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ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
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NO. W.S. 921

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS.

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 921.....

Witness

Commandant Martin Finn,
10 Burrow Road,
Sutton,
Co. Dublin.

Identity.

Section Leader 'C' Company, 1st Batt'n.,
Dublin Brigade, 1915 - ;
Captain, Staff 1st Eastern Division, I.R.A.
M.O. Eastern Command.

Subject.

Activities of 'C' Company, 1st Batt'n.,
Dublin Brigade, 1915-1921.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil

File No. S.2230.....

Form B.S.M. 2

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BURO STARE WILEATA 1913-21
NO. W.S. 921

STATEMENT BY COMMANDANT MARTIN FINN,

Command Medical Officer, Army Medical Corps,

Eastern Command, Collins Barracks, Dublin,

Residing at - 110 Burrow Road, Sutton, Co. Dublin.

I was born in Athboy, Co. Meath, in August, 1899. I attended the National School in Athboy up to about 1910, the Model School in Trim up to about 1914 or 1915 and from that time on I was a pupil in O'Connell Schools, North Richmond Street, Dublin. I travelled by train every day from my home in Athboy to Dublin and towards the end of my secondary school education I lodged in a boarding house in Dublin.

On taking up residence in Dublin, I became a member of C. Company, 1st Battalion, Dublin Brigade, Irish Volunteers. I attended parades during the year, 1916, and up to the week preceding Easter Week, while still attending O'Connell Schools where I was studying for my Intermediate Grade certificate.

When we were getting our Easter holidays from school in 1916, I informed my Section Commander that I was going home to Athboy, and I was actually on holidays when the Rising took place.

When I returned to Dublin to resume my studies after the Easter vacation, I made contact with former members of my unit as soon as it was possible to do so. To the best of my recollection, I attended a meeting of my Company in the latter part of 1916. I was present at the meeting at which the Company officers were elected, and among those

present I noticed men who, apparently, had only just been released from English internment camps and jails as some of their heads were closely cropped. The Company meeting was held at 41, Parnell Square and the re-organised unit officers were elected as follows: Seán Flood, Acting Company Commander; Seán Prendergast, 1st Lieutenant; and Dinny Holmes, 2nd Lieutenant.

When I was going home for the Easter vacation in 1916 and informed my Section Commander in Dublin of my intention to do so, I did not know at the time that there was anything of importance pending and I certainly had no knowledge of the fact that a Rising was in contemplation. My Section Commander did not enlighten me. I knew, of course, that a route march was scheduled for Easter Sunday but this was nothing out of the common. As I was anxious to have my position clarified on my return to Dublin, I approached the Company Captain, Seán Flood, and explained the matter to him. He asked me to furnish a detailed report for his information and said that he would let me know the result in due course. I made out my report and gave it to him. Shortly afterwards I was told by him that my explanation was satisfactory and accepted.

No untoward incident occurred during 1917 beyond the fact that I, with the other members of the Company, attended the usual weekly parades in the Tara Hall. I also attended a number of field exercises in the vicinity of James Castle, Finglas, Co. Dublin, where we carried out rifle shooting practice and later grenade throwing. I remember on one occasion we were visited by the R.I.C. from the Barracks in Finglas but, beyond observing our movements,

they took no action. When our Company Commander gave them orders to leave, they did so without creating any disturbance or difficulty. I was a member of the Guard from 'C' Company surrounding the grave in Glasnevin Cemetery where Thomas Ashe was laid to rest on his death from forcible feeding in Mountjoy jail in September, 1917, and took part in the parade of the Dublin Brigade back from Glasnevin to O'Connell St.

During the year 1917 the Volunteers generally throughout the country were being reorganised and during my holiday periods I was attached to the local Company in Athboy. I attended their parades and meetings and assisted in the carrying of despatches between Athboy Company and other Companies located in the area. I learned the rudiments of signalling by reading about it in the different text books and imparted such knowledge as I acquired to the members of the Kildalkey Company which was the next Company to Athboy. I also assisted in the drilling of the members of Frayne and Clonmellon units of the movement.

I might mention that at this stage my brother, Seamus Finn, was Adjutant of the Meath Brigade and he used me for the purpose of carrying despatches from him to the Battalion Commandant, Michael Fox, in Delvin. I also carried despatches to a man, named Foley, at Bohermeen in connection with impending Brigade Council meetings to be held in that area.

On one occasion while I was on holidays in Athboy, my brother, Seamus, returned from Brigade Headquarters in Dunboyne with instructions from the Brigade Commander,

Seán Boylan, that a Detective Officer, named O'Brien of the Dublin Division, who was home on holidays in Athboy, was to be picked up and brought to Dublin for surrender to the Director of Intelligence, Michael Collins. There were two houses in the locality named O'Brien - both relatives - one at Caucestown and the other at Pluxtown. The two houses were raided simultaneously by the Athboy Company, I being a member of the raiding party at Caucestown, but we found that the Detective Officer was in neither of them. We subsequently learned that the information which had been given to us was incorrect.

In July, 1918, on the occasion of the Cavan by-election, for which constituency Arthur Griffith was elected a member of Parliament, I, with other members of the Athboy Company, cycled to Virginia where we carried out police work and assisted generally in the election by propaganda, patrolling and guarding polling booths.

In the latter part of 1919 or early 1920 I took part in the burning of two R.I.C. Barracks, one at Caucestown and the other at Delvin, on the same night. These posts had been recently evacuated by the R.I.C. who had been withdrawn to other stations.

While I was at home on holidays at Easter, 1918, there was a general mobilisation of the Meath Brigade ordered for Tara on Easter Sunday, and I, with other members of the Athboy Company, turned out in strength on that occasion. No attempt was made to interfere with the mobilisation, and the parade and subsequent dismissal passed off without incident.

On one occasion an officer of the Meath Brigade, Comdt. Seamus Keoghan, was killed in an encounter with British military forces. I was present at his funeral. It was a very big parade (from Kells to Ballinlough) of Brigade dimensions, with a band. A few of our officers wore uniform and carried Sam Browns and revolvers openly at the funeral, and rifle volleys were fired over the grave of the deceased officer. The R.I.C. and military followed up from Kells but their lorries were held on the road from Kells to Ballinlough, by design and according to orders, by the vehicles of the funeral cortege. When they finally arrived they were too late to make arrests.

One night while I was at home in Athboy, the house was surrounded by British military and raided. My brother, Jack, and myself were in bed. Both of us escaped to the back gardens of adjoining houses, he going in one direction and I going in the other. When I came to the laneway running off the main street, I heard some British Tommies talking and I hid on the other side of the wall. I remained there for about half an hour in a haybarn until the raid was over, when I went back into my house. The military had withdrawn and my mother told me that, during the course of the search, they felt the beds to see if they were warm and, by that means, ascertained that they had been recently occupied. The raiding party was led by a local R.I.C. Constable, named Wheatley, who was a particularly officious type and who went by the local nick-name of "the Weesey man". While we were having our breakfast, this Constable had our home under observation from a doorway almost opposite. My brother, Seamus, the Brigade Adjutant, who had been to G.H.Q. in Dublin, on Volunteer business the

previous day, was due to return that night and was to be put up at Kehoe's of Ballinlough, as he was on the run at this time. Knowing this, I decided I would go to Kehoe's, and immediately after my breakfast I set off on the bicycle. Coming out on the main street, I saw Wheatley observing my movements. I was not armed at the time, but I put my hand in my right pocket and, giving Wheatley the impression that I was armed, I covered him. I kept him covered, as he thought, until I got down the main street to the corner. Instead of taking the road to Ballinlough, I went in the other direction until I came to Rispin's forge, right opposite the Catholic Church. Having explained the position to Jim Rispin, who was an old hurler, I asked him to go down as far as the corner and see what Wheatley was up to. After a short time he returned and told me that he had seen Wheatley beating it for the barracks, presumably with the intention of calling reinforcements from Trim. As soon as Wheatley was out of the way, I doubled back on my tracks and cycled as fast as I could to Ballinlough which was about twelve miles away. When I got there, I met Comdt. Kehoe's sister who told me that their place had been raided by British military at the same time as our house had been raided in Athboy, and that her brother, Seán, had been arrested. He was the local Battalion O/C. Fortunately, my brother, Seamus, missed the train from Amiens St. to Kells that evening when coming from Dublin and thereby avoided being arrested in the raid on Kehoe's. Fr. Murphy, who was a Parish Priest in the district and was an uncle of the Kehoe's, had arrived at the house shortly before me.

I learned afterwards that several lorryloads of military had followed the route which I had taken in the first instance. From that day neither my brothers nor myself took the risk of stopping at home.

At this time my brother and I with the other members of the Company were making shotgun cartridges and on one occasion we were engaged in assembling different materials in a gateway adjoining my home. My brother and I were mixing sulphur, charcoal and potassium chlorate when a minor explosion occurred, fortunately without serious consequences or attracting the notice of the local police force who were billeted quite close to us. The material gave off a good deal of smoke, but as the stuff was spread and not compact the report was not loud.

Prior to the raid on my home previously referred to, Captain King - well known subsequently as an active Intelligence Officer for the British - had been stopping in the local hotel for a period ostensibly engaged as sales representative for the Minimax Fire Extinguisher Company, an English Company with headquarters in Dublin. He, apparently, used this as a means of travelling round the country with a view to obtaining information regarding the movements of the I.R.A.

The Dáil Loan which had been floated at the time and the success of which was the concern of every member of the Movement was helped a little by a contribution of twenty-five gold sovereigns which my mother gave me as a subscription to the Loan. These I carried to Dublin where I handed them over to James Kirwan, a publican of 49 Parnell Street, Dublin, who was an intimate associate of Collins and whose premises

were used by the latter frequently during these years.

Kirwan undertook to transmit the money to Collins.

Immediately after the raid on my home I returned to Dublin and went into residence at the Coombe Maternity Hospital where I was doing my period of training as I was then in my final year before passing out as a Doctor. I was resident in the Coombe Hospital from about the beginning of September, 1920, to January, 1921, and during that period I was an active member of "C" Company of the 1st Battalion, Dublin Brigade, Irish Republican Army; as it was then known.

I with other members of "C" and "K" Companies paraded at Mark Wilson's billiard saloon, North Frederick Street, for the rescue of Kevin Barry from Mountjoy Jail. At the time Kevin Barry was under sentence of death for an attack on British troops in North King Street some weeks previously. Revolvers and grenades had been provided for the purpose and we were awaiting instructions for the attempted rescue when our Company Commander Seán Flood came in from the direction of Mountjoy and informed us that the attempt had been called off. Seán was in contact with members of General Headquarters Staff and Active Service Unit who had prepared plans for this rescue. It was apparently decided not to go ahead with the matter.

Sometime in the latter part of September and a short time after the Tans had appeared on the streets of Dublin my Company Commander decided to call in the revolvers of the Company for inspection and during the course of the transfer and inspection a shot gun was accidentally discharged which wounded a Volunteer named McArdle. He was wounded

in the leg and taken to the Mater Hospital for treatment and I am glad to say he recovered completely.

On one occasion during this period Dinny Holmes who was one of our Company officers and who lived in Railway Street was fired on, presumably by members of the enemy forces. As a result of this shooting accident we were mobilised and patrolled the area, armed, for some nights following with a view to taking retaliatory action, but nothing transpired.

Generally our Company area covered from Doyles Corner, down Phibsborough Road, Bolton Street, Dorset Street, Blessington Street, Berkeley Road, Doyles Corner. We patrolled this area on several nights a week with a view to ambushing any enemy troops passing in lorries or otherwise.

Having finished my course in the Coombe Hospital I left there and took up residence in a boarding-house in 25 Upper Gardiner Street, owned at the time by Miss Lyons. Miss Lyons was very sympathetic and actively engaged in the Movement for Independence.

Owing to my Volunteer activities and to the fact that I was on the "run" from home I could not attend University College for the purpose of completing my medical education and it was not until 1925 that I took the opportunity of doing so when I took my final examination in Medicine. From early 1920 until the Truce in July 1921 I spent all my time on Volunteer activity of one sort or another. When not actively engaged in ambushing patrols etc., I was engaged on Intelligence work, having at the time been

appointed Intelligence Officer to the Company. Miss Lyons' house was used by Volunteers generally and 'wanted' men on the 'run'. Among these were the late Kevin O'Higgins who was known as 'Mr. Hennessy'; the 1st Eastern Division Staff Officers when in Dublin on I.R.A. duty, including the late Colonel Seamus O'Higgins, my brother Seamus Finn and Paddy Mooney.

About March, 1921, the engineering unit of the Battalion laid an ambush for British troops at Findlater's Church during the course of which an engineering student of U.C.D. named Dwyer was killed in action. Another Volunteer named Mat Ladrigan was wounded on that occasion and he was brought to my digs. When I got home from other duties on which I had been engaged I found he had been put in my bed. Ladrigan was fairly badly wounded having received a bullet in the knee and a shrapnel wound in the left side near the heart. I went to the Mater Hospital and contacted a Doctor there whom I knew, Dr. John Geraghty, who had been out in the Rising of 1916 and who was a member of the 1st Battalion. Dr. Geraghty sent another Doctor named Anthony O'Regan - a native of Trim - the following morning who attended to Ladrigan. That evening the Battalion Commandant, Paddy Holohan, came in and took Ladrigan to the Mater Hospital where he was taken in and treated.

My bedroom in the boarding house was used on occasions as a meeting place for Company Council meetings and on one occasion in February, 1921, plans were made for an attack upon Egoe and his gang, who were at this time very active British agents. According to information they were due to pass in cars through our area on the following night.

I was instructed to remain at home at my 'digs' with a view to arranging for treatment of members of the unit engaged in the operation who might be wounded. Information had been received, presumably from higher sources, that Igoe and his party would be travelling from Gormanstown to the Castle and would follow the route, Whitehall, Drumcondra, Upper and Lower Dorset Street, Bolton Street, Capel Street, Parliament Street to the Castle, part of which ran through our area. The plans were laid to attack this party at Bolton Street Technical Schools and men were selected to do the job. When the attack took place, instead of Igoe and his party passing through it was found that two lorryloads of British military and a light armoured car constituted the opposing forces. The attack was opened with grenades and revolver fire which resulted in the enemy losing 7 killed and 6 wounded. Casualties on our side were nil. As a result of this action the curfew which at that time was at 10 o'clock was advanced two hours to 8 o'clock. This meant that all citizens not having permits from the British occupation forces had to be indoors at 8 o'clock.

By virtue of my position as Intelligence Officer to the Company and by reason of the fact that my brother Jack who was also a medical student at that time in residence in the Richmond Hospital and also a member of "C" Company of the 1st Battalion, I had, as part of my duty, to collect from him the names and addresses of the next-of-kin of Black and Tans and Auxiliaries who might be brought into the Richmond from time to time for treatment of wounds received in attacks by our Forces. Another medical student and Volunteer, Ambrose Doran, who was subsequently a Medical

Officer in the Army and who has since died, kept me supplied with lists of the names and addresses. These I subsequently gave to the Battalion Intelligence Officer, Thomas Walsh. The purpose of course in obtaining this information was for the initiation of retaliatory action on the houses of the next-of-kin in England of the Tans and Auxiliaries in Ireland.

In or about this time an enemy agent, who had been shot by the Active Service Unit of the Dublin Brigade and whose name I cannot now remember, was taken to Jervis St. Hospital in a serious condition. It was suspected that one of the hospital porters had given information to the authorities about the subsequent execution of this man in the hospital yard and I was instructed to keep a close watch on him with a view to ascertaining if suspicions could be substantiated and if in fact he was an enemy agent. Members of "C" Company kept him under observation for a lengthy period but despite close surveillance we could never find out anything to connect him with the Castle Authorities. The only thing against him at the time was the fact that he was an old Dublin Fusilier. Paddy Quinn, who was at the time a resident medical student in Jervis St. Hospital and was a member of "C" Company of the 3rd Battalion, Dublin Brigade and the 4th Northern Division, was our contact on the spot, and the movements of this man were observed by the Intelligence Squad of the Company, most of whom were unemployed.

I attended the usual I.O's meetings each week.

I had an Intelligence Squad organised for the Company made up of men mostly unemployed. These men patrolled the

city generally for the purpose of picking up information regarding the movement of enemy forces, spotting any regular routes travelled frequently by enemy forces. As a result of their activities they reported to me that an open touring car carrying some officers followed by an armoured car left the R.I.C. depot in the Phoenix Park daily. It proceeded down to the Kingsbridge, down the south Quays through D'Olier Street and out towards Dunlaoghaire. This car used to return from Dunlaoghaire to O'Connell Bridge and follow the route Upper O'Connell Street, North Circular Road to the Depot. I reported this movement to the Battalion Intelligence Officer and shortly afterwards the Company Commander, Seán Prendergast, told me that this was the King's messenger and that "B" Company of the 1st Battalion was detailed to attack it. He was very disappointed that "C" Company did not get the job of attacking this car as the Company I.O. had the credit of reporting it in the first instance. It was attacked by "B" Company at Doyles Corner.

A former boarding house of mine occupied by a Mrs. O'Keeffe, 400, North Circular Road, was raided on the instructions of our Company Commander, Captain Prendergast. This address was a place where I had formerly lodged together with some other medical students and some businessmen. At that time a small room in the house was occupied by a man who was somewhat of an oddity and had an English accent. He was, as far as I understood at the time, a mechanic. He mentioned to me that he was a "Shinner". I never took him seriously. I told Prendergast that I did not think there was anything in the report as I was lodging there previously and as far as I was aware there were no

arms in the house. Nevertheless, as he had got instructions to carry out the raid I with others assisted in the operation. Since I previously lodged in the house I remained outside while the raid was taking place, but nothing was found.

Our usual procedure when going on patrol was for the man selected for the job to call to McDonagh's, the hairdresser's shop in Dorset Street, and collect the grenades and revolvers for use in the event of an attack materialising. The men coming from work collected their revolvers from McDonagh's before going directly on patrol and when finished they left them back there again in time for them to reach their homes before curfew. On one occasion one of our men, Volunteer Murphy, on his way home from a patrol was picked up by either Tans or Auxiliaries and with at least one other was taken out to Clontarf Park, Drumcondra where they placed a tin can over their heads and shot them.

While I was living in 25 Upper Gardiner Street I had as a fellow-lodger a Volunteer named Gerry Tuohill from Kanturk, Co. Cork, the same townland as our landlady, Miss Lyons. Tuohill had been trying for some considerable time to resume his Volunteer activities with a Dublin unit and I had made a number of attempts to have him taken on as a member of "C" Company, 1st Battalion, Dublin Brigade. As, however, he was on the strength of the Kanturk Company of the I.R.A., which Company was on active service, some delay was experienced in having the necessary transfer effected. Eventually his transfer came through and I had him taken on the strength of "C" Company where he was posted

to the Signalling Section of the Battalion. Tuohill was an athlete and used to train for the mile in the University Grounds, Terenure. On one occasion he overstayed his time and when he got to the Pillar by tram he found that he was cutting it short as curfew was at this time in operation from 8 p.m. on. He ran the journey from the Pillar to Gardiner Street and when passing the Iona Hotel about 30 yards from our lodging a civilian stepped out of a doorway with a gun. Tuohill, acting on the spur of the moment, put the individual sprawling on his back and continued his sprint to the halldoor which I had open for him as he had not got in by 8 o'clock and I was on the look-out for him. We saw this individual going up the street with the gun in his hand. He was obviously a 'Tan' in mufti.

On Tuohill's second parade with the Battalion Signalling Class in 44 Parnell Square the premises was raided by Auxiliaries and the Signalling Class arrested. They were taken to Kilmainham and Tuohill remained in custody until the signing of the Treaty in December, 1921, when he, with the others, was released. He was a medical student and resumed his studies when he came out of gaol and he is now a qualified Doctor practising somewhere in England.

During the period of the Belfast boycott in the early part of 1921 a number of us were detailed to raid a Jewman's premises in Cecelia Street. My job was to bring the ledgers captured in the raid to 25 Upper Gardiner Street where they were later collected by the Battalion Commander, Paddy Houlihan. The policeman on point duty at Capel Street held up the traffic to enable me get through with the

ledgers which I carried on a bicycle and which I found fairly heavy.

In or about that time an area of the North City including Upper Gardiner Street, was cordoned off by British Forces and a house-to-house search carried out. While the search was in progress all occupants had to remain indoors and as soon as it was completed the male occupants were assembled together in Dorset Street until the raid had ended. Kevin O'Higgins, my brother Jack, Jerry Tuhill and I were taken out of No. 25 Gardiner Street to Dorset Street where a number of others had been assembled. After some time we were let back to our houses. I had two revolvers secreted in No. 25 but they were not found.

Some time in March or April, 1921, I remember being present at a Company Council meeting, at which the Company Commander, Captain Prendergast, instructed us that no enemy forces were to be allowed to pass through our Company area to the North Dublin Union between the hours of 2 p.m. and 5 p.m. Patrols were placed in position at different parts of the Company area. I was placed in charge of a patrol of about eight men at the Dorset Street Picture House. We waited there from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m., but there was no sign of any enemy. I dismissed the patrol, but I remained on for a while in company with Joe Crowe. I was armed with a revolver and six rounds of ammunition, and he had a grenade. Not long afterwards, two senior N.C.O's of the Royal Army Service Corps came along on a motor-cycle. When I stepped out to halt them, with a view to taking the motor-bike and side-car off them, they wheeled around very sharply in the direction of the Black Church. Fire was opened on both sides. They

stopped the motor-bike and continued firing. I fired my six rounds. When my last round was gone, I told Crowe that I had no more. He did not say anything, but just fired his hand grenade. We then retreated down Granby Lane to Dominick Street. At this stage Crowe informed me that he was hit, but he seemed to be all right and able to keep going. We went down to Hoban's of Parnell Street, the Capel Street end, where in a short time two of the Company Officers, Captain Prendergast and Lieutenant Paddy Kirk, arrived. Paddy Kirk, who had a good knowledge of first-aid, brought Crowe to his home in Bridgefoot Street and continued dressing his wound until it healed. It was a flesh wound in the arm. That same afternoon, one of our patrol attacked a military lorry with grenades at Phibsborough Road. There was considerable enemy activity in the area in a short time, but we got away before the enemy patrols arrived.

On a Sunday evening in May, 1921, three of us - Bill Maher, Billy Gannon and myself - were instructed to go in the Battalion car, with the Battalion driver, to a farmer's place in Fingal where we were to collect a Lewis gun and six revolvers and bring them back with us. Before going, we were given twelve rounds each of revolver ammunition, but no arms. We collected the stuff and returned to the city without meeting any enemy patrols. We left the stuff in the Battalion dump in a laneway off Temple Street. We passed through a crowd in Eccles Street who were awaiting the removal of the remains of Archbishop Walsh of Dublin from the Mater Private Nursing Home to the Pro-Cathedral.

A few days later, the three of us - Bill Maher, Billy Gannon and myself - proceeded with the same car and driver to McNeill's of Booterstown to collect a machine gun. We were accompanied on this trip by the Battalion Quartermaster, Paddy Rooney. When we called at McNeill's we did not get any machine gun, and we were hard pressed to get back to the city before curfew at 8 p.m.

On the 24th May, the evening previous to the attack on the Custom House, a number of us who were on parade at Tara Hall were instructed to remain over after the parade. When the parade was over, we were instructed to report at 12.30 p.m., or 12.45 p.m., on the following day to Lower Gardiner Street (Beresford Place), armed with a grenade and revolver each. There were twelve of us in all from our Company and, when we reported next day as instructed, we were placed in position from Liberty Hall around to Lower Gardiner Street. I did not know what was in the air. At 1 p.m. I noticed a lorry pulling up outside the Custom House and a number of men getting out of the lorry and bringing petrol tins into the Custom House. It is difficult to remember all the details, but I remember the Auxiliaries arriving and one of them standing on the tender and pointing to the smoke issuing from one of the windows of the Custom House. The Auxiliaries were attacked with grenades and firing at this stage became general. There was an armoured car firing from a position in Abbey Street. Nick Tobin, Jim Plunkett and myself retreated through Brooks Thomas and made our way to my lodgings in Gardiner Street. From then on, it was very difficult to get through the city because of enemy patrols.

Shortly afterwards the Company Commander, Seán Prendergast, sent for Billy Gannon and myself. He told Billy Gannon that there was a vacancy in the Active Service Unit and that he would fill it. He told me that all remaining University students in the Dublin Brigade were being sent to different parts of the country and instructed me to report to the Plaza Hotel, to the late "Ginger" O'Connell, afterwards a Colonel in the Army. When I arrived at the Plaza Hotel, there were two other students there whom I did not previously know. They were law students. One was Barry O'Brien, now a Judge, and the other was a chap named Rynne. O'Connell questioned them regarding their activities and experience, and he sent them down to the South with instructions to send periodic reports to him. He asked me what part of the country I came from and, when I told him, he asked me did I know Seán Boylan, the Divisional Commander of the 1st Eastern Division. I said I did, that I knew him well. He told me to report to him as Captain of his Staff. He ordered me, however, to report first to Dr. Ahern in the Rotunda Hospital in Dublin. I saw Dr. Ahern in the Rotunda and he asked me how far I had got in medicine. I told him that my studies were interrupted for over a year.

Next day I reported to Seán Boylan at Divisional Headquarters. I went to a camp in the Culmullen-Batterstown area where a number of officers were undergoing a course of training. I was there when the Truce was declared.

From the time of the raid on my parents' house in Athboy, from which I escaped, until the Truce in 1921, I was living at the expense of my parents who were meeting

hard times by reason of the fact that my brothers and myself were members of the Volunteer movement. They were raided regularly two to three days a week by the Auxiliaries from Trim and subjected to abuse and intimidation, that is, my parents and my sister. My sister was engaged carrying despatches for the Athboy Company. On the night of the burning of Trim by the Black and Tans from Gormanston; following the capture of Trim R.I.C. Barracks, my brother, Seamus, and the Athboy Company were in position to defend Athboy should the Tans attack it. My mother and sister were brought to O'Higgins' house in Clonmellon, where the womenfolk of the O'Higgins' family in Trim were also brought. My brother and some of the Athboy Company remained in our house to defend it should the Tans come to burn it. My father refused to leave the house. The Tans did not come. As I was not on the spot, it was not my story but, as I was pressed to give my account, I could not but refer to this.

Signed:

Martin Finn

(Martin Finn)

Date:

*24 February 1954*Witness: *Patrick Kirk*, (Patrick Kirk)

*Lieutenant. E. Company
1st Batt. Dublin Brigade
I.R.A.*

