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ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BURO STAIRÉ MILEATA 1913-21

No. W.S. 1044

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS.

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 1,044

Witness

Patrick Devitt,
Cloneen,
Kilnaboy,
Co. Clare.

Identity.

Vice O/C. 5th Battalion Mid-Clare
Brigade.

Subject.

Mid-Clare Irish Volunteers,
1913-1921.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil

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ORIGINAL

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NO. W.S. 1044

STATEMENT BY PATRICK DEVITT

Bloncen Kilnaba
~~Ballyaha, Kilfenora~~, Co. Clare - formerly
Vice O/C. 5th Battalion, Mid-Clare Brigade

I was born in February 1890 at Cahersherkin, Kilfenora. I was the eldest of a family of five, the second youngest of whom was Martin, afterwards Vice Commandant, Mid Clare Brigade, and killed in action against a party of R.I.C. on 23.2.1920, at Fermoyle, Inagh, Co. Clare. I was six years older than Martin.

My father was a small farmer; my mother died when we were very young with the result that I was taken away from school at an early age to take her place in the household. Martin was kept at school until he was about 15 or 16 years of age and he was then sent into Ennistymon to business. I remained on the farm and still follow that occupation though where I now live is a place which was given to me by the Land Commission. It is much bigger than the parental holding which I surrendered.

My first connection with any national movement commenced when I joined the Irish Volunteers on their formation in Ennistymon towards the end of 1913. I remained a member of that unit until the Redmondite Split in the autumn of 1914, after which I joined the Cloonagh Irish Volunteers. I cannot now recall who the officers of that company were, but I am definite that they included my brother Martin, Seamus Conneally and Austin Rynne. There was something more sincere, more determined and more active about the Cloonagh Company than the unit in Ennistymon. Though it was much smaller in numbers and had not any of the prominent or business people associated with it, yet I was soon convinced that the men in charge had a definite military objective in mind; less attention was paid to the spectacular side such as uniforms and public parades and more instruction was given on extended order drill, skirmishing and shooting exercises. The company acquired a

couple of .22 rifles and usually on Sundays mobilised at Arranmore for target practice with those guns. Another fact which impressed me about the Cloonagh Company was that almost from the start it was made clear to every man that at the first suitable moment the Irish Volunteers would go into armed insurrection against British rule. Practically every Sunday my brother, Martin, would lay special stress on this particular subject - we are getting ready to fight against the foreigner and to finish the job the Fenians set out to do. In addition to the Sunday mobilisations, the company also met at least one night each week for drill. We had as instructors - not trained ex-British army men - but our own Volunteers who made a serious study of training manuals and were quite efficient in imparting the knowledge they so acquired to their comrades.

Between 1914 and Easter 1916, I can only remember one outsider coming into the area for training and organisational purposes and that was Ernest Blythe, who arrived some time in 1915. He did not stay very long. He delivered a few lectures or speeches, reviewed the company and took us on some long route marches on which we were generally pursued by a couple of R.I.C.

At Easter 1916, I was among the men of the Cloonagh Company which mobilised at Ardmore House which in later years became popularly known as 'Liberty Hall' - then a disused building - but my memory of the details of what occurred are rather hazy. I do know that we collected arms around the parish and that orders as to what should be done were awaited, but they never arrived. After the 1916 Rising the Cloonagh Company did not melt away. We met and drilled as often as heretofore, but in more secluded places outside of the eyes of the police. By the time of the general release of the Irish Volunteer leaders from English prisons. I would say that the company's strength was greater than before the Rising.

A branch of Sinn Féin was formed at Cloonagh in August or September 1917, and though I became a member and attended most of the meetings held up to the Truce, I held no official post in the Club.

In the East Clare by-election in July 1917, the Cloonagh Company with its band attended meetings in several centres in that constituency. I was present at such occasions at Lisdoonvarna, Quin, Ennis and Corofin. In the latter place the company, which marched there about 50 or 60 strong, was expected to meet with a hostile reception, but on the contrary, before the day was over, I think, they won over a good deal of support for the Sinn Féin candidate, Mr. de Valera. They were a splendid body of men, sober, sincere and ready to discuss and capable of explaining the policy of Sinn Féin to people in a district where the Irish Party had a good grip, but I think it was their exemplary behaviour that impressed most of all. On election day, too, the company was in the constituency in full strength and took part in the conveyance of voters to the booths and providing protection around the polling stations.

It was towards the end of 1917, when there was a re-organisation of the Cloonagh Company, that I was appointed either 1st or 2nd Lieutenant of the unit. I held that rank until June 1921, when I was made Vice O/C. of the battalion (5th - Mid Clare) after Tom Shalloo was arrested. I remained in that post until the Truce. Owing to the lapse of time and defective memory I am not able to supply the names of the men who comprised the staff of the 5th Battalion, except that the O/C. was Andy O'Donoghue, Lickeen, Kilfenora, when I became Vice O/C.

Frank Barrett was then O/C. of the Mid Clare Brigade; Peadar O'Loughlin Vice O/C., and Sean O'Keefe, Quartermaster.

As Lieutenant of the Cloonagh Company I assisted the company captain at the weekly parades and drilling and took charge of the half-company - Cahersherkin - when it met for drill on week nights. The company did not receive any instruction in firearms as a unit, as we had not enough guns for that purpose, but from time to time a rifle or an R.I.C. carbine was used to demonstrate the principal parts to the different sections and also for aiming and loading these guns.

Though many Volunteer companies in Co. Clare became involved in cattle drives and land trouble towards the end of 1917, or early in 1918, the Cloonagh Company was never involved in such incidents. Maybe I should say that the district was one of small farmers and that there were no ranches or big estates which might involve us in that type of trouble.

The first armed clash which I had with the British forces arose, strange to say, from internal dissension within the ranks of the Volunteers. I am not conversant with the facts which led to this dissension, but at any rate, a group of Volunteers in the Mid Clare Brigade area refused to recognise the official officers of the brigade and formed what became known as the 'Independent Brigade'. Of course, this splinter organisation was not recognised by G.H.Q. in Dublin, but they appear to have created a good deal of trouble in the Mid Clare Brigade area, which was not in the national interests at the time. These dissentient elements were almost entirely confined to the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Battalions, and only a few individuals in the 4th, 5th and 6th Battalions were involved.

As I already have stated, I do not know very much about this 'Independent Brigade', or its activities, but whatever happened, it was decided at a meeting of the brigade staff of the Mid Clare Brigade that my brother Martin, then Vice O/C. of the Brigade, should lead a column drawn from the 4th and 5th Battalions into one of the ('Independent Brigade' strongholds,

the district between Connolly and Kilmaley, to disarm certain people who were behaving in a way that was regarded as harmful to the Volunteer movement - I think I heard at the time that the people in question were using the 'splinter body' to suit their own welfare in connection with local land disputes.

In any event, a party of between 30 and 40 armed Volunteers from the 4th and 5th Battalion under the command of my brother went on foot into the Kilmaley district in January 1920, and conducted a number of raids for arms. About five or six shotguns were seized. To the best of my recollection, the party spent about two days on this job. It was a long journey back to our own homes and, as a punitive measure, the Kilmaley people were compelled to take us home on outside cars and traps comprising a total of 10 or 12 such vehicles.

As we passed Crowe's Bridge on the road between Connolly and Inagh, a steep hill had to be climbed. We alighted from the vehicles to make the load lighter for the horses and ponies. Some of the men left their guns on the cars and traps and fell into groups behind them. Suddenly a motor car^{or van} came around a bend without warning. The leading Volunteers, being taken unawares, immediately ran for cover without being able to bring their guns with them. At that stage Donal Lehane of Lahinch and myself were walking side by side about 30 or 40 yards behind the vanguard of the party. The motor car had suddenly stopped and our men shouted 'police' or 'military' I forget which. Lehane and myself jumped inside the fence, while others further behind us also got into the fields on the north side of the road. My brother, Martin, rallied those behind us and led them to the top of a piece of rising ground where he could see and engage the intruders. In the meantime Lehane and I, along with a couple of others who were near us, opened fire on the motor car. As soon as we did so, the occupants, who were then taking some of the guns that were

abandoned on the leading cars of our convoy to the motor car ran back to their vehicle and got inside. The motor car reversed along the road to Inagh until it got out of range and then drove off as rapidly as possible to Ennis. In the car was the O/C. of the British military for the Co. Clare, Colonel Cotton. It appears he was making a tour of inspection on the occasion.

Unfortunately that incident was to be a regrettable one for my family, as it led to the death of my brother, Martin. The occupants of the motor car - I'm not certain if they were all soldiers or mixed with soldiers and R.I.C., captured three or four shotguns and my brother vowed that ere long he would recover at least as many guns from the enemy. There were no casualties on either side on this occasion.

Soon after this encounter I received word from my brother, Martin, to collect two rifles from Andy O'Donoghue, Lickeen, Kilfenora, then O/C. 5th Battalion, and to take them to McGoff's outside Inagh. The dispatch was brought to me by one of the Inagh Volunteers whose name I don't remember. O'Donoghue took me to a dump near his own home and there handed me two police carbines and about 100 rounds of ammunition. Accompanied by the dispatch carrier I went on foot to McGoff's and there found, waiting for me, my brother, Martin, Ignatius O'Neill, O/C. 4th Battalion, and Patrick (Fake) Lehane of Lahinch. It was then daybreak. I got a meal at McGoff's.

We left McGoff's around 9 a.m. and went on to Fermoy, where we arrived about 10 a.m. It had been reported by the Inagh Volunteers that a patrol of four R.I.C. men from the Inagh Barracks had appeared lately along the road to the village of Connolly and my brother decided to attack them at Fermoy in the vicinity of the previous attack. We had some scouts from the Inagh Company with us and I can only remember the

surnames of two of them - Callaghan and Meeney. The scouts were posted between Fermoyle and Inagh and their job was to signal, by raising a flag, that the patrol was on its way. The scout with this flag was about 500 yards away from the two nearest members of the attacking party, Martin Devitt and Patrick Lehane, who had taken up positions behind a low fence running almost parallel to the road and about 100 yards from it on the south side. O'Neill and myself were placed 250 yards or so away from them behind a fence with a hedge of sally bushes and 100 yards from the cross where the road takes a sharp left turn southwards to the village of Connolly. From this cross, too, a by-road runs in a northerly direction past Maloney's house and eventually joins the main road from Inagh to Milltown-Malbay. Our position gave us command of about 150 yards of the road running from Inagh to Connolly which inclines a good deal from the cross to Duggan's house, a distance of about 260 or 270 yards. The land where my brother, Martin, and Pake Lehane were positioned roughly falls in line into the road level, but to the rear the ground rises gradually towards the summit of a hillock and provides no cover of any kind for a stretch of about 120 yards where a heavy growth of furze bushes up to the summit then gives cover from view.

The police patrol, up to the morning of the attack, usually travelled on their bikes in pairs about 50 yards apart. On that morning, however, when they arrived at Fermoyle, they were about 350 yards apart. It was then about 10.30. As soon as the two leading policemen had rounded the turn at the crossroads O'Neill and myself opened fire. We did not hit them and as soon as the firing started they threw themselves off the bikes and took cover in a trench on the far side of the road. We had no view of the second pair in the patrol, but it appears that when the shooting started they had passed the gate leading to Duggan's house and at once dismounted from their bikes, taking cover

behind the road fence facing my brother and Pake Lehane. From there they had a view also of where O'Neill and I were placed, though we could not see them. One of these two police was an excellent marksman.

After the initial burst of fire O'Neill and myself, seeing no target, ceased firing and we remained where we were for about 20 minutes. O'Neill then suggested that I should work my way along towards the road to try and find out what was happening and to ascertain whether the policemen at whom we fired were still there. I got into the next field on our left and crawled beside a fence which ran straight to the crossroads. I managed to get to the cross without being observed and from a gap on Maloney's side of the road fence was able to see the policemen's bikes and guns lying on the road. There was no sign of the two police. Just then a sheep dog came along the road and when it came as far as the bikes it stopped and began to look into the trench on the opposite side of the road. It was immediately chased off. I was thus able to ascertain where they were hidden. I made my way back to O'Neill and told him what I had seen. I also suggested that we should try to rejoin my brother and Lehane. O'Neill agreed. We made our way southwards under cover of fences and got over the Connolly road about 200 yards from the cross. Then we moved towards where our two comrades should have been. This meant that we had to enter rising ground and make ourselves exposed at certain points to the police if they were sufficiently watchful. Only at one point - crossing a gap - did we come under fire, but we managed to complete our journey without accident.

On arriving at our objective we found no trace of the other two men. We decided that I should go back to our original position and hold on there while O'Neill would try to locate the others. I got back all right and was there for some time when I saw O'Neill running from the fence where I had left him

across the open field towards the furze bushes around the summit of the hill. He was under fire and, feeling certain he must have been hit, I made up my mind to go to his assistance. On my way I heard him shouting "Clear out of here" and I suspected then that something had gone wrong. I continued towards where he had retreated. Sighting a house on the far side of the summit I headed towards it. This house belonged to the Meaney's, one of whom had been scouting for us.

In the house I found O'Neill sitting on a chair and blood flowing from him. He had been badly wounded in the thigh. He greeted me with the sad news "Oh, Paddy, Máirtín is knocked out". Lehane was also in the kitchen. O'Neill told me that Martin's body was lying alongside the fence a bit away from where we had left himself and Lehane that morning and that if I attempted to go near it the police would "blow my head off". After remaining in Meaney's for about 10 minutes or so - we were then about 700 or 800 yards from the road as the crow flies - and discussing our next line of action, O'Neill insisted that Lehane and I should clear out of the place. I asked what was going to become of himself and then Miss Meaney spoke up and said "We'll look after him. We'll hide him away and see that he is safe". O'Neill was adamant. He insisted that Lehane and myself should leave the locality as enough damage had already been done. Incidentally, O'Neill was engaged to Lehane's sister and he was anxious that no injury should befall Lehane, who was much younger and had been brought into the attack by O'Neill. In my case, too, he felt that as my brother had lost his life, it was wrong to expose me to any further risks. Both Lehane and myself left and travelled together across country until we came to Cullinagh, about three miles from Ennistymon. There we parted.

At Cullinagh, about 4 o'clock in the evening, I met

Seamus Conneally, formerly O/C. of the 5th Battalion, Mid Clare Brigade, and told him what had happened to Martin. I suggested to Conneally that he should go into Ennistymon to try and get a car to take O'Neill away from Fermoy. After leaving Conneally, instead of going home as intended, I changed my mind and made my way back again to Inagh determined to do something to safeguard O'Neill and get possession of Martin's body. As I approached Inagh I saw a big concentration of R.I.C and military there, so I avoided them and got into Dea's house in the vicinity of that village. In that house I met a schoolmaster named Cuddihy who knew me but did not let on that he did. He and the Deas assured me that O'Neill was safe and that my brother's body was in the hands of the Inagh Volunteers. I then went back to my home in Cahersherkin where I made no reference to my own people about the day's happenings. On the following day my father heard about the death of his son when he went to Ennistymon on some business errand.

Martin's body was hidden in a limekiln, guarded by the Inagh Company until it was confined on the night subsequent to the day of his death. A meeting of the brigade staff was held in the meantime and they came to the conclusion that his death should be kept a secret from the British forces and that until a more suitable time his body should be hidden away without being given a christian burial. I was very strongly opposed to this decision and strove hard to have him buried in the family grave, but I had to yield to pressure from my superior officers. That night, Volunteers from all over the Mid Clare Brigade area assembled around Inagh and they marched in military formation from Inagh to Cloonagh, Ennistymon, after the coffin.

The parade was dismissed and the Volunteers ordered home before the coffin was hidden away. A party of thirteen including some of the most prominent men in the Mid Clare

Brigade had been selected to convey the remains to the temporary resting place, a turf stack in part of the Cloonagh district known as "Russia". I remained for this very unpleasant part of the night's work which did not conclude until the early hours of the morning. Every man present was warned to keep the details of what they had participated in as a strict secret, especially the place where the body was hidden.

Three weeks or so afterwards a party of R.I.C. and military under the District Inspector from Ennistymon drove in lorries direct to the turf stack and removed the body to the military barracks. An inquest was held and the verdict returned that "Martin Devitt died while fighting for the freedom of his country" or something to that effect. After the inquest the body was handed over to our family. I regret to have to record that the Parish Priest of Ennistymon refused to allow the remains into the Parish Church and they had to be taken to the church in the local Workhouse. Next day there was a military funeral. Of course, it was a huge affair, Volunteers attending from all parts of the country. There was a firing party at the graveside in Cloonagh and there was no interference by the British forces.

Naturally, the fact that the R.I.C. and military were able to discover my brother's body by driving straight to the spot where it had been concealed gave rise to a lot of speculation as to how they received the information. It is still the subject of much discussion among the people who were members of the I.R.A. at that time. I remain convinced that among the thirteen men who were present at "Russia" when the coffin was placed in the turf stack there was a spy. I can now only remember the names of a few of the thirteen men in question.

I am of opinion that Martin's death had a very adverse effect on the subsequent activities of the Mid Clare Brigade. He stood out among the men of that unit for his bravery and

resource. He was quicker than any other person that I knew to see and seize an opportunity for hitting at the forces of occupation and he had a way for getting men to do what he wanted without being obtrusive or dictatorial.

I should have mentioned earlier that in 1919 under my brother's supervision we started making home-made bombs in my father's place at Cahersherkin. A few of the Volunteers around the townland helped at this work. The casings for these bombs were large sized treacle boxes and disused metal pots. They were filled with scrap iron round a stick of gelignite to which a detonator and fuse was fixed. The fuse protruded a couple of inches outside the end of the case and ran through a hole in the cover which was then sealed and bound to the container. The finished articles varied in weight from one to five pounds according to the size of the container and the bomb was detonated by the rather primitive method of applying a lighted match to the end of the protruding fuse which, of course, we were able to time fairly accurately.

We experimented with some of these bombs and they possessed considerable destructive value, but the only occasion when it was decided to put them to use against the British was in the attack on Connolly R.I.C. Barracks on 21st July 1919. I did not directly take part in that attack, but I brought a supply of the bombs from my own place to Cloonagh where arrangements were made to have them collected and brought on to Connolly by the captain of the Ennistymon company, John Joe Neilon. I am not able to say exactly what happened which caused these bombs not to be delivered, but I know that they never arrived and that the attack had to be called off after a half hour or so as the men in charge were depending on the bombs as their most effective weapons.

After my brother's (Martin) death the next armed engagement in which I was involved was Ruan Barracks which was

captured and destroyed on October 14th 1920. I was not one of the party who actually entered the barracks on that occasion as I had been detailed to form one of a section of 5 or 6 which was placed in guard of a cross roads outside the village of Ruan. I was armed with a rifle and the men who were along with me were also armed, but I cannot now remember who they were. In fact, I did not enter the village of Ruan at all because as soon as the attack was over and the barracks destroyed, we got orders to disperse and I went off home along with some others from my own district.

Some two months or so after Ruan I was among a party of about 60 men who were brought into Tullagha and Lickeen, Kilfenora, for the purpose of forming a Brigade Flying Column. Most of the brigade officers were present and the personnel of the column was mainly drawn from the battalion and company officers of the 4th, 5th and 6th Battalions of the Mid Clare Brigade, although there were also some representatives from the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Battalions also. The column was billeted on the local houses for some days and received special training in fighting tactics especially in extended order drill and advancing and retreating under fire. Joe Barrett was the column O/C., and I cannot state if there were any other officers

The column was in great fettle and most anxious to come to grips with the enemy. On the morning of 17th December 1920, we were roused very early - I'd say about 3 o'clock - and after having something to eat we set off to Monreal, a locality about 4 or 5 miles from Ennistymon on the road to Ennis. A convoy of two lorries of British troops were expected to pass that way from Ennistymon for Ennis. At about 300 or 400 yards from the crossroads one of which runs over the Monananagh Bridge 300 yards or so to the west, it had been decided to attack the convoy. The operation was under the control of Joe Barrett, O/C. Operations for the Mid Clare Brigade.

I am not able to remember now even the approximate strength of the attacking party, nor can I supply any data regarding the disposition of the attacking party other than the section to which I was attached myself. This section was in charge of Andy O'Donoghue, O/C. 5th Battalion, and included Sean McNamara, O/C. 6th Battalion, Tom Shalloo, Vice O/C. 5th Battalion and Austin Geraghty of the Cloonagh Company. We were all armed with rifles and had about 50 rounds of ammunition apiece.

Our position was inside an animal shelter about 40 yards long and about 15 yards wide. This shelter was bounded by high stone walls, 7' or 8' high and a gap was made on the east side of it to provide a way of retreat. The western wall ran about 25 or 30 yards from the main road and almost parallel to it. We gutted this wall to provide loopholes to fire through. The boundary wall on the north or Ennistymon side ran from the main road up over rising ground past the shelter for several hundred yards to our rear and entirely cut off our view from the road coming from Ennistymon. Due to a rise in the ground from the road our position was roughly 15 or 20 feet above the road level.

On the other side of the road the land dropped gradually towards the Inagh river and afforded very little shelter. There were a couple of short stretches of low stone fences and rocks behind which others of the column were placed and it was down among them that the column commander took his post. I believe Ignatius O'Neill was in control of all the men on our side of the road.

We got into our positions before daybreak and it was an intensely cold morning, the ground being covered by a hard frost. Approaching 10 o'clock in the morning three lorries came along from Ennistymon. A shot was accidentally discharged before the first lorry came into the ambush position, but I don't know whether this affected the outcome of the ambush or not.

In my own opinion the site chosen by us was not suitable for engaging three lorries unless the vehicles came to us in very close formation. As it happened, there was a distance of about 200 yards between each of them. At any rate, as soon as the first lorry came within our view we opened fire. The driver was not hit as he managed to take his lorry past us towards the crossroads where cover was available. The occupants of the second lorry, which we were not able to get a shot at, got out and engaged us in using bombs and shortly made our position untenable. The ambush had not long started until we got the order to retire. As we were retreating we came under the fire of the occupants of the third lorry who had brought a machine gun on to a hill which commanded our line of retreat for a distance of four or five hundred yards. This was a trying experience and we were also faced with the danger of being cut off if the enemy advanced along the byroad which ran from the crossroad eastwards to our right. However, this did not happen and with the loss of only one man wounded in the knee we all got across the road into country where we had plenty of cover from fences and hedges.

After crossing the road we fell back towards Cloonagh and came under no serious fire from the enemy. The wounded man, Sean McNamara, was able to walk a distance of about a mile. He became weak from loss of blood. We took him to the house of a man named McCaw in Cloonagh, where he rested for a couple of hours. He was then taken under escort in a pony and cart with a bed of hay to Daly's of Caherminane, Kilfenora. There his wound was dressed by Mrs. Lysaght, afterwards my mother-in-law, and under cover of darkness he was brought to Cahir's of Ballydoura and I did not see him again for some months, when he was fully recovered.

In Monreal I fired a total of seven shots. I can give no estimate of the casualties inflicted on the British in that fight

but I am extremely doubtful that there was anything like sixteen of them killed and fourteen wounded as is claimed in some quarters.

Though there were a number of houses and haystacks burned by the British troops as a reprisal, there were no human lives taken.

From the date of the Monreal ambush to the Truce it was very hard to get a chance in North or Mid Clare to attack the enemy as they passed through the county with any hope of success. Their convoys were consistently strengthened and armoured vehicles were also brought into use. The best which could be done was to hamper their communications by road cutting, constructing road blocks and destroying telephone lines. Long distance sniping was also resorted to, but I'm not aware that such shooting ever inflicted a casualty.

I think the last operation in which I took part was at Ennistymon in January 1921. It was a Sunday morning when a small column of about ten men under Peadar O'Loughlin, Vice O/C. Mid Clare Brigade, and all armed with rifles entered the monastery grounds in that town and took positions there overlooking the police barracks. It had been decided to attack whatever police would be returning from Mass at about 9.30. The range was fairly long, about 400 yards, and the space within which the police were within view was not more than five or six yards.

As the police put in an appearance we fired, about three or four shots per man. Only one policeman was wounded.

On the political side of the movement I was nominated as one of the Sinn Fein candidates for the Ennistymon Rural District Council and Board of Guardians in elections which were held during 1920. All our candidates were returned unopposed. I was elected chairman of the Board of Guardians and subsequently as chairman of the Rural District Council in opposition to Seamus Conneally, also one of the Sinn Party, but who had

joined a splinter body of Volunteers in Clare which I have already described as the "Independent Brigade". On becoming chairman of the Rural District Council I was automatically a member of the Clare County Council.

I have not much to relate about the happenings on any of these local bodies as my recollection of the business that was transacted is now very poor. I know, though, that the meetings of the Rural District Council and Board of Guardians were held fairly regularly and that they were never much interfered with by the British authorities even though we refused to recognise the British administration. It was a different story entirely with the Co. Council after it came under Republican control. Most of its members were prominent Volunteers and, as well as being 'on the run', that body had clashed badly with the British Local Government Department over its refusal to strike a vote to provide for awards made in the British administration Courts under the Malicious Injuries Acts in favour of members of the British forces who had been injured while in conflict with the Volunteers. As a result the Co. Council meetings after a time had to be held secretly in different places through the county. Owing to various other calls on my time I did not attend many such meetings.

There was one incident which I omitted to refer to but which I would like to mention. It is the occasion of the burial of Tomas O'Loughlin, the veteran I.R.B. man and Sinn Feiner from Carron in North Clare. There was a big parade of Volunteers at the funeral under the command of my brother, Martin. Two or three R.I.C. entered the graveyard in Carron, to keep an eye on the proceedings. My brother detailed a party of about half a dozen Volunteers, including myself, to remove the police from the scene. We requested them to leave the graveyard, which they did, and conveyed them to the

road where they were detained by us until the burial services had concluded and then told they could go. There was no reaction by the police authorities.

I am recording this incident which took place, I think, in 1918, as it was the first occasion where the police representatives were openly challenged in our district in the presence of thousands of people. I believe it did a great deal to undermine the prestige of the R.I.C. among the civilian population.

Signed: Patrick Devitt

(Patrick Devitt)

Date: 2.12.54

2.12.'54.

Witness: D. Griffin

(D. Griffin)

