

W. S. 955

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BURO STAIRÉ MILITAIRÉ
No. W.S. 955

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS.

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 955

Witness

Patrick Mullooly,
Kiltrustan,
Strokestown,
Co. Roscommon.

Identity.

Captain, Kiltrustan Company;
Brigade G.M. North Roscommon Brigade, later.

Subject.

National activities, North Roscommon,
1918-1921.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil

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STATEMENT by Mr. Patrick Mullooly,

Kiltrustan,

Strokestown,

Co. Roscommon.

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I was born in 1894 in this locality and went to school in Kiltrustan National School. My mother's name was Duffy and her family were known as the "Fenian Duffys". Her father was out in '48 with Meagher and he was arrested. His son, Jim, who was my uncle, was out in '47 and was known as Jim the Fenian. A grand-aunt of mine was married to Charles Stewart who was a member of the United Irishmen in the North of Ireland, and who, on being banished from there, settled down at Stewardstown.

My father, John Mullooly, with a man named O'Neill were on their keeping or on the run in Curraghroe as a result of the stormy John Martin and Greville election and are referred to by T.D.O'Sullivan in his writings. My earliest recollections are of arguments between Parnellites and McCarthyites on Home Rule and the Old Age Pensions Act and such like, and the old story tellers and ballad singers who sang ballads about Michael Dwyer, O'Brennan Roe, the Manchester Martyrs and recitations such as Emmett's speech from the Dock and Brian Kennedy. Last but not least the Boer War and the great sympathy of the people for the Boers in their effort to maintain their independence and my sister's tears because the donkey eat a ballad composed on Cronje's fighting at Ladysmith. As children we were often entertained by tales of the "Molly Maguires" and of the noted Roscommon Rapparee O'Hara, who was hanged in Roscommon old jail and so forth, and of the local

Witch whom the people used to consult when in trouble. The people had a horror of spies and informers, knowing the way they had betrayed all previous movements and the R. I. C. were adepts at finding out information about people who lived in a kind of terror of them.

It will be seen that the rebel strain was in my blood from both sides of my family tree. Later, I was interested in the declining Land League and the Hibernians and the fight for direct labour on the roads as a result of Jim Larkin's example of the organisation of the Transport Workers' Union in Dublin. The Hibernians had a strong organisation in Kiltrustan - about 250 members. I would not join them because they were sectarian in that only Roman Catholics were admitted to membership.

When the Irish Volunteers, who afterwards became the Irish National Volunteers, were started I joined them. They had no arms of any importance and they dissolved shortly after the first World War broke out, principally by Redmond's action in offering them to the English War Office and as he was acting as a recruiting agent for the British Army, and there was a danger that they might find themselves drafted into that Army.

Easter Week and the Rebellion found this part of the country unorganised or any preparations made and so no incidents took place around here, and after it was over, the country seemed dead and listless and doomed to remain that way for a long time. Things, however, brightened up quickly with the release of the prisoners and by the advent of the Plunkett election in early 1917 the people were looking up again. I was sitting at our fire one night with some other local lads during the early period of the election campaign when some one came in and said that Father O'Flanagan was in the Kiltrustan

(local) Hall. We all got up and went to the Hall. Father O'Flanagan was there all right as was also Martin Conlon who was telling his audience the story of 1916 and the Rebellion. As Conlon finished his story Father O'Flanagan jumped on to the stage and pointed at the Banner of St. Patrick which hung in the Hall, and underneath which was the scroll - "Freedom comes from God's right hand and needs a godly train and righteous men must make our land a Nation once Again", and said, almost shouted, "If you do not believe in these words, tear down that banner of St. Patrick and trample on it". This evoked tremendous enthusiasm, everyone springing to their feet and cheering loudly and as the young men went home over the hills that night, you could hear their defiant cheers echoing from hill to hill.

The election was a great win for Count Plunkett although I would say that a lot of people voted for him thinking he was going to take his seat in the English House of Commons. After the election things became very quiet again and the next thing to stir up the people was the death of Thomas Ashe. A demonstration was planned for Strokestown - a protest meeting and a request to the Hibernians for the use of the Big Drum from Kiltrustan Hall was refused by them. We broke into the Hall late at night and took the Drum as well as the scroll bearing Emmett's speech from the Dock. After the election a plebiscite was held in which you were asked to declare if you stood for complete separation from England or not. I think the idea underlying this was to find out what support would be forthcoming for the Sinn Féin programme in view of a pending General Election.

A local branch of Sinn Féin was organised in Kiltrustan and one day I noticed an advertisement in the

daily paper. Irish Independent or Freeman's Journal - I forget which - stated that anyone wishing to join the Irish Volunteers should communicate with Michael Collins. I replied to this advertisement and in due course I had a communication from him and enclosing a 1914 British Army Drill Book. We now set about forming a little Company of Volunteers on our own in Kiltrustan. About twenty-five young men joined up and this number increased later to thirty-six. I was selected to be Captain; Jack McCormack to be first Lieutenant; my brother Michael to be Second Lieutenant and George Lenihan to be Quartermaster. The only things we had in the nature of arms was a .38 revolver and one .22 sporting rifle. This was about August 1917 after Collins had been released. We kept going like this throughout 1917. In 1918 when the conscription crisis was at its height, our numbers increased considerably and we were drilling every night. One day I was speaking to Michael Greene in Kilglass and was telling him my views on affairs. He asked me to join the I. R. B. and explained what it meant. I said I would consider it. About a week later he came to a local dance and that night he took me into the organisation with some of my neighbours. I now discovered that my brother had been a member for the past two years. I now recruited some more members.

After the Plunkett election in 1917 the Kiltrustan St. Enda's Sinn Féin Club originated thus one Sunday afternoon. Johnnie Law and I called on Father McGowan the curate for Kiltrustan and asked him if he would help us to form a Sinn Féin Club and without demur this great priest gave his consent and told us to make arrangements for the meeting which, returning home with the good news, we did. The number was small that met one evening outside the church gate at Kiltrustan but amongst those

present was an old Fenian, Patrick Kennedy. Father McGowan accepted the presidency and Kennedy proposed me as secretary, while Martin McHugh, a veteran Land Leaguer and District Councillor, was elected Treasurer. So the battle royal was joined with the local A.O.H., a few of whom had already defected and some more were showing similar signs. The matter came to a head after Tom Ashe's death when, led by the president, we marched in a body to the local A.O.H. Hall and demanded the loan of the fifes and drums and other instruments which we claimed to be the property of the parish as a whole. Of course we were indignantly refused, although the occasion of our request was to attend a public meeting to be held at Strokestown to denounce Ashe's murder.

The Hibernians were rather nervous for the safety of the drum and so it came to our knowledge that the R.I.C. stationed at Gillstown, a country post about two miles distant, had instructions to keep a watch on the hall. We were also keeping an eye opened and observed the approach and retirement of the R.I.C. patrol and so, one sultry and dark night, John McCormack and I entered the hall from the back by shoving back the window catch and unscrewing the lock off the door. We removed the drum and Robert Emmett's Speech from the Dock, which was hanging on the wall, but unfortunately the old reliable we gave the drum to for safe keeping got windy and buried it in a nearby bog and the damp ruined it.

So ended the A.O.H. local band instruments. Nevertheless, when the big day arrived, we had our own Sinn Féin band loaned to us by Kilmore. They had recently purchased drums - the old Land League ones being considered too heavy and it also almost oblong in shape instead of round. After the conscription menace had passed and the Sinn Féin Club took the plebiscite

locally for or against independence, the local Hibernian Branch became but a memory. At the time, some local wit expressed himself thus: "Bold Robert Emmet, the darling of Éireann, bold Robert Emmet was hung on the wall; bold Robert Emmet jumped down from the ceiling and beating the big Drum, escaped from the Hall".

During the conscription period - Father McGowan had left at this time - Father Roddy, who had taken his place, came with a message to the effect that the R.I.C. were going to take up all the guns in the district. We collected all the guns in the area that night except one. The owner of this gun said he had it hidden and we accepted that. He delivered it to the R.I.C. on the quiet. During that time we made pikes from scythe blades by cutting the blades down and attaching them to long handles by keeper rings. About twenty-five of these were made and were sold to our members at 2/6d. each. Peter Corlon, a local blacksmith, made the pike heads from the scythe blades.

Some time in 1918 Bill Doherty of Elphin contacted me and he was the first Volunteer officer outside our own Company that I came in contact with or knew of. Martin Conlon visited Strokestown organising a Volunteer Unit there. Later, Ernie O'Malley was introduced to me by James Ryan of Strokestown and he stayed at my house for a fortnight. He travelled around extensively, organising Volunteer Units and visiting people. I remember remarking to him one day that the Volunteers should be oath-bound and he replied that he disagreed and said "If men are no good without an oath, they will be no good with it". As far as I could gather, his idea was to have a small number of reliable men in every area. There was no Battalion organisation at this time and as

far as I could ascertain there was only a certain small number of men in the Volunteers in each district.

In September 1918 the British had a military guard of about twenty-two men in Carrick-on-Shannon Railway Station. This guard carried rifles and had a box of ammunition in reserve. They stayed in tents on the Railway Station at the end of the platform. Mick McGloughlin, who was a porter working in the Station, gave us all details about their set up and was satisfied that they could be surprised and disarmed. Ernie O'Malley and I went to a meeting in Drumlion where we met Dockery and eleven other men from Carrick-on-Shannon and the matter was discussed. O'Malley suggested - in fact decided - that a cattle train which was due to arrive at the station on Saturday night should be held up some distance outside the town and boarded by an armed party of ours and then, with an armed man covering the engine driver, proceed into the station and jump the guard and disarm them. In the meantime two men dressed in R.I.C. uniforms were to proceed along the line and engage the sentries in conversation and at the exact moment disarm them. The R.I.C. uniforms were to be got from the local dramatic society who had them as part of their stage property. I remember McTiernan from Carrick saying that that was all nonsense - to rush the guard and disarm them would be the proper thing to do, but O'Malley's plan was decided on. The eleven Carrick men were to form the boarding party for the train and Mick Dockery and I were to be dressed up as the two R.I.C. men. At a given signal from O'Malley the train was to be stopped. Seán Bermingham brought out the R.I.C. uniforms to my house but they were unwearable. They had been lying up so long that they were so mouldy and dirty it would have been a farce to put them on.

Barney Gannon from Drumbo was to provide a horse and side-car to take the arms away and Dockery, O'Malley and I were to cycle behind this and fight a rearguard action, if necessary, to ensure their safe removal to Lisadown area where they were to be dumped.

On Saturday night, the 28th September 1918, I cycled to Lisadown and met Dockery and O'Malley there. O'Malley told me that we could not go on with the project as the station was surrounded by military and that they were waiting for us. I thought he was trying me out and said "We will go on anyway". He then told me that Captain Murphy, who was in charge of the Carrick Volunteers, had sent him word not to turn up at the mobilisation centre as, apparently, the British were aware of our intentions. No Carrick men turned up at the mobilisation point and the only ones there were - Tom Moolick from Aughran, Dockery, O'Malley, Barney Gannon with his side car and Gilchrist, and Mick Loughlin from Kilmore and myself.

Mick Dockery went into the station to meet Mick McGloughlin and to scout the town and found that the Carrick Volunteers had been ordered not to mobilise, and the thing was impossible without them. O'Malley had to call the attempt off and was in a rage as apparently he had had his time in Roscommon extended by Collins in order to bring off this stunt. I met Mick McGloughlin who was the porter at the station the following day and he told me it was an awful blunder not to have brought the thing off that night. All the young soldiers who composed the guard had been drafted off to France and they were replaced by old veterans who were beyond active service. Saturday had been pay day for those men and they were all drunk that night and had women in the tents and it would have been practically only a matter of walking in and taking the rifles and ammunition. It may have been this changing of

the composition of the Guard that gave the Carrick men the idea that the Guard had been strengthened and that the British were aware of our intentions. I do not know if any enquiry was held into this matter as I left the area shortly afterwards and, as far as I know, it was never attempted afterwards.

In November 1918 I left Kiltrustan and proceeded to Dublin to undergo a course at Daly's School of Motoring in Dartmouth Road. Before proceeding to Dublin I summoned a meeting of the Kiltrustan Company to have a new O/C appointed in my stead. A day or so previous to this, while I was seated in my house writing despatches calling this meeting, Sergeant Cawley of the R.I.C. walked in. He tried to grab the despatches but I snapped them from him and tore them up and threw them in the fire, pushing him away as I did so. He shouted out "Come in and bring the rifles" and immediately two R.I.C. men rushed into the house. They searched the house but found nothing and took their departure.

Mick Warren was appointed Company O/C to replace me and a few days later I left for Dublin. In Dublin I went into digs in Jimmie Kavanaghs, Charlotte Street, and there I met Seán Bolger, afterwards known as "Flash Bolger" from his speed and accuracy with a gun, and I had all my correspondence from home addressed to him to keep the police from checking up on me. When I reached Dublin I also called to see Martin Conlon and visited him often afterwards. The course at Daly's was not very interesting or instructive and only lasted a few weeks, and when it finished I think it was through 'Flash' I got employment in Millers of Thomas Street at 30/- per week. Digs in Dublin at this time were notoriously bad

but as I was working at canning fruit - I was at Millers (oranges) - there was always plenty of that stuff to eat. I paid 25/- per week for my digs which left me five for other expenses. I met a man from Galway who worked with Flash and he prevailed on me to change my digs to his in Marlborough Street. This man, some time later, went back to Galway, so I was now on my own there.

I now developed the "flu" which was raging at the time. I drank a bottle of stout and some glasses of rum in an effort to cure myself and, as a result, got very drunk. The following morning I was raving. The people in the digs sent for an ambulance to take me to hospital, but when it arrived I was out walking the streets, well on the way to being all right. I returned in a day or so to my work at Millers, but I would not be allowed to work and was dismissed on the grounds that I had not reported sick and forwarded a doctor's certificate. I now went on the dole but Millers got me knocked off that also, and for a while I now worked in Wallace's coal yard. They were a rough, tough lot of men who worked there and their language was awful, but they were kind to me and assisted me in many ways, probably because of my youth.

The railway were now taking on men and I succeeded in getting appointed and was sent to Ennis, Co. Clare. Before leaving Dublin I had seen Seán Ó'Murthille who instructed me to get in touch with Tom Brown the Captain of Volunteers in Ennis. I travelled with a party of Highland soldiers (Scottish) to Ennis and discussed politics on the way with them, they agreeing that the English should be kicked out of Scotland as well as Ireland. I found digs in Ennis in a house called Petits, who was an ex-R.I.C. sergeant. When anything appeared in the papers that would annoy him, this man would say "Fogarty",

meaning Bishop Fogarty who is still alive - "with his ten foot pike". While in Dublin Martin Conlon had mentioned the matter of the I.R.B. to me and I had told him I was one of them. He must have sent word to Ennis before me because Brown got in touch with me and I attended meetings of the Circle there but no parades, except the May Day one which was a Labour gathering. It was well by now into the Spring of 1919.

One day while at Mass in the Priory, I saw Ernie O'Malley there and we had a chat. He told me he had travelled nearly all Ireland since last we met. He again remarked that if we had only 10 reliable men in each county we would be all right. He said he was about to stage an ambush of the R.I.C. and that he would have a rifle for me and to provide myself with a bicycle. Tom McMahon, who was a checker on the railway, loaned me his cycle without asking any questions, but no message ever came from O'Malley.

I now heard of shooting having occurred in Limerick and I applied for a transfer to there, which I got. I was not long in Limerick, however, until I was in trouble with the railway bosses there. They were a rotten lot and they behaved like dogs to me. I was put on night duty but soon I was transferred to the goods yard. Here, there was plenty of food to be got by filching from the waggons at night. The staff at Limerick were a bad lot and went out of their way to make things go the hard way for one, and the amount of petty pilfering that went on in that station was very high. One night a Frenchman was allowed to shelter in a carriage in which was a bag containing a large sum of money. The money disappeared and the Frenchman never was got.

I now applied for another transfer and succeeded in getting back to Kingsbridge Station, Dublin. On reaching Dublin I joined Paddy Houlihan's Company of Volunteers and my I.R.B. friends and Martin Conlon, being taken into Martin's own Circle. I was now attached to the Traffic Department and secured digs in Parkgate St. convenient to my work. The staff of the railway at this time were nearly all men who had served in the British Army during the 1914-18 war, having been employed or got first preference for employment, and were no good from a National point of view. Amongst the staff there was one man, Mick O'Connell from Tipperary, with whom I struck up a friendship. Mick was an extraordinary type of man, very strong and athletically built. He had joined the R.I.C. where he had proved his worth as a boxer. When posted to a station he had a difference of opinion with the Sergeant i/c, whom he beat up and then chucked the police. Nationally, he was quite sound and I afterwards discovered that he handed over the bulk of his earnings to the I.R.A. funds.

One night while parading with my I.R.B. Circle, I was pointed out a man whom I was told was a nephew of Kickhams. By now, the first Dáil was functioning. The Volunteers had become the I.R.A. and took an oath to the Irish Republic, recognising it as the supreme authority, while others of us had also taken an oath to the I.R.B. as well, which recognised the executive of that body as the supreme authority. One night at a meeting of our circle of the I.R.B. a strange man in a leather coat addressed us on this matter and told us not to refuse the Volunteer or I.R.A. oath, but to remember that the I.R.B. oath took precedence over it.

The railway men now refused to handle any rail traffic carrying British Army stores. A few wagons

were loaded with stores of this nature at Kingsbridge Goods Yard and as no one would handle them, remained lying there with a military guard on them. I reported this to Paddy Doyle who was later executed in Mountjoy and pointed out that they could easily be destroyed despite the fact that there was a guard on them. The Guard had become very lax from hanging around there so long. I pointed out that a few men with "Spraggs" - a railway tool used in the manipulation of railway wagons, could easily destroy them. Doyle reported to Paddy Houlihan and one day a few men entered the yard, held up and disarmed the Guard and set fire to the wagons which were completely burned out. The wagons were destined for the South of Ireland.

A man named Keogh informed me of what he believed to be a source of conveying British despatches out of the city. I got in touch with a Mr. Kennedy, one of Mick Collins Intelligence Officers, and introduced him to Keogh. It transpired that the men suspected were really agents of Mick Collins. One night Mick O'Connell and I went into a public house opposite the Castle. The place was full of Auxies and soldiers. O'Connell was drinking a bottle of stout and I a mineral. A little Welsh soldier came over and said to me that he would sing a song in Welsh for me. I told him to go away, that I did not want any singing. He went away but returned again with the same request, and again I told him to go away. He returned the third time and taking off his tunic said he would sing whether I liked it or not. I gave him a slap - more a push than a slap - and he fell on the floor. Immediately every Auxie and soldier left the place in a hurry. Things now seemed nasty and the barman was showing vivid signs of great fear. We left the premises and went down Dame Street.

Here we were held up by Auxies who ordered us to put our hands up. O'Connell's reaction was to stick his hands down into his pocket. We were put under arrest and brought to Dublin Castle and put into the room - I think it was the Day Room of the Guard House. Here a number of Auxies were playing cards and drinking at the same time. A barman carried them drink. It was interesting to hear their language and their comments as to what they were going to do to the "Shinners". O'Connell recognised the barman as one whom he had known when in the R.I.C. Depot and called him over and said "Don't you know me?" The fellow said "I never seen you in my life before". O'Connell said "I am going to get out of here somehow". Shortly after this another barman came in with drinks and O'Connell recognised him as a man he had seen speaking to two friends of his. He called him and said "You know me: I met you with so and so." He never actually had met the fellow. The man said "Oh, yes" and said he would see about having us released.

In the morning we had to clean up and I then recognised one of the other prisoners who was there as Ernie O'Malley. He had been so badly beaten that he was nearly unrecognisable. I got over near him and whispered to him and asked him if he knew me and said 'the old settle bed in Kiltrustan'. He whispered back "Oh, yes. My name is Stewart; what is yours?" I said "Mulloy." He then said he would see me in the wash house. We got together in the wash house and he asked me if I got out to get him some clean clothes. After we received breakfast from the Auxies O'Connell and I were brought before an officer, who was decent enough to us. We told him how we had been brought in last night and that we were railway men and should have been working. He told us we would have to sign a form declaring that we were loyal citizens of

His Majesty and that we would have to report to some officer daily. We said certainly, and asked him who was the officer. All we wanted was to get out. He now said, "It is all right: you can go", and called the Sergeant and told him to show us out of the Castle, and out we went without signing any forms. I immediately went to Martin Conlon's and told him about O'Malley, and I procured some clothes of my own and went back to the Castle with them. I told the Sergeant i/c of the Guard that I was in there last night and that some poor devil of a prisoner had asked me to get some clothes for him. He asked me the prisoner's name and I said I did not know. He let me look at the prisoners who were exercising at the time and I pointed to O'Malley who was in rags and said, "I think that is him". The Sergeant said O.K. and took the parcel and I now left, very glad that I had not been kept again. When I got outside O'Connell was waiting for me. He had followed me to the Castle in case he could do something if I got into trouble again.

We now reported to Kingsbridge and to our surprise were not even questioned about our absence and were paid our full pay. The Castle must have confirmed with the railway that we were railway employees. I now visited Martin Conlon's sister's place in Church Street and there, for the first time, I met Seán Connolly of Longford. I also met Diarmuid O'Hegarty in Conlon's dairy in Dorset Street. I was now told to report to Vaughan's Hotel - that the "Big Fellow" wanted to see me. I went there and met Collins, who informed me that Connolly was going down to Roscommon to reorganise and ginger up the place and that I was going down there also as Brigade Q.M., North Roscommon. I remarked to Collins that I would not mind going if the place was hotter. I will

never forget the look he gave me and said, "It is up to you to make it hot". I turned and walked down to stairway without another word. I could not bring myself to look at him again. I now attended classes run by G.H.Q. in a place off Talbot Street which dealt with demolition work, etc., and how to destroy stores, including motor vehicles. Seán Connolly now requested that I proceed to Roscommon which I did. I had been considering going home for quite a long time previous to this.

On Ash Wednesday 1921 I arrived at the Presbytery at Dangan, Kilmore, and stayed there that night. I now went on to Hillstreet and on to Jack Denihan's in Ashford. There I inquired about Seán Connolly and was told he was in Ballinameen. That night I heard Connolly had arranged to attack Elphin Barracks, held by Tans and R.I.C. I now went to Feragh and the following night I walked to Elphin to meet Connolly at the Dispensary in Elphin who had Dockery, the Brigade O/C, with him. I took a cycle from outside a house and using it joined Connolly and Dockery at the Dispensary. I had intended to have a chat with Connolly about the arrangements for burning the barracks, but before I could do so he detailed me to proceed immediately to go and meet some of the men at Ballyhoughter Bridge. The men in question were conveying a mine for the purpose of blowing in the wall of the barracks and Connolly was afraid that they might go astray. The mine was supposed to be on a cart.

I proceeded immediately to the Bridge as ordered but although I waited there for some considerable time no men or cart turned up. Four men eventually came along on foot. I took cover while they passed by and then followed them for some distance but got no

indication of what they were on. I now returned to the Bridge and just as I arrived there an explosion went off in Elphin. I now got on my cycle and headed at all speed for Elphin. I was held up at the Dispensary by a party of our men who had shotguns. I asked them if that was the mine that went off and where was Connolly and they then let me proceed through. On getting into the town I found some of our men lying on the street firing at the barracks and the R.I.C. and Tans returning the fire. Véry lights were going up by the dozen from the barracks and the spent flares were falling all around the place. I had an idea that if I could get paraffin I could possibly burn the barracks if the mine had done sufficient damage to it. I now heard three whistle blasts which was apparently the signal for retiring, as I could see our men making their getaway. I returned to the Dispensary and then back to Ballinameen.

Seán Owens was the local Battalion O/C of the I.R.A. and Connolly was afraid that as a reprisal for the attack on the barracks, the Tans would burn Owen's house so he mobilised a party of five or six men with rifles to protect Owen's house. This party took up positions in the ditches overlooking the house and their instructions were that if the Tans set fire to the house, they were to fire into them with all their might. The Tans came out all right and although they searched and scoured all around the house, they did not set fire to it and retired peacefully, and we did the same. Every night afterwards, for a while, we mobilised likewise to meet a reprisal on the house, but the Tans did not return.

Connolly and I now proceeded to Hillstreet where Dockery and Seán Clancy, the Brigade Adjutant, were.

Connolly now told me that he had been ordered to proceed to Leitrim by G.H.Q. but that he would return and have another go at Elphin Barracks. Next night he left to proceed to Leitrim and as I shook hands with him I had a feeling that I would never see him again. I got that impression somehow and I cannot explain why. He was killed within a very short period R. I. P.

An attempt was now made to go into Elphin and ambush a patrol of R. I. C. and Tans there. On the night fixed Owens, who was local Commandant, refused to take his men into the town as he said he had information that the Tans were aware of our intentions and had occupied a number of ruined houses along the approach to the town and were waiting for us to come in, and any attempt to go would get our men slaughtered. I and two other men named Deignan and Burns decided we would go on with the job. Burns guarded the road while Deignan and I searched each ruined house, but we found no Tans in them. We proceeded on until we came in view of the barracks and remained there for some time. Not a Tan was to be seen at the barracks or anywhere else, so we withdrew. I returned to Ballinameen again and reported to the Brigade O/C Dockery, and recommended that Owens be dismissed, but Dockery refused to do this. In all, during this time, we had failed fifteen times to make contact with the enemy.

I now started on a tour of inspection of the different companies including Pat Madden's Company at Ballagh, which was really the South Roscommon area. Pat had an excellent company, well trained, and Pat himself made a very favourable impression on me as a Commander. He knew what he was about and also how he was going to do it. After the inspection of the Company I had a conversation with Madden at Farrell's publichouse where

we discussed all aspects of the situation including all the abortive ambushes that had been planned and failed for want of a target showing up, and we agreed that the only place you were sure of an enemy turning up was on the main roads where they were every day. We discussed how the two Roscommon Brigades could cooperate and help one another. Dockery had at this time gone to Keadue to arrange for an ambush there.

After my meeting with Madden I returned to Hill-street when I got a message that an ambush was planned for Scramogue - a couple of miles on the eastward side of Strokestown. As Dockery was in the Arigna area, I went down and joined Pat Madden at an old house at Doughill where his men were mobilising for the ambush. As this was an operation to be carried out by units from both Brigades, I wanted to ensure that the booty, if captured, would be fairly divided between the Brigades. Pat Madden, John Gibbons and Luke Duffy had selected the ambush position and about 6 a.m. we started for Scramogue. There were about eight men armed with rifles and a number of men with shotguns. The Curraghroe Company from the North Brigade was also mobilised for this attack and others were out blocking bye-roads which led to the ambush position. On arrival at the ambush area, Madden lined up his men and detailed them to their positions and gave each man instructions as to what he was to do and the role each was to play during the ambush and afterwards. He did this very efficiently and the result was that when the thing did take place the whole thing went like clockwork and there was no confusion.

The people in the houses in the ambush position were taken from their houses and put in safety and all was ready. Nobody knew of what type of enemy force would turn up or when. With some others I was in the

house just facing the main road leading to Strokestown when a tender travelling very fast approached from that direction. In a matter of seconds it was in the ambush area and fire was opened on it. A Hotchkiss Gun from the tender opened fire on our position. I got out of the house on to the laneway and almost immediately the firing died out except for an occasional shot. I could see Pat Madden rushing down the road towards the enemy tender which had come to a standstill on the centre of the road. I followed Madden who was taking the surrender. Really, there was no surrender to take as all the enemy who were Lancers were either dead or at least knocked out of action. The machine gunner was lying in the body of the tender badly wounded or dead. Madden and his men were collecting the enemy's arms. I grabbed a tin of petrol which was in the tender and unscrewing the cap poured the contents over it and as I did so Luke Duffy, who was a very athletic type of young man, jumped on to it and lifted the gunner in his arms and jumped off, on the side of the road, with him. The gunner had seven bullet wounds in him but was able to stand up. Madden shouted at him, "Don't be so sharp; we are not as bad as we are painted. Nothing will happen you here. I am in charge and Madden is my name". This man refused to identify me later in the Curragh Hospital when I was paraded at his bed for that purpose, although I could see that he recognised me by the look in his eyes.

One little soldier, who was also wounded and was lying on the side of the road, was asking for a priest. I told him to say an Act of Contrition and I would get him a priest later. This man identified me at the Curragh Hospital. By now, Madden's men had collected the enemy armament including the Hotchkiss gun

and started their withdrawal up the hill, so I put a match to the tender and it went up in flames. When we had gone down the road first there were two men in civilian clothes lying under the tender. They were the only men who were on the tender that had not been hit and it transpired they were two Black & Tans who were under arrest for having looted the chapel in Elphin and were being conveyed to Longford for courtmartial. I now joined our men and we divided up the captured armament. Madden kept the machine gun and gave rifles in its place to the men from the northern area. It was agreed that the two prisoners would have to be shot as they knew too much and would be able to identify us should they escape and at any rate we could not hold them indefinitely. The Curraghroe or North men took one prisoner, and Madden the other. Madden now made for his own area while the others made towards Doughill. I went with the Curraghroe men who were in charge of Martin Fallon and we proceeded to the fields in the vicinity of Farrell's publichouse where we halted and took cover in the ditches. Brian Nangle, O'Connor, McGill and I were in charge of the Tan prisoner. It was raining and we were wet through our clothes and cold. It was now about 1 p.m. Brian Nangle and I went into the publichouse and got a whiskey for ourselves and sent some down to our pals and the Tan where they were. I had an automatic pistol in my right coat pocket and a revolver in my left. We now left the pub to join our party and when on the road a lorry of Tans and soldiers came suddenly round the bend. We turned around and faced back and tried to get off the road. I got over the ditch and into an alley cut but Nangle could not make it and was caught immediately. By now there was a number of the enemy in the field next to me. I said a prayer and made a dart to get into the next field,

the bullets pattering around me as I did so. I got through to the field but immediately saw that there were two Tans in front of me. The one nearest was carrying his rifle at the trail and he was shivering with fright. I made towards him with the intention of getting past him as I realised he was pretty harmless and intended to shoot the other fellow. I had my hands in my pockets holding my guns ready for using. The first Tan never made an effort to cover me off but just said "You are my prisoner". I ignored him and tried to shoot the second one but the automatic did not fire. It may have jammed or got caught somehow in the clothing of my pocket. At that moment the rest of the Tans rushed in from behind me shouting at me to 'put them up' and I was surrounded and caught.

They took me out on the road, searched me and found the guns and about £30 of the Brigade funds which they took. A sergeant of the R.I.C. remarked "You are no cowards anyhow". I called on him to keep his men under control as they were pushing me around. He replied "I am in charge here and you will be all right". I now noticed a lane leading into the fields and made a dart for that, but a policeman blocked my way and they again closed around me and one of the soldiers hit me on the head with the butt of his rifle and knocked me on the ground. Nangle and I were now handcuffed and put on the lorry, while they searched the area around where they caught us. Had they gone about another 100 yds. they would have got the prisoner and the rest of our men.

We were now taken to Strokestown. The lorries pulled up at Gibbons Public House and, while there, a party of Auxiliaries from Roscommon arrived. They wanted to do us in but the Black and Tans formed a

cordon around us and would not let them molest us. I noticed that none of the roads had been blocked in South Roscommon and that was how the enemy forces from Roscommon town and Athlone were so quickly in the ambush area. We were taken to Strokestown and down to the demesne where the Lancers were quartered. The Lancers were in a murderous mood as their O/C Captain Peek and one of the other officers - Lt. Tennant - had been killed in the ambush. Again the Tans formed a cordon around us and protected us. The military, when unable to get at us, pelted us with handfuls of gravel.

We were now driven to Roscommon town - a member of the Lancers had got on the lorry and he had a cat of nine tails with which he hit us on the head, especially Nangle. I was fairly well messed up with blood already from a cut on my head which I got when the soldier hit me with the rifle butt and this probably helped to save my head, but Nangle was beaten unmercifully. This continued until we got to Four Mile House where Joyce, the driver of the lorry, stopped it and told the soldier to stop, saying we, meaning the Tans, will be blamed for that. When we reached Roscommon we were ordered to bend down in the lorry - this was to keep the people from seeing us and our bloody condition, but Nangle, always obstinate and determined, put his head up as high as he could and I did the same.

We were brought to Roscommon Jail where we were put in separate cells; as we went up the steps a Red Cap (military policeman) followed us up and jabbed us with a bayonet. I only got one bad jab, the mark left by

it being on my leg still, but Nangle got a number of bad jabs. We were given one blanket but no food, as far as I can remember. At 12 p.m. that night Lieutenant Steynor who was stationed in Roscommon and who wore a skull and crossbones on his tunic and carried a long Webley revolver, accompanied by D.I. Cole from Strokestown who carried a lantern and cat-of-nine-tails, came into my cell. I had heard how, when they captured Dan Madden, Pat's brother, they had made it a point to walk on his bare toes with their heavy boots, so I kept them well in under the bed. I was ordered to stand up and take off my coat and waistcoat and hold up my shirt. I was then questioned as to whether I knew Dockery and about Hillstreet. They said the guns found on me had been fouled and had been fired that morning, which was a lie. I was asked if I knew Pat Madden, Frank Simmons and so forth, and I replied to all in the negative. They then left my cell and went to Nangles. I could hear them ask Nangle if he was prepared to die, and Nangle's gruff reply, "I am always ready to die". Nangle was then told to say his prayers. He knelt down and did so for a moment or so, and then got on his feet again. He was again asked if he was ready to die, and he replied, "didn't I tell you before I am always ready to die".

We were now taken out of the cells and into a yard and told we were going to be shot. I was not afraid, somehow. Guns were put against us but they did not shoot and we were put back in our cells again. Next morning our breakfast was brought into us from Grealy's Hotel. Pat Madden had arranged this. It was taken into me by two little soldiers with whom I shared it. British soldiers were none too well fed and always anxious for food. Nangle, however, would give them none of his, and so they disliked him, but not a percentage of how he disliked them.

We were now paraded for identification purposes. D.I. Cole came over to me and said, "I want to save you. You might as well tell all you know or your fate will be the same as your brother's". He promised to obtain a pardon for me if I would co-operate with him. This was the first indication I had that my brother had been killed. Nangle had a khaki forage cap on him - I don't know where he got it; perhaps he had picked it up at Scramogue. All the people from around Ashbrook, Scramogue, had been taken to Roscommon to see if they would identify us and were looking through windows at us. There were about twenty-five other men on the parade with us. When I was asked my name, I said it was "Pat Madden", the name I had given when captured. Sergeant Mileady of the R.I.C. said, "You are not Pat Madden" and I replied, "What does it matter?". He then said "You are about right".

I could see some woman point at Nangle from inside the window. She was from the Ashbrook area near Scramogue and was, I believe, a religious fanatic. After the parade, which, other than the incident of the woman and Nangle, was abortive, we were put back in our cells. I had become very friendly with the soldiers and they plied me with questions about conditions in the Irish Republican Army. They said that they were told that the men of that Army were paid £10 per week. I said, "No - £5". They said they would escape with me by getting across the wall and join the I.R.A. They would not agree to bringing Nangle with them as he had not given them any of his food. I was trying to arrange with them to steal the keys and open my door and get across the wall, but every day they said they could not get a chance to get the keys. Eventually they agreed to include Nangle in the escape also.

On Easter Sunday Lt. Steynor came in to my cell in a mad state, followed by some of Capt. Peek's men from the Strokestown garrison, and jumped on top of me and beat me up. Another gang went into Nangle's cell and did likewise. We were taken out to the yard separately and put into tenders, being handcuffed to the upright bar of

the gun mounting. We were now driven towards Athlone. With the vibration and jolting of the tender, the handcuffs soon began to cut into my wrists. The members of my escort would light matches and put them to my finger tips, causing me great pain. I appealed to the officer i/c and he ordered the men to stop and they now whispered to me that they would shoot me for complaining them. I told them they would not have the guts to do so. As the tenders approached Killoon Chapel the people were coming out from Mass and we were told to keep down our heads as we were still all blood from the beating up we had got. Instead of bending down Nangle stood up and did the same on arriving in Athlone. We were taken to the Military Barracks there and put in separate cells facing each other. There were a number of other prisoners there also, including Seán Rattigan from Athlone. I called Nangle and his face appeared at the hatch on the cell. His head was an enormous size, being all swollen. I laughed at him and he laughed at me. We were kept in Athlone for about a week or near a fortnight. Matty Tully entertained both us and the soldiers with his famous recitations and we became very friendly with the soldiers.

The soldiers were now again arranging for us to escape but before this could take any shape, we were taken out one morning early - Nangle and I - and put on tenders and driven to the Curragh. Several times en route we had to make detours to get round road blocks. On arrival at the Curragh we were taken to the Military Hospital. ^{WAS THERE} He treed the County Inspector, R. I. C. and the wounded machine gunner and the little soldier, who wanted the priest, were patients there. The machine gunner was asked if he recognised me. He looked at me with recognition in his eyes and shook his head indicating

no and turned away. He seemed a very sick man. The little soldier identified me by a scar on my hand, and said I was the man who took his arms off him. I did not. It was Seán Gibbons who had done so and, strange to relate, I discovered that he also had a scar on his hand in exactly the same place. Hetreed was satisfied and said to me that I knew the fate of my brother but that if I would tell him where our arms dump was I would go scot free and they would protect me. I said I knew nothing whatsoever about it and he replied "Nonsense".

We were now taken to the barracks in the Curragh occupied by the Cameron Highlanders where we were for about a month. Here, again, we started plotting with the soldiers about letting us escape. However, a Jewish sergeant overheard the soldiers talking amongst themselves about letting us escape and reported the matter to his superiors, and we were transferred to other cells. Next day we were brought back to Athlone Barracks. I remember how beautiful it was to see the open country again and looking so lovely in its coat of green. It was now spring time. Our escort told us they were going to shoot us before we got to Athlone on the guise that we were trying to escape. I had some cigarettes which I gave to the escort and they became friendly.

When we reached Kinnegad all the escort got off. the lorry and went through the town except one man who was quite careless and was not even in possession of his rifle. I took this to be a trap, as I could see sentries posted on the roads some distance away and they probably wanted us to make a bolt for it, so that they could shoot us. The next time we stopped again they bayoneted some ducks that were on the road. One of the soldiers reprimanded them for this saying, "Do you call that soldiering?" The soldiers now fell to discussing

shooting on the range and we discovered that the man who had remained on the lorry at Kinnegad was the champion shot of the regiment.

In Athlone we were placed in the guardroom cells. The sergeant in charge of the prisoners there was known by the men as "Black Jack" and he looked every bit of it. He came into my cell and accused me of having tried to escape when I was there before. I now got scabies. I showed my hands to the military doctor one day he visited us; he looked at them but passed no remarks. Gerry Davis, now a doctor in the Irish Army, came in as a prisoner and he and I started to plan an escape when out on exercise. We planned to get to Mass and then to get out over the wall. However, before the appointed Sunday arrived, a Red Cap soldier came in and said I should have been in hospital and took me there. I wanted to get in touch with Davis. I got them to bring me back to the guardroom to collect a coat I had left behind and was able to inform Davis I would be ready on Sunday. In the hospital I was put in a room on the top storey which was the third. There was a guard on the room. One of the soldiers - a medical orderly known as Paddy from Tipperary as he was Irish - who looked after me was very friendly and he suggested that I should grab a rifle and shoot my way out. He was supposed to give me sulphur baths, but said that if he did I would get all right and I would be brought back to the cells where I would not have a chance. Instead of giving me baths he made me scrape my fingers with a match box to keep and develop the scabies.

Miss Duffy from outside Athlone visited me and she informed me that the door was only kept on the latch and not locked and that I could get out by the back of the hospital. When Sunday came I succeeded in getting

to Mass escorted by two soldiers. I delayed and tarried as much as I could, but could not see any signs of an escape attempt. Black Jack now arrived and ordered me back to my prison immediately.

Some wounded prisoners from the Kilmeena ambush in West Mayo arrived at the hospital that evening and I was now taken down to the second storey and put into a room all to myself. I now definitely made up my mind that I was going to escape out of this place. I gave a soldier a half-crown and he pointed out to me a way that I could get away by the back of the hospital and he said he would help me if he could.

I was next taken before an officer and charged with the murder of four soldiers, being in possession of arms, etc., etc. Nangle was charged with having ammunition. The shivering Tan on the day of my capture and Sergeant Cawley from Strokestown were also there and part of a summary of evidence against me was taken down. I was asked if I wanted to make a statement or give evidence and I said I would do so when the day for defending myself came. I asked the officer taking the evidence for his name so that I could acquaint my solicitor. He replied, with a grin, "I am sure you would like to know so that you could pass it to your friends outside". I was now taken back to the hospital, convinced of my fate, and decided that I might as well die in an attempt to escape as to wait to be hanged.

The hospital stores were usually closed at 6 p.m. My soldier friend who had said he would help me told me that he had left a ladder against the hospital boundary wall. I wanted to confirm this so I asked the sentry for a drink of water and, before he could reply, ran past him and up the stairs to the wash room. The ladder

was there all right. I now made up my mind that I would go between 12 and 1 a.m. that night. I went to bed and fell asleep and when I woke up it was quite bright. I heard the clock strike 2 a.m. It was my intention to get through the window and on to the roof of a shed. Whilst the sentries were being changed outside the door I got through the window and on to the window sill. I now jumped from the window which was on the second storey. I landed on my feet and fell and immediately got an awful pain in my feet and back and could not straighten my body. I ran in a stooping position to the ladder - nearly on all fours - and climbed up it on to the top of the wall, pulling my raincoat which I had taken with me on the glass which covered the top.

I took the ladder with me over the wall and ran across an orchard to the barrack wall and placed it against it, with the intention of kicking it back when I got on the wall. There were 3 strands of barbed wire on top of this wall and I went through them and dropped into a plantation of laurels on the other side - a drop of about 10 feet. My shirt - a hospital one - was badly torn and I had left most of it in the barbed wire on top of the wall. I was now in some private grounds. I went across another small wall and across the roofs of some low sheds and dropped into a lane at the head of O'Connell Street. A patrol of enemy passed by the head of the lane. I now ran along the canal until I reached the Shannon until I came up against an old mill race. The water was low in the race and I crossed it. I now kept to the fields and went to the first house I met. I got a drink of water here and the man here told me to continue along the road until I met a bog road. I did this and eventually came to a house. The people in this house were all right and

were friends of Mattie Tully. I left this house immediately after getting some tea, two of the people accompanying me along to another house. By this time the people were going to the bog to cut turf and they took me along with them. During the day an alarm was given that the Tans were coming and I hid in a boghole but they did not arrive.

I had made my escape on the 24th May and this was the 25th. Barney Gaffney, who was the local Battalion O/C of the I.R.A. in this area, called that evening and at dusk, about 10 p.m., put me on a donkey cart and brought me to O'Connell's of Topnacconnell, getting here at 8 a.m. in the morning. I had just got to bed when a very swanky horse and trap arrived in which was Eva Fitzgerald from Athlone and a nurse with a supply of wines, oranges, medicines, etc. I stayed for a week at Topnacconnell, having transferred to a house named Flynn's in the meantime. I had developed a violent pain in my back and Doctor McDonnell attended me until I was better. Gaffney gave me £5 from his funds and with this the girls bought me some clothes. Later, I went on to Castlecool. I eventually got to Ballagh in Pat Madden's area.

It was now about the middle of June. I now travelled on to Curraghroe and from there to a dug-out in Scramogue area. Seán Leavy and others were sleeping in this dug-out and were living on the neighbours around it. I found that since Scramogue ambush that south of Elphin at least the Brigade had been completely inactive. Dockery, the Brigade O/C, had been arrested and apparently nothing was being done to get him out. With my experience I believed we could buy his escape and I told them so. Mrs. O'Connor and Saundunlers supplying the food for the men in the dug-out. I could see I was not welcome in the dug-out, and one day Mrs. O'Connor told

them they should be ashamed of themselves and should get out and do something.

Rita Lenihan was sent to Boyle to find out the situation about Dockery. She came back and said Dockery had escaped. I now left and went to Hillstreet - staying at a dug-out in Pollymount on my way - to try and contact Dockery. I learned in Hillstreet that two Tans were cycling from Kilroosky to Strokestown every day - unmolested since we were arrested. Jack Loughran told me this and suggested that we get a few shotguns and shoot them the following day. I went into Clooneen that night - this was a short cut to Hillstreet - and at Kilglass met another Jack Loughran who was Company Captain there. I asked him about the Tans and he said he was waiting for them on Tully Hill. I met Dockery in Hillstreet and came back with him to Kiltrustan to inspect that Company which was commanded by Mick Fallon.

I wrote a despatch to Fallon and signed it as Brigade O/C, ordering him to disarm the Tans during the week. Fallon waited in ambush on the road but they did not come for some days and, when they did, they had a girl cycling between them, so Fallon could not fire on them. Fallon and his men jumped out on to the road and fired after the Tans but they escaped, making off at great speed. The Tans arrived at Tullyhill but no one was waiting for them there.

I now mustered the Kiltrustan and Creeve Companies and wrote a letter which was posted to Hopkins of the R.I.C. in Strokestown, telling him that Brian Beirne could be got at any time at Mick Beirne's of Grange. We hoped by this that they would come out to get them and we could ambush them. I asked the O/C of the 3rd Battalion for the loan of some arms but he

refused to give them and this left us with 1 rifle, 2 hand grenades and some shotguns only available. We mobilised at Killdolloge on the road from Strokestown to Brian's place. There was about forty men assembled but most of those were detailed to block roads. The men blocking the roads made so much noise in throwing down the stone walls and building them across the roads that they were heard in Strokestown and instead of the R.I.C. coming out the way we wanted them, they went instead by the Elphin road and raided Tom Brady's.

A few days later the Truce came into force and all was over, at least for the time being. None of us believed that the Truce would last very long. The morale of our forces, speaking for the lower ranks, was very high and we were in no way overawed by the British Forces when the Truce came. All we lacked was good armament and good leadership, both of which was severely lacking. In contrast to this, the morale of the enemy forces was quite low as I should know, having lived with them for a considerable time. They were far more afraid of us than we were of them. We were fighting voluntarily for an ideal and had our hearts in it, while they had no such incentive to urge them on. They were wont to believe all types of rumours and stories about us which, if they did happen, were grossly exaggerated and lost nothing in the re-telling, such as the one that our men were paid £10 per week. This was a means that perhaps we could have exploited successfully had we been wise enough to do so, but we did not realise the value of propaganda at the time.

Allowing our men to come out in the open when the Truce took effect, to my mind was a bad thing. The enemy got to know an awful lot about us and to know

persons whom they never suspected were members of the Volunteers or working in sympathy with them. The taking in of recruits to the organisation during the Truce was also a mistake. If we could have armed even half of the men we had, we would be doing wonders. The situation changed so rapidly after the Truce that it is hard to anticipate what would have happened had it broken down and the war restarted.

I met one of the Tans in Strokestown during the Truce and we were discussing the ambush at Scramogue. He remarked that Captain Peek had fought very bravely and I told him that Captain Peek was shot in the back of the head while running away. He was shocked at this and said "The so and so and we were told that he fought like a lion before he was knocked out".

After I got back to Hillstreet when I escaped from Athlone I made a check on Brigade funds and found that there was £700 missing. There was no indication of what had happened to this money and no indication was ever forthcoming. The money was kept for us by local people who handed it out on request.

When I first met Seán Connolly he was after returning to Dublin after his first organising trip to Roscommon and so it came to pass that on his return to North Roscommon to complete the reorganisation of the Brigade he made application to G.H.Q. to have me sent home to act as Brigade Q.M. At this time, having resigned from the railway at Kingsbridge, I was attending a course of lectures in company with others whom G.H.Q. were preparing to send to other areas. General O'Connell (Ginger) lectured on tactics, John Plunkett on engineering. George Plunkett was also a constant visitor as was also D. O'Hegarty, director of organisation.

Previous to my notification to attend these lectures and after I had volunteered to go any place, Martin Conlon brought me to tea in a small dairy of his in Dorset Street. The only other company at tea was D. O'Hegarty. I must have favourably passed the scrutiny, for immediately after I was summoned to Vaughan's Hotel where I was shown upstairs to a room where Mick Collins and O'Hegarty were the only occupants. I objected to going home on the grounds that I might create jealousy, taking into consideration the fact that I was two years away except the yearly visits home, and was now returning to take Brigade rank over those constantly on the spot. Collins looked me straight and said, "What is your real objection?" I answered that if it was hotter there I would not mind, and he replied with such a look of disdain, "If it is not hot enough, it is up to you to go home and make it hot enough".

The look accompanying these words made such an impression on me that I just sprang to attention, saluted and, without a word, turned and walked out and so to the classes at Talbot Street. The plate on the door here bore the inscription "The Topographical Society Of Ireland". It was during this period that Paddy Doyle gave me 50 rounds of .303. Another lad (I think Kavanagh was his real name.) in the company gave me some .22. Both refused to accept any payment for it and accompanied me with it to my digs in Montpelier Hill. I now met Seán McMahon, Q.M.G., and after a visit to 17 Dingle Lane where a munitions factory was in operation and a dump, I got two stone of gelignite, which was delivered on a cart pulled by a white horse which I understood was G.H.Q. property and taken to some public house in Capel Street. From there I was put on the train at Broadstone Station on the occasion of my departure for Roscommon.

A day or two previous to my departure I got my final instructions in the lecture room referred to and £10 to defray my expenses home from D. O'Hegarty. I also got an order signed by Michael Collins to be shown to Seán Connolly and Mick Dockery, setting out my duties. My instructions were to take charge of the Brigade funds and Intelligence and to communicate with G.H.Q. in the event of the Brigade not being willing to make me a weekly allowance. I was also told that Seán Connolly would soon move on to reorganise Leitrim and that I was expected to do the best I could with the reorganised Brigade in his absence. I arrived at Drumsna Station and was met by Mick McLoughlin, P. McCrann and John Daly. McLoughlin had been transferred from Carrick-on-Shannon to Drumsna.

Marty O'Connor accompanied me from Dublin where he had been in hospital after a severe burning by petrol in an attempt to fire the Courthouse in Strokestown with others. He is now District Court Clerk and resides in Strokestown. He and I proceeded to the Presbytery at Dangan, Kilmore, some miles to the south of Drumsna where Father Dan Carney was then Curate. Father Dan was a member of the I. R. B.

Signed

Patrick Mullooly

Date

3/6/1954

Witnessed:

Matthew Barry

Matthew Barry, Comd't.

Patrick Mullooly

3.6.1954.

