries had, for a time, left an opening in the surrounding cordon and we escaped through this on to some high ground across the road. Quane had stayed with us all the time and it was when we had escaped that we cleaned him and handed him over to a doctor for medical attention while the rest of us came back to East Limerick.

Sometime in June, 1920, I was a member of a party under Liam Hayes (late Adjutant-General of the National Army) which raided the house of a Major O'Grady. The house is known as Kilballyowen, and is situated between Hospital and Bruff. Information

had been obtained that this Major O'Grady had arms in his house, including a couple of machine guns, and it was in order to procure these arms that we raided the place. These Maxim guns were similar in their mechanism to the British Vickers gun in which I had had some training, and also I had seen Maxim guns and handled them in Germany. One of the guns we got there was afterwards put into good working order but the other one had defects that we could not remedy. The serviceable gun which we captured here was the one used later at Glenacurrane.

One of the Volunteers who was with us on that raid was Seán Crowley and he had posted sentries around the place while we were engaged on the raid. It took us a considerable time to search the place thoroughly and it was in the course of this that Crowley came along to inspect the sentries and found the 2 men he had left at the main gate leaning against the wall smoking cigarettes. Crowley got very annoyed with them, ordering them roughly to put out the cigarettes at once; to remember that they were on active service and that the lives of the rest of the men depended upon their vigilance but apparently when he had gone away they again lit up and were chatting by the wall when a British cycling patrol came upon them. The men apparently did not appreciate the fact that it was a British patrol until the latter was upon them as, quite often, our own men used to move about on bicycles as a similar kind of patrol. Therefore, the British soldiers were in contact with them before they fully realised who they were. They managed to raise the alarm, however, and while the military were engaged in surrounding the house, we made our escape with the arms we had captured.

There was an incident which occurred after the Truce which is more a funny story than anything else but it may have some bearing on other events. It concerns a motorcar which Seán Ford (Tomás Malone) had, and which had been captured originally from D. I. McGettrick of the R. I. C. The registration plates had been painted out on the car and the derisive identification "D. I. 303" painted on instead. Malone had become very well known with this car and one day, when he had to abandon it and it was captured by the military in Kilmallock, Malone felt very sore about it and the British Intelligence Officer, Brown from Kilmallock, was very pleased. He looked upon the fact that Malone's car had been captured as a sort of major victory. We all met Brown after the Truce and had drinks with him, but we still felt sore about the car, particularly Malone. One day there was a coursing match at Mount Coote which we attended, and which was also attended by Brown and some of the R. I. C. who had come there driving the car in question. When we saw this we decided to take it away from him even though it might be taken as a breach of the Truce. Malone went to have a drink with Brown to keep him occupied while another man and I went to start the car. It took us a little while to start the car and, in the meantime, we were seen by the housekeeper in Lord Adare's house, near which the coursing match was being held. She came along saying that we must not touch the car as it belonged to Captain Brown. I fired a shot over her head to scare her away and then we drove off. I should have mentioned that this was the second day of the coursing. On the previous day there was a Black and Tan named Enright

who had a dog running there. This man was a brother of Enright, the R. I. C. man who was killed at Knocklong, and he was particularly active and bitter against our men, on one occasion bombing some of our captured men. For this we decided he should pay the death penalty. No opportunity to carry this out had arisen until the Truce occurred but when we saw him at the coursing match, even though the Truce was then in operation, we agreed to shoot him and we did so that night. When I had taken the car, we drove off and the man who was with me asked me, after a while, to allow him to drive, assuring me that he knew how to do so. A little later, however, along the road, he crashed the car into an old quarry and we had to abandon it there. My hand and arm were rather badly cut by the windscreen. I got a lift in a trap back to Mount Coote to let Ford know what had happened to the car. He had, in the meantime, been with Brown - they were having drinks together - and when I came along Malone introduced me to Brown. I could see Brown looking at me with considerable interest. He knew me by name already but when he saw that I was only a small man he could not believe that I was the desperado whom he had been looking for some time ago. I then saw him casting his eyes at the drops of blood on my coat which had come from my hand and it was evident that he was putting two and two together and associating me with the shooting of Enright the night before. However, we had a drink together and we left him then. It seemed from what I heard then that he and Malone, when they were told about the taking of the car, had gone in pursuit of us but whether Malone misled him or not I do not know, for they stopped short of where we had crashed the car. That night we went into Hospital and got Slattery's bread-van and nine men armed with

rifles whom we took along to Giblinstown Quarry and loaded the crashed car. We had taken a man with us who thought he might be able to fix the car on the spot but when he found he could not we got a float and put the car on it. We took it back to Slatterys yard in Hospital.

The following day British troops, led by Captain Brown, appeared in Hospital and proceeded to raid houses and premises all round the town, evidently looking for the car. Malone was standing in Slattery's land waiting to take such action as might be necessary but they never came near Slatterys.

Another incident which concerns Tomás Malone, or Seán Ford as we knew him then, just occurs to me now. It happened soon after Malone had rejoined us after his escape from Spike Island which I think was some time in April, 1921. At that time we were in Ahern's of Ballinlough, Co. Cork, where we had gone to keep out of the way for the time being. We were resting at this time and occasionally Malone would take me with him. I used to look after the car for him, clean it, etc., and sometimes we would go to a publichouse named Murphys on the Fermoy road to have a drink. On this occasion Malone came along to me and suggested that we go to Murphys. It was early in the morning and Donnchadh Hannigan, who frowned upon any such thing as drinking, was still in bed. The pub was about a mile or so up along the by-road and was within a few yards of the junction with the main Fermoy road. We pulled up at the door and when we went in someone inside remarked that we should take the car away from in front of the door for, if a military lorry should come along on the main road, our car would be seen and if they came in we



would all be killed. Malone, however, replied to this, "The divil a kill; it will be all right." We started to drink and almost immediately one of the girls of the house ran in shouting excitedly, "The lorries are coming. We'll all be killed", and urging us to run for our lives. But Malone was very cool, telling them to calm down, that nothing would happen. Malone was dressed in a trench coat and light-coloured breeches, with a Sam Brown belt and gun in it, and was well able to act the part of a typically British officer. As the lorry, which seemed to be full of soldiers, began to pull up, Malone walked out quickly and held up his hand. Speaking in an affected English accent and with an easy manner, he asked if they had any petrol with them and if they could give him some as the car had run short. He informed them that he was on his way to Cork but was stuck for petrol. I do not know whether he actually said he was a British officer or just left them to assume that, but at any rate they agreed to give him some petrol and began to fill up our car from their spare petrol. He added some circumstantial evidence to his pose by saying that he thought we had sufficient petrol when we left Tipperary but blamed his driver (that was myself) as a stupid ass who had overlooked filling the tank before we started. They then came towards the snug of the publichouse and when I saw them coming I ducked out of the snug and stood at the ordinary counter. Malone and the British officer came in and Malone said "Thats my driver", without looking at me. I saluted smartly, the salute being acknowledged by the British officer. They had a few small whiskies together. When they had ordered their own drinks Malone called over towards where I was "Will you have a drink, driver?", to which

I replied that I would have a bottle of beer. Then the British officer stood a drink and I had another bottle of beer. After this we went out and got into the car. Malone and the British officer shook hands and apparently his party was going to Tipperary. We moved off in the opposite direction. There were about 3 or 4 lorries in this party and they were on their way from Cork to Tipperary. We never knew whether the British officer afterwards learned to whom he had given the petrol and with whom he had had a drink that day.

When the Treaty was signed Donnchadh Hannigan, the column Commander, who at this time was also the Brigade Commander in East Limerick, became a Major-General in the National Army and I, with a number of other members of the East Limerick Brigade, also joined the Army in which I remained until the end of the Civil War.

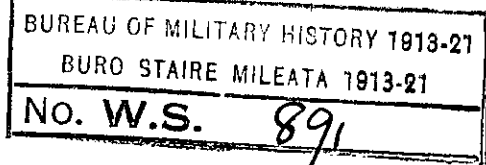
Signature Maurice Meade  
(Maurice Meade)

Date 23<sup>rd</sup> Sept. 1953

23rd Sept. 1953.

Witness

J.V. Lawless Col.  
(J.V. Lawless) Col.



The following is a translation of a letter from General G. Blumentritt, late member of the German General Staff, to Lt. Colonel McCarthy of the Bureau Staff, in reply to a query sent to him by the latter regarding the whereabouts of the 203rd German Inf. Rgt. in 1916-17.

Marburg on the Lahn,  
Schwanallee 7,  
Germany.

Dear Lt. Col. McCarthy,

Many thanks for your letter of the 9th inst. Unfortunately I cannot answer your question as exactly as I would like to. It was too long ago and my documents were all destroyed in 1943 by the bombardment.

When in the first World War Turkey allied itself to Germany there was then the war theatre of the Dardanelles (Gallipoli). There the Turkish troops fought, but they were advised (instructed) by German officers under Marshal Lemhan von Sanders, Pascha, who even before 1914 had led a German military mission in Constantinople.

Then there was the war theatre in Mesopotamia and the Caucasus front against the Russians. Also in these Turkish armies there were German and Austrian officers as advisers, specialists, railway troops, machine gun units and a little artillery and sappers.

Then came shortly after, the fight at the Suez Canal and at the Sinai Peninsula, later also Palestine against the English.

Well known German names were Colonel Baron Kiess of Kiessenstein, A Bavarian Artillery officer of the General Staff - after the war in Munich Commander of the F(Bavarian) Regiment of the Army. He was on this front with - mainly - Turkish troops.

Further, there were in Turkey at various periods General von Lossow (also a Bavarian officer) as Chief of the General Staff of the Turkish Army; Colonel Bransant von Schellendorf; General von Zeecht p.p.

#### "Asia Corps"

When, however, from 1916 on the position in the near East became more and more serious for the Turks and the Turkish Army became weaker and weaker, we decided to provide more vigorous support. General Falkenhayn was sent there as Commander-in-Chief with a larger staff. Furthermore, the German technical and specialist troops - artillery, machine-gun, mine-throwers, sappers, and especially railway troops were increased, because the Turkish railway contributed very little.

But above all the 'Asia Corps' was organised! It was not a Corps but a weak Infantry division but all the same a compact German unit of troops, also with infantry regiments.

On account of the bad railroads it arrived very slowly in 1917.

Therefore it can easily be that this 203 Regiment belonged to this German Asia Corps (without being able to prove it I have a feeling that in fact that 203rd Regiment was there!)

I cannot tell you anything more precise than that.

I have not read Gorlitz' book, can therefore give no further information. I have only heard from old officers of the General Staff that there are many things in it that are not correct. But I cannot judge that.

My picture will probably be in an overcoat. If so, one always seems slimmer in the long overcoat.

Captain Liddell Hart will come to France to the S. H. A. P. E. meeting to visit General Gruenther.

The Russians are doing all they can to -

- (a) influence the German elections;
- (b) to separate Washington-London-Paris;
- (c) to prevent 48 & 18 million Germans from allying themselves to the West;
- (d) to prevent in any circumstances a German Defence Treaty for the West.

Greetings,

(Intlld.) J. B.

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