ROINN COSANTA.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS.

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 963

Witness

Andrew Kennedy,
Bank Place,
Tipperary,
Co. Tipperary.

Identity.

Member of Irish Volunteers, Fedamore, Tipperary, 1917 - ;

Member of No. 1 Flying Column, 3rd Tipperary Bgde.

Subject.

(a) National activities, Co. Tipperary, 1917-1921;

(b) Arrest and subsequent shooting of D.I. Potter, April 1921.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil

File No. S.2264

Form B.S.M. 2

Statement of Mr. Andrew Kennedy,
Bank Place, Tipperary, Co. Tipperary.

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ORIGINAL

STATEMENT OF MR. ANDREW KENNEDY,
Bank Place, Tipperary, Co. Tipperary.

I was born in the parish of Solohead in October, 1900, my parents being small farmers there, and I went to school until I was sixteen at Monard National School where I reached the sixth standard. On leaving school, I went to help on my uncle's farm at Fedamore, Co. Limerick, and I worked there for about two years.

I was about sixteen and a half years' of age when I went to Fedamore, and it was there I first came in contact with the Volunteer movement, as a Volunteer Company had been formed in Fedamore, I think, about the end of 1917 and the Company Commander was, I think, Willie/or James Clifford. I joined that Company sometime about then and continued to parade with them. As far as I can remember, the nucleus of a Company had been there for some time but, coming on to the beginning of 1918 and the approach of the conscription crisis, the numbers in the Company increased and it was then up to about a hundred men, as far as I remember.

We had little or no arms in the Company, and for drilling we used imitation wooden rifles and hurley sticks. I do not remember any event of outstanding importance in Fedamore up to the time I left it at the end of 1918 and returned to Solohead. During the 1918 general elections, of course, the Volunteers of Fedamore, and everywhere else, were fully engaged doing police duties in connection with the election, as well as helping to organise public meetings and suchlike. It was in or about the time of the elections, or shortly afterwards, that I left Fedamore.

On my return to Solohead, I made contact with the Solohead Company of the Volunteers, through a couple of my school pals, Micky (Bulleen) Ryan and Tim Crowe, who were also my neighbours. Tim Crowe was acting Company Commander of Solohead Company at that time in the absence of Seán Treacy who was then organising the Galtee Battalion, and through them I became a member of the Solohead Company.

I had known Seán Treacy well since my school-days, though we did not go to the same school. He lived about four miles distant at the other end of the parish, but I used meet him at Mass on Sundays and other ways, and I knew him to be a most enthusiastic nationalist and that he was in touch with the leaders of the national movement from a very early date.

It took me a little while, when I got home after my two years' absence, to sort things out, discover who was who, what was going on there and to arrange to have myself admitted to the Solohead Company. At that time it was not as easy to join the Volunteers - in Solohead at any rate - as just walking up and asking for admission. They were very selective about whom they would accept as members. Treacy and the others had apparently made it a rule not to accept as Volunteers anyone but those who could be shown to be absolutely reliable and willing and anxious to fight. At that time and up to the Truce, in fact, a man had to be practically proposed and seconded and agreed to by all the members before he was admitted as a member of the Company. That may not have been the case elsewhere, but it certainly was true of Solohead.

I did not know anything about the Soloheadbeg

ambush, which took place on the 19th January, 1919, until after it had occurred. Actually, several members of the Company, including myself, were not told about it and had nothing to do with it. Treacy and those with him carried out that affair on their own and merely got assistance as they required it from what members of the Solohead Company were immediately to hand. So the first we knew of the Soloheadbeg ambush was when we heard about it from the people around and read it in the newspapers. Some days afterwards, the gelignite which had been captured there had been removed to a quarry at Ballydonagh and, apparently, Treacy wanted to carry out some tests with the explosive, with a view I suppose to seeing how it could best be used by our people, what its effect was, and so on. On this occasion I was instructed by Tim Crowe to bring one of the rifles captured from the R.I.C. at Soloheadbeg and ammunition to Ballydonagh where it would be used to protect those carrying out the experiment. Crowe had instructed me to bring the rifle and five rounds of ammunition, which he had given me, to Ballydonagh, near Dunohill. I took the rifle and ammunition on the appointed day to a point some couple of hundred yards from the quarry where I handed over the rifle and ammunition to him, and made my way home again as best I could. I understood then that Crowe was acting as outpost guard for the people who were carrying out the experiments in the quarry but, as he told me to clear off when I had given him the rifle, I did not wait to see what was going on but obeyed my orders.

There was a lot of military and police activity around Solohead following the ambush and for some time afterwards, but we took very little notice of this at

the time because, as I say, most of us in Solohead Company had known nothing about the ambush beforehand, and also because there had been military manoeuvres or tactical exercises carried out in the locality before this and we had got used to seeing lorry-loads of soldiers and signalmen stringing wire along the road when we passed back and forth, so that a lot of the activity that took place after the ambush seemed, to the ordinary people around, like a continuance of what had been going on before. We did not know enough then to understand the significance of parties of police and military moving here and there.

About that time - January, 1919 - I secured employment in the traffic department at Limerick Junction railway station and, as I was working on the platform there, my services as an agent for the Volunteers were considered valuable by the Solohead Company, of which I was a member. Because of my presence continually on the platform at Limerick Junction, I was in a position to note the movements of R.I.C. and military personnel and stores, and also to act as an agent for the receipt and despatch of messages and material to and from Volunteer Headquarters in Dublin and the South Tipperary Brigade. Consequently I was urged to have no outward connection with the Volunteers and, from that time on, my contact with the Volunteers became secret.

The system in operation for sending messages to and from G.H.Q. and the various country Brigades was usually to employ trusted railwaymen, such as, engine drivers, guards, or ticket checkers on the trains, to carry these messages and deliver them to other trusted people, such as, myself, for instance. When I got to know the

methods and routes, I would pass these on to where they were supposed to go, through a recognised message centre. For instance, on the station in Limerick Junction there were Jerry Frewen, who was a member of the Tipperary Company, and his sister who kept Eason's Bookstall on the station, and there were others employed at the station, such as, Paddy Coen, who would take these messages if he happened to be going off duty before myself. At a little later stage, most of the messages, whether written or verbal, might only have to be passed from the guard's van to Eason's bookstall where Maggie Frewen (now Mrs. Ml. Breen) took them and passed them on. Very often, when I brought a letter to the bookstall which might be intended for the O/C, South Tipperary Brigade, the two R.I.C. Detective Officers, Fox and Cadogan, who frequented the station, were leaning over the bookstall, but they never seemed to suspect that messages were being passed because it was done so openly. When I took a message from the guard, it was usually in an envelope addressed to the Stationmaster at Limerick Junction, but with a special identification mark on it as well, and so the detectives never dreamt that the apparently routine railway communications were, in fact, I.R.A. despatches.

My impression at the time was that these detectives regarded the I.R.A. as some kind of wild fellows away up in the Galtee mountains and never for a moment considered that the men they were standing around amongst, at Limerick Junction station, for example, could have had any connection with the organisation.

On one occasion I got a very confused message from Seán Eivers who was checker on the night-mail from

Cork. The message Eivers gave to me verbally was to the effect that there had been a raid on the mails in Cork and that one of the items of information discovered in the mails was that three important men were to be arrested on the following morning. That part of the message was clear enough, but he could only remember two of the names. One of these was the late P.J. Moloney and the other was Willie Benn. He racked his brains to try and think of the third name, but could not remember it before the train left the station, although he said he was a very important man. At 1 a.m. I brought this message to Jerry Frewen at his home and asked him to get word to Moloney and Benn.

The third man, whose name we did not get at the time, we discovered afterwards to be the late Commandant Seán Duffy, who was the Officer Commanding the 4th Battalion. The information was got to Tipperary by Frewen; and Moloney and Benn were warned that they were due to be arrested in the morning. Benn acted on the information and got away before the party came to arrest him. He went on the run from then on. P.J. Moloney decided that he was too old to undergo the hardships of being on the run and decided to brazen it out. Consequently, he was arrested when the party came for him in the morning, although he had been warned. Sean Duffy, whose name we had failed to get, was also arrested that morning and was given a term of imprisonment.

As I said before, I had been urged by my Company not to have any open association with them on account of my services on the railway, and this embargo on my Volunteer activities was not very pleasant to me at the time. Though I knew the work I did on the railway was valuable, I would have preferred to be openly taking my

part with the other Volunteers of my Company. However, in addition to the handling of I.R.A. despatches, I also was able to acquire a certain amount of arms and ammunition and suchlike useful items which passed through on the railway.

I remember on one occasion during the munitions strike, that is, the period when the railwaymen refused to carry armed enemy parties or stores, a British officer in mufti asked me to look after his luggage and see that it was placed on the Limerick train for him. The Limerick train was not due to leave for about an hour and a half. I usually carried with me a bundle of keys which were capable of opening almost anything and, when I got his luggage into the van, I went through it, opening the cases with my keys. I took from the luggage a .45 revolver and from fifty to a hundred rounds of ammunition, a pair of fieldglasses, a Verey light pistol and his uniform, which I concealed for the time being, and sent off the rest of the luggage. When I was going off duty at 3 p.m. that day, I chanced taking the revolver and ammunition with me. Passing out the police barracks safely, I met a couple of lorry-loads of soldiers who were going to the station to discover what had become of the items missing from the officer's luggage. They did not take any notice of me as I passed them by, nor did they find the rest of the material which I had hidden at the station. The .45 ammunition I had got on that occasion was looked upon as very valuable, as I don't think there was a single round of .45 in the area at that time.

On another occasion I collected a lot of shotgun cartridges, which we usually refilled with buckshot when we could find any such ammunition. I took this off

the train and hid it in the station until I would be going off duty. When going off duty, I took the cartridges with me. As I was moving off, I noticed that some members of the Tipperary Company were taking petrol from the other side of the station. I stopped to give them a hand and, in order to do so, I left down the cartridges I was carrying. As soon as they found out what my parcel contained, they became more interested in that and wanted to take possession of it, notwithstanding the fact that I had merely stopped to help them. After some argument, I threatened to make a report to the Company Commander on the whole matter, and they then agreed to let me retain the ammunition.

Another incident that occurred about the same time was the I.R.A. raid on Limerick Junction station for the purpose of removing a fire-hose and pump which were generally kept in the station. The pump and hose were required for the attack on Kilmallock Barracks (which took place on the 27th May, 1920). Being a railway employe, I was in a position to know where everything was located and where the keys could be found. To avoid identification, we blackened our faces and tied handkerchiefs across the lower part of our faces, so that we would not be recognised. The pump was a heavy affair on wheels and could be moved on its wheels for short distances, but it needed a horse and cart to take it away, and the hose, as far as I can remember, was a round rubber affair similar to the garden hose but probably bigger in diameter. It was intended to use these to pump a jet of paraffin or petrol on to the barracks at Kilmallock in order to set fire to it.

The destruction of the vacated R.I.C. barracks

throughout the country then occurred, and I remember being engaged with other members of my Company on one of these jobs, that was, the destruction of the R.I.C. barracks at Glenbane. On that occasion each man brought with him a bottle containing paraffin oil or petrol, and these were hurled into the barracks when the fire was started.

About this time we decided to hold up the postman bringing the mails to the barracks at Limerick Junction. Crowe, Tommy Ryan, [illegible] and myself spent all night in a hay barn, so as to be on the spot in time to intercept the postman going to the barracks in the morning. Amongst the mails we captured on that occasion, we got some useful information, but I cannot now remember the details except one item. This was the first public offer of a reward for information leading to the capture, dead or alive, of Dan Breen. With this document were a number of printed posters on which appeared the now famous bad photograph of Dan Breen and offering the public a reward for his capture.

Apart from these occasional activities, there were twice-weekly Company parades. The location of these parades was varied from place to place, but they were most often held in P.P. Moloney's barn at Gorthdrum. I was again attending parades at this time, and I was one of those selected to go to a place near Tipperary town to attend a special musketry class.

When I went to attend the special musketry class, I learned to my great surprise that the musketry instructor, a member of another Volunteer Company, was a man named Michael Nevin, an ex British Army man, who

worked with me on the railway. I had never suspected until then that he was an I.R.A. man and, knowing that he had been in the British Army, I had been very careful about him up to this. He, in turn, had not known that I was in the I.R.A. until he met me at the class, but from then on we worked in harmony for the national cause in the course of our daily work.

The knowledge we gained at this musketry class, while it was very useful to us personally, proved of little value to us when passing it on to our respective Companies, by reason of the fact that our instruction was based upon the service Lee Enfield rifle and we did not have one of these rifles in our Company at the time. In this way it was difficult for us to transmit the knowledge we had gained to the other men of the Company. It was six months later before we had a service rifle in the Company and by that time I suppose we had forgotten what we had learned at the musketry class, except that we were able to handle a rifle ourselves. One thing that was sadly lacking all the time, even up to the Truce, was any kind of aiming tests or range practice that would ensure that the men knew how to aim properly. It was explained to them in theory, of course, but in action, which was the only time we could fire off live ammunition, it was largely a matter of guesswork whether or not our fire was accurate. Even a miniature .22 rifle would have been very useful for practice shooting but we did not have one in the Company. I suppose it is true to say that the standard of weapon training and tactical training amongst the I.R.A. was low compared with the standard of trained soldiers. We had not got the facilities, the material or the instructors to achieve anything like a high

standard, but I would say our deficiency in this respect was counterbalanced by a high morale. Our men had plenty of courage and believed in their own superiority against the enemy. They did not even understand at the time how poor their efficiency standards were by comparison with the enemy, and it was this factor that enabled them to carry on the fight. On the other side the enemy had all the advantages of technical and tactical training and a good supply of weapons and ammunition, but did not appear to have the courage to use these advantages against us.

There were numerous small incidents from time to time, most of which I cannot recall at the moment, but one such incident occurs to me now. There was a man working with me at Limerick Junction Station, named Paddy Ryan. "Paddy, the Master" we called him. He was from Rossmore. Usually, the two of us went to town to Tipperary on a Saturday evening. There were a couple of R.I.C. men in Tipperary town who had made themselves particularly objectionable, and we decided on one particular Saturday that we would put a stop to their activities. This was on our own initiative. We went into Tipperary with two .38 revolvers in our pockets, intending to search for and shoot these two R.I.C. men who usually made themselves very busy going around the town on a Saturday evening. We were not very long in Tipperary town and had not yet managed to find the two men we intended to shoot, when two lorry-loads of Black and Tans and Auxiliaries arrived from Limerick. This force, which was under the command of Sergeant Horan, proceeded to smash up everything they could lay hands on in the town and, as they were too large a force for us to cope with, we went into a shop where we hid ourselves until the Tans had departed. Then we

quietly made our way out of the town towards home. Apparently it was not our day, but the circumstances proved lucky enough as it happened, because I decided to try out my revolver on the following Sunday in a quarry near home. It was a five-chamber revolver, and not one of the five chambers would fire. An examination of the weapon disclosed that the striker was defective. It was too short and incapable of indenting the striker cap of any of the cartridges. If we had attempted to shoot the two policemen as planned, I would have found myself unarmed in the process.

That particular .38 revolver was sent away for repair but I never saw it again. In the meantime I captured another revolver in transit on the railway and this time held on to it myself. I had decided, in view of all the stuff that I had managed to get hold of from time to time and passed on to the Battalion and had got none of it for myself, that I would retain the next one I captured.

About the autumn of 1920 I accidentally wounded myself in the hand with an automatic pistol which I was testing. I forget where I got this pistol but, having decided to try it out, I brought it to the back of a rick of hay at my own house, where I began to unload it in order to strip it down for examination. I pulled the action several times and thought I had it completely unloaded. Then I was beginning to strip it and I was pushing against the muzzle with the palm of my right hand when it went off. Apparently I had not completely unloaded it as I thought. The bullet passed through the palm of my hand and out at the back. Hiding the gun in the hay-rick, I went to a neighbour's house, Mick Crowe, who was also a Volunteer, and he tied it up for me. It

was next morning before I went to a doctor in Tipperary, a Dr. O'Dwyer, brother of Sir Michael O'Dwyer, whom I knew was hostile to the national movement, but as he was my family doctor, I felt it might be safer to go to him than anyone else. Dr. O'Dwyer fixed up my hand, but I was unable to resume work for some months and, when I did resume, I found that the stationmaster at Limerick Junction, an ex British Army officer named Savage, had apparently given information about me to the R.I.C. On the day I resumed work I was held up and questioned by the R.I.C. They took me to the barracks when I was coming from work that day and questioned me as to why I had been out of work so long and where I had been in the meantime. I told them that I had fallen off my bicycle into some barbed wire and that the wire had gone through my hand. This story was to account for the wound on my hand as well as my absence from work, but they did not seem to believe my story and held me there while they sent to Tipperary for trained army personnel to examine the scar on my hand. Some hours later, two lorry-loads of soldiers of all experience arrived from Tipperary and I was examined by some medical corps soldiers and N.C.O's. One of the Tommies, examining my hand, said to me in a whisper, "You either did it yourself, Paddy, or you were shot with your hands up!". But he shouted back to the Head Constable, "That is all right. That is not a bullet wound". Then the Tans told me to run for it, but I knew what that meant, so I told them I was unable to run, that I was too hungry and too weak. I moved off as slowly as possible while still in their view but, as soon as I got round a corner and out of sight of them, I took to my heels and ran as fast as I could. That would be in or about the end of 1920, and I never returned to Limerick

Junction from then until after the Truce.

I made up my mind then to join Dinny Lacey's Column, the No. 1 Flying Column of the South Tipperary Brigade, and applied formally for this to my Battalion. The Column at the time was, I was told, down in Waterford. As it was continually on the move, I was instructed that the best way to get in touch with Lacey was to go to Brigade Headquarters at Rosegreen. I went to Brigade Headquarters and waited around there for a matter of some three weeks, during which time I was engaged with others in the construction of a dug-out on the land of Sadleir's of Ballydine which was to serve as the Brigade Headquarters office.

Actually I don't know much about the details of the Brigade Headquarters establishment or its plans, as I was only an ordinary Volunteer waiting there to get in touch with the Column and, in the meantime, giving a hand to whatever was to be done. As far as the dug-out was concerned, I never saw it when it was completed. What we were doing was sinking a pit about the size of an ordinary small room, about ten or twelve feet deep, in the side of a hill. I believe this was to be subsequently roofed over and covered with sods, level with the ground, and the entrance to be through a concealed passage, but as I never saw it when it was finished, I know no more about it.

While I was there, the various Brigade Officers were located in different houses around that small area at Rosegreen. For instance, one house was the communications centre where all messages for the Brigade arrived; another was occupied by the Brigade Adjutant, and so on. Any visitor to the Brigade Headquarters usually only saw one

or other officers of the Brigade in the house he went to. Paddy Aherne was the foreman in Sadleir's place and he was also the local Company Captain. Aherne was in charge of the construction of the dugout. We were helping to dig the pit and to remove the earth some distance away from it where it was spread on ploughed fields and other places which would escape notice. One of the houses occupied by the Brigade Headquarters was Looby's of Rathsallagh, and the Brigade despatch centre was Egan's of Tooloohan.

During the time I was at Brigade Headquarters, the Column were in Co. Waterford, Cloneagh vicinity, which was the 8th Battalion area. The 8th Battalion of the South Tipperary Brigade covered part of the Co. Waterford, and it was on the occasion of this visit that Lacey recruited the first members of the 8th Battalion into the No. 1 Flying Column. On the return of the Column to the vicinity of the Brigade Headquarters, I joined it and remained from then to the Truce as a member of the No. 1 Column.

The Column was about thirty-five strong at this time and some of the older members of it, who had been members since the beginning of the Column, were being returned to their own Battalion areas to start operations on their own in their Battalion areas. For instance, Brian Shanahan was sent back in the early Spring of 1921 to take charge of Grantstown Company, and was later appointed Battalion Commander in that area after the death of Sean Duffy, who had been Battalion Commander up to then; Seán Fitzpatrick, who had acted as 2nd-in-command and Adjutant of the Column, was withdrawn for posting as Brigade Adjutant; the three

East Limerick Brigade men, John Joe O'Brien, Bill Fraher and Seán Lynch, who had been with the South Tipperary Column up to then, were claimed and returned to their own Brigade in East Limerick; Tim Crowe was sent back as Battalion Quartermaster, 4th Battalion; and Micky Fitzpatrick, who had been wounded, was never able to resume duty with the Column up to the Truce; but some of the original members of the Column, such as, Micky Ryan (Bulleen) and the two lads from Dunohill continued to serve with the Column along with Lacey who remained all the time as the Column Commander. The original Column had been formed almost entirely from officers of the old 4th Battalion with, of course, the addition of the three East Limerick men mentioned and, as this had the effect of robbing the units of their best officers, these were now being returned to their Companies and Battalions. I do not know whose idea this was, or who issued the orders for the re-organisation of the Column, but I imagine it was from Brigade Headquarters. Seán Fitzpatrick was replaced as Adjutant and 2nd-in-charge by Jim Kilmartin. Jim Doherty became Column Quartermaster and Tom Lynch Intelligence Officer. Some time a little later the Column was further organised into two sections, placing the men roughly according to their units of origin. Pak Dalton was put in charge of the men from the western end of the Brigade area, and I think it was Perie Tobin who was the Commander of the section embracing the men from the eastern side.

This re-organisation of the Column into sections and squads took place, as far as I can remember, about March of 1921 and was for the purpose of ease of control in administrative matters, such as, billeting and tactical, in the course of operations. The squad was made

up of three to four men under a squad leader, and the number of squads in each section varied with the strength of the Column from time to time.

While the No. 1 Column of the South Tipperary Brigade were very active all the time, the number of actual engagements with the enemy does not quite represent their activities because, for every one of these engagements, there were numerous times when the Column planned an operation, or waited in ambush for an enemy that failed to turn up or for some reason the planned engagement did not come off. Such disappointments were common, so that we looked upon it as a lucky event when an expected enemy party actually came along into our prepared positions.

The first active engagement I can remember clearly after joining the Column was an attack on an enemy convoy which usually conveyed foodstuffs and supplies to an enemy garrison at Clonbeg in the Glen of Aherlow from Tipperary. The local intelligence report we got stated that this party usually went out from Tipperary at a certain time, the supplies being carried on a four-wheeled horse waggon and escorted by ten to twenty soldiers who moved in extended order in advance and in rear of the vehicle. The report said, however, that on the return journey the escort usually travelled on the vehicle, which was then unladen otherwise, and it was decided to attack them on the return journey when they would be all together in the vehicle.

The Column proceeded to the Turntable, above Ballyglass, and position of attack was selected. Four of five men were put into a position at the turn of the road from where they could halt the convoy. The

remainder of the Column, led by Dinny Lacey, moved up through the wood on the hillside to get dominating positions from there to the hilltop. While they were so engaged, the military party came along the road, long before it was due to arrive, and, to our surprise, they were in the same extended formation as they had been on the outward journey. There were only three or four soldiers slightly in advance of the vehicle, the remainder being extended along the road behind it. The instructions Lacey had given were that fire would not be opened by our men until he himself gave the signal by opening the fire.

As the situation developed, however, there were only the vehicle itself and the three or four soldiers near it actually within the ambush position, the remaineder being spread along the road, and Lacey, with the bulk of the Column, was not yet in position for the attack. The four or five men he had left in position at the road-side were armed mostly with shotguns. Some of these must have exposed themselves accidentally and were seen by the military who suddenly ran for cover, and shots were exchanged. Some of the soldiers were seen to fall after the fire of our fellows, and the horses attached to the waggon bolted out of control, plunging over the fence where our fellows were. The waggon was held by the fence and the horses swung in mid-air from the tackling. The two horses were shot, to take them out of trouble. As the rest of the Column did not know what was happening, they did not come into action at all. The remainder of the military party took cover in the same wood where our fellows had gone to select position, and so there was nothing to do at this stage but to retire gracefully from the position. I think that action took place early in March, 1921.

Later on in the same month - March, 1921 - we had an almost similar occurrence at Garrymore. On that occasion we were attacking a military party bringing foodstuffs from Cahir to a British outpost at Clogheen. This party too had been reported as usually returning to Cahir on the truck which brought out the supplies. Both the No. 1 and No. 2 South Tipperary Columns were at hand for this attack, but neither of them were in position when the enemy party came along, two hours earlier than their normal time for returning. There was a running fight for a while with the military, the military running along the road and our fellows running along in the fields, and exchanging shots as they went. Some of the military were reported as wounded on that occasion but, outside of that, nothing happened. The No. 1 Column was then withdrawn from that position. The No. 2 Column was away up in Garrymore and did not come into the action at all, except that I suppose they heard the shooting. The O/C of our Column, Dinny Lacey, and his 2nd-in-command, Jim Kilmartin, were inside in a little farmhouse having their dinner when the shooting began, so that what action there was, took place on the initiative of the men who happened to be in outpost position at the time.

On our return from that operation, it appeared that we were being guided by men who did not know the country very well. We returned at right-angles to Clogheen in the direction of Ballyboy on a by-road which ran between the main Cahir-Clogheen road and the Cahir-Ardfinnan road. While we were moving along in the course of our retirement in the triangular strip of country enclosed by these roads, a motor car, driven by a man in civilian attire, came up to the rere of the Column. The car was held up, one of

the members of the Column got into the car with the driver, and they drove on towards the head of the Column. Here Seán Downey recognised the driver of the car as District Inspector Potter of the R.I.C. Downey said, "That's District Inspector Potter, the so-and-so that gave me three months in jail!". Potter was thereupon placed under arrest and his car was taken over. We proceeded towards Ballyboy with our prisoner.

Near Ballyboy a military party, or patrol, of about twenty-five soldiers was observed in extended formation coming towards us and moving for the possession of a ruined or disused house. The soldiers were coming at the double to gain possession of the ruined house, but Jim Doherty and a few of our lads got there before them and opened fire on the troops from the house. The military party retired when they were fired on, and it was evident that, as well as their appearance being a surprise to us, they were equally surprised by our appearance. There was rather a deadlock position then, the military being unwilling to advance against our fire, while we, on the other hand, could find no covered way to approach downhill towards their position. We found also that we had been advancing nearer to the enemy post at Clogheen instead of away from it, as we thought, our guides apparently having mistaken the lie of the land. At that point, Potter's car was abandoned and, taking the prisoner with us on foot, we retired in the Tiobrad direction. We travelled a couple of miles before we stopped to look for something to eat, and we billeted in the Newcastle area that night.

Next morning we were awakened early by one of our scouts who reported the presence of several lorry-loads of military and Black and Tans in our vicinity, scattered

around as if meaning to attack. However, we made our escape from there without a shot being fired and without their being aware of our presence, retiring in the direction of Aughavoolavann.

I think it was on the night following the day of his capture that D.I. Potter made his one and only attempt to escape. In the dusk of the evening he made a sudden dash away from the guard that was placed over him and, in a flash, disappeared in the dusk. The whole Column was spread out in search of him, and it took us about a hour before we finally found him, a few fields away, standing with his back against a bush. He had no idea where he was and could do nothing but wait until he was recaptured. I am afraid the first of our lads who caught up with him may have handled him roughly, or spoken to him with more force than courtesy but, following this, he gave Lacey his solemn assurance that he would never again try to escape. Notwithstanding this, however, the guard always took precautions to see that he did not, but from then on he apparently resigned himself to remain as our prisoner and never made any attempt to escape after that.

During the time Potter was in our custody, we had grown to like him and he, in turn, had developed a certain respect for us. He was undoubtedly a gentlemanly sort of fellow. It was evident that, living amongst us, he had developed a new and heightened view of the I.R.A., while hitherto he had looked upon the I.R.A. as composed of a lot of hooligans, but now he realised that those represented by his captors were men of honest and sincere purpose. The mutual liking and respect that had grown up between us made it very embarrassming to carry out his execution when this became necessary, due to the refusal of Dublin Castle to

release or reprieve Volunteer Trainor, who was executed in Dublin, in exchange for him.

D.I. Potter was executed at a place called Cloneagh in Co. Waterford. The whole Column was there at the time, but there were only five or six men picked for the firing party. Nobody wanted this job and, in fact, one of the men on the firing party was so worked up about it that he accidentally shot himself in the leg in the course of the execution. I was perhaps somewhat tougher in my outlook at the time than most of them, but even I felt how hard it was to execute a man whom we respected and who had lived with us for so long. A short time after this we were waiting for a military party to come along when, from some information Lacey had got, he remarked to Downey, "There's a D.I. in this party". Overhearing him, I could not help interjecting, "If there's a D.I., we'd better shoot him when we get him and not be crying about him afterwards!" Lacey took exception to my remark, which was merely facetious, and I was penalised afterwards by being selected for some tough assignments.

The Column had a hotchkiss gun for some time and it had been used at Glenbower. I believe it came from General Headquarters in Dublin, but the men who were assigned to use it knew very little about its mechanism. The men who carried it around and looked after it were ex British Army men, but they had no experience of hotchkiss guns and it would take them the best part of a day to dismantle and re-assemble it for cleaning and suchlike. As a result of this, the rest of the Column had very little confidence in this gun. My brother, Seán Kennedy, who was in business in Kanturk and had served with Seán Moylan's Column in Cork, came on a

holiday - I think it was St. Patrick's Day, 1921 - to Dunohill. We found that he had expert knowledge of the hotchkiss gun as he was able to dismantle and re-assemble the gun in about ten minutes, whereupon Lacey claimed him from the North Cork Column. Seán returned to Kanturk for a short time to collect his belongings, and about the first week of April he joined the Tipperary No. 1 Column. From then on, we had an expert machine-gunner, and the Column developed some confidence in this weapon. Seán afterwards became the Divisional Machine-gun Officer when the Division was formed. The only type of belt we had for the gun was the strips carrying seventeen rounds each and, of course, our ammunition was very scarce and bad at that. We did not realise how bad it was until afterwards when we found a lot of misfires.

Seán Kennedy had had experience of different kinds of terrain in the North Cork area, and I think it was on this account he was sent to select an ambush position at Barnagh on the main Clonmel-Cahir road. We had learned that a daily patrol of two lorry-loads of Black and Tans and R.I.C. passed along this road and it was intended to attack them with all the forces at our disposal. For this purpose, the No. 2 Column was called on to assist us in the operation. We occupied the position Seán had selected for a matter of some four hours one day. At this stage it was evident that something had happened and that the enemy were unlikely to appear, and so we abandoned the position. We heard afterwards one story that the enemy on their way from Clonmel had been warned of our presence by a beggarman passing the road, and another explanation given was that an accident had happened to one of the lorries, or it became badly punctured, or something,

so that they had to return to Clonmel, but for whatever reason, they did not turn up at any rate. Looking at the position in later years, I realise that it was not so good as we thought at the time. The fire of the No. 2 Column under Sean Hogan would have been directed in such a way as to cause casualties amongst our men who were occupying the low ground on the north of the road.

Shortly after this, we were at Drangan when a very sad accident occurred. We were adjourned for lunch after some training which had gone on in the forenoon, and Dinny Saddleir and Jim Norris, two ex British Army men, began practising bayonet fighting, but it seems that one of the rifles was loaded and it ended with Norris shooting Saddleir dead. Norris was placed under arrest after this accident and sent to Brigade Headquarters. Saddleir was O/C of the 7th Battalion and was not attached to the Column except when it was in his area, when he remained with it and took part in any of its activities. It was the custom when the Column moved into a particular Battalion area for the Battalion Commander of that area to remain with the Column until it left his area. It was in Clooneen near Drangan that Saddleir was shot. He was buried that night in a home-made box in an adjacent graveyard where his remains lay until some time during the Truce period when they were removed to his family burial ground. An Inquiry into the affair was held at Brigade Headquarters which cleared Norris of any intent to kill and found that the shooting was purely accidental, whereupon Norris was returned to the Column.

The No. 1 Column was still together, intact, when about the 1st June, 1921, there was a big round-up in the area by British forces. The British troops formed

temporary posts at Ardmayle school and other places from which they were beginning to comb the whole area,, in search of the Column I suppose. That occasion sticks in my memory because we were in Clonoulty at the time and we were attacked by bulls on the lands of P.J. Maher. We had great difficulty getting away from them without having to shoot some of them, but we did not want to fire any shots as we were then a mile or a mile and a half from Ardmayle school where we knew the British military were. We had some difficulty that time in evading capture. The days were so long that we could only move about after nightfall and hope that our position in the daytime was sufficiently secure to avoid its being located by the military search parties. We did, however, evade the British forces successfully on this occasion.

Shortly after this, it was decided to reduce the strength of the Column by sending some of the members to form small Columns in their own Battalion areas. In this way we hoped to increase the enemy's difficulty in locating us by spreading the search over a wider area, and it would be easier for these smaller Columns to conceal themselves as well as to get food and shelter.

It was about this time that we very narrowly escaped another big round-up which took place in the Ballypatrick area, near Kilcash. We had spent two nights in this place and, in the morning just as we left, the whole place was surrounded. We were not aware of any impending attack when we were leaving. However, we got away. It was following this that the men from the 4th Battalion area, with Jim Kilmartin who was then the Column O.C., (Denis Lacey was on the Brigade Staff) went back to our own Battalion area where we carried on

operations in perhaps a smaller way.

While we had other minor engagements at Thomastown, etc., the most important one that occurred after the dispersal of the Brigade Column was on the 3rd July, 1921, at Boherdotha. About a fortnight previously the Solohead Company had held up a train between Limerick Junction and Limerick, and had emptied off it a lot of goods listed as contraband under the Belfast Boycott which was then in force. Orders had been issued by G.H.Q. through the Brigades to prevent the handling or trading of goods of certain Belfast firms as a counter to the pogroms which had taken place there, and it was in carrying out this order that the Solohead Company had held up the train, and had thrown off a lot of stuff reported as Belfast goods, including brandy, whiskey, bass and chocolate. The R.I.C. and Black and Tans from the post at Oola nearby had come on the scene after our men had left and made free use of the liquor that was lying around, returning to their station in a highly intoxicated state. When this was reported to Kilmartin, he decided that it would be worth while trying this again, but we would be waiting for the Black and Tan party when it arrived.

On the morning of the 3rd July Jerry Fitzpatrick and Seán Kennedy went to Limerick Junction and joined the goods train due to leave. They held up the engine driver about two hundred yards on the south side of Boherdotha bridge. Very little goods were taken off the train - just sufficient to attract the R.I.C. and Tans out from Oola when the hold-up was reported to them. Having allowed the train to proceed, we adjourned to the neighbouring houses for breakfast, and afterwards took up positions in the vicinity of the bridge to await the expected approach of the Black and Tans along the railway line.

One man was left on the bridge to observe the approach of the enemy and give us the warning. In due course he reported the approach of ten or twelve R.I.C. and Tans coming along the railway line towards us from Oola direction, and later he reported that some of the Tans were getting up on the bridge. This meant that the section of our men, of which I was one, in Mullaghney's boreen would be under enemy observation. We had to retreat from there so as not to give away our ambush position too soon. We retired to a position around a bend in the boreen where we would not be observed from the top of the bridge. The Tans eventually went down off the bridge and proceeded along up the line to where the train had been held up and where Kilmartin and the other men were waiting for them.

When Kilmartin and his men opened fire, we had to double back to get to our position on the bridge. Actually we had as far to run to get to the bridge from where we were, as the R.I.C. had to get to the bridge from where they were, and the result was that, by the time we got on to the bridge, the enemy were actually passing under it. Three or four of us, including Denis Ryan and myself, rushed to the parapet just as the last Tan was going under it, and we fired straight down at him. It was as easy from that position to hit him with a stone as with a shot from a rifle, but we only succeeded in shooting him in the heel, which took the boot off him as well as wounding his heel, and he remained there as a casualty, but the others ran on. The others had got about forty or fifty yards beyond the bridge on the other side when the Sergeant in charge ordered them to take cover and return the fire. They got into the long grass along the railway and concentrated

their fire on the bridge, so that we had difficulty in finding a suitable place from which to fire at them.

Of the squad of men on the bridge, only two of us could find suitable places from which we could fire on the enemy on the railway. One was a narrow piece of wall of about four feet and then an open fence with only bushes on it, no bank or anything to give fire cover. The exchange of fire, therefore, was confined to Bill Allen and myself. Bill could fire from his left hand, but he could not get into a left-handed position because I was in his way, and I could not, with reasonable safety, cross to the other side of the bridge, as the enemy fire covered the whole of the top of the bridge and they were keeping it up pretty regularly. However, we shot two of them dead, including the Sergeant in charge - Sergeant Johnston. Both Allen and myself claimed to have shot the Sergeant, as apparently both of us had fired at him. During this exchange of fire, both Allen and myself, as we re-loaded, had to rise up in full view of the enemy in order to fire, while the enemy fire was splintering the stones around us.

After a while, I found that my rifle was not functioning. Seventeen consecutive rounds, which I had loaded, misfired although each time I had pulled back the striker and tried a second time to fire with each round. I did not know at this time whether it was the rifle or the ammunition was at fault. I asked Allen to give me some of his ammunition, but he said he had none to spare. I ran back off the bridge towards where our other fellows were and asked if any of them could give me some ammunition, but they only laughed at me and no one could offer me a round. As I was going off the bridge, I met

Kilmartin who shouted out an order to everyone, "Fill your magazines!". I remarked to him that I had nothing to fill my gun with, but he took no notice of me. He then shouted in a loud voice, "Surround them, lads!". This apparently was for the purpose of intimidating the R.I.C. and seemingly was successful, because the latter jumped from their positions and fled back along the line, providing an easy target for our men on the bridge. They fled along the line in the direction of Oola, which was about three-quarters of a mile away, stumbling, falling and getting up but, on the whole, seemingly avoiding the fire that was directed after them.

It was considered undesirable to pursue the fleeing enemy as some of them had gained and taken up positions on the main road bridge, and if we attempted to advance on them, we were liable to be trapped by any reinforcements coming along the main road. At any rate, two of the R.I.C. were killed, including the Sergeant, and one at least was wounded - the Black and Tan whose heel we had shot off. In addition to their arms, I believe we picked up others which were thrown away by the Tans who fled.

No reprisal was attempted after this attack, although we expected that there might be, but I expect it was because of the imminence of the Truce, which occurred about eight days later, and I suppose the enemy posts had been warned not to carry out reprisals at this time. Later that evening, however, aeroplanes were observed over the area, apparently searching for some trace of the I.R.A. who had carried out this attack, but we escaped their observation. We were back in the direction of Dunohill at this time.

On the Sunday before the Truce - that would be 10th July - we had got orders for the dismantling and

destruction of all telephone and telegraph communications in the area, and Kilmartin, Jim Doherty, Seán Kennedy and myself were in Lattan where we were dismantling the telephone installed on a licensed premises, when suddenly a couple of lorry-loads of R.I.C. and Tans came along. It was most unusual for them to pass this premises, which was also a post office, without calling in for refreshments and we expected that we would have to fight our way out, but on this occasion they passed without stopping. Again I presume that they had got warning of the Truce which was to come into operation the following day.

On the morning of the 11th July, the general order that was issued to all I.R.A. units was carried out in every Company area. This order was to the effect that intense activity would be shown everywhere, such as, sniping enemy posts, or any such operation that would indicate the presence of the I.R.A., up to twelve noon on that day when the Truce would come into operation. So from daylight until twelve noon on the 11th July, every Volunteer who had a gun sought for means to use it, and the Truce came with intense I.R.A. activity over the area. I understood at the time that this order came from General Headquarters in Dublin and was issued to us by the Brigade Headquarters, but I don't know anything about it except what I have stated. During that morning, though a lot of shooting at enemy posts took place, it was not a serious affair, as a lot of the shooting was done at long range and the enemy remained strictly indoors.

There were numerous incidents which I have not included in my story, and one of these occurs to me now. It was while I was with the Column and we were in the vicinity of Solohead. Jerry Fitzpatrick and I went

into Limerick Junction Station on a sort of a reconnaissance mission as we both knew every inch of the place. It had been reported to us that there was a Black and Tan on the premises of the station and, when we arrived, we were told he was on the Limerick train. We began to search the train but, as this Black and Tan was in civilian clothes, we did not identify him. Apparently he managed to conceal himself from the local Volunteers, who were with us to identify him, by drawing the blinds of something like that, so that we passed him by.

I am not sure whether it was on this, or some other occasion that we attacked two military policemen on the station at Limerick Junction, but I am inclined to think it was a separate occasion. These two military policemen were constantly in attendance on the platform, I suppose for the purpose of seeing that military personnel passing through conducted themselves properly. On that occasion I was acting as a protection for Bill Allen and Seán Downey who went on to the station platform and fired at the two military policemen. The policemen jumped down between the carriages. Allen and Downey, hearing a lot of shouting in one of the carriages, which in fact came from a lot of schoolboys returning off holidays or something like that, thought this was a military party and cleared off without pursuing the military policemen further. At this stage I came on the platform with a handkerchief across my face to prevent identification. One of the military policemen had been wounded had gone into the stationmaster's office. I tried to get in after him, but the door was locked and I would not be admitted.

Another incident, which occurred about the time Dinny Saddleir was shot, was the arrest, trial and

execution of a spy, named Boyle. I think he was a planter, land-grabber, a man who had taken over an eviction farm or something like that, in the Drangan area. He was suspected of acting as an enemy spy or tout, and proof having been obtained against him, he was arrested and tried. His sentence was sent to Brigade Headquarters for confirmation, and this came back with an order detailing the four men who were to carry out the execution. My name was amongst the four. This was, I believe, because of my facetious remark to Lacey about D.I. Potter. Boyle was shot at Killousty, and his body was labelled as a spy and left there. I was not present at the courtmartial, so I do not know what evidence was produced against him. I was merely detailed as one of the execution party and carried out my orders.

SIGNED: Andrew Kennedy
(Andrew Kennedy)

DATE: 25th June 1954
25th June 1954.

WITNESS: J.V. Lawless Col.
(J.V. Lawless) Col.