

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BUREAU STAIRS MILITARY 1913-21
No. W.S. 1097

ROINN



COSANTA.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS.

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 1,097

Witness

Joseph P. Morgan,
Knocklong,
Co. Limerick.

Identity.

Member of Mallow Battalion Column.

Subject.

Irish Volunteers, Mallow, Co. Cork,
1917-1923.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil

File No. S. 2390

Form B.S.M. 2

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21, 097
No. W.S. 1097

STATEMENT BY JOE MORGAN,

Knocklong, Co. Limerick.

I was born at Rathcoole, Co. Cork, on 24th February 1897. My father was a member of the Royal Irish Constabulary. He was transferred to Mallow shortly after I was born and I was reared and spent my boyhood days in that district.

There was a company of Irish Volunteers in Mallow prior to Easter Week 1916, but I was not a member. The arrest and deportation of Dan Hegarty and Chris O'Connell, who were the Volunteer leaders at the time, created a bit of a sensation in the town and, as in the case of many other young lads, stirred up my interest in Irish history.

I joined the Irish Volunteers early in 1917 before the release of the prisoners in June of that year. At the time new recruits to the Volunteers were generally accepted only when they had been 'vetted' by the officers of the unit and they were usually invited to join up. I was introduced into the Volunteers by Jack Cunningham who was, at the time, 1st Lieutenant of the Mallow Company. The strength of the unit about this time was between 50 and 60 and the officers who were elected were:- O/C. Owen Harold; 1st Lieutenant, Jack Cunningham; 2nd Lieutenant, Dan Looney.

In the early stages the only type of training carried out consisted of foot-drill and, later on, arms drill with wooden rifles. Training was usually carried out in the fields in the vicinity of the town and, occasionally, in the Town Hall. In addition to carrying out the normal training, and Volunteer activities during 1917 and 1918, all members of the unit took an active part in organising the political wing (Sinn Féin) of which organisation we were all members. There was also a strong branch of the Gaelic League in the town, supported mainly by the Volunteers and members of their families.

Early in 1918, the Mallow Battalion of the Irish Volunteers was formed. It consisted of the following companies:- Mallow, Mourneabbey, Analeentha, Ahadillane, Burnfort, Dromahane, Lombardstown, Ballyclough, Two-pot-house, and was attached to Cork Brigade. The battalion officers were, I think:- O/C. Liam Jones, Mourneabbey; Vice O/C. Jeremiah Buckley, Mourneabbey; Adjutant, Patrick McCarthy and Quartermaster, Tadhg Looney.

There were very few guns in the Mallow Company at this time. Some shotguns were held by Volunteers which were their personal property, while I think the company officers had revolvers. However, when conscription was threatened by the British, there was a big influx of recruits and there were, at one stage, in the middle of 1918, about 250 members in the company. During this period steps were taken to collect all shotguns and ammunition in the district and every known owner of a gun in the district was visited. As far as I can recollect, all guns, to the number of about 80, were surrendered voluntarily. These raids for arms were carried out by the company officers :- Owen Harold, Jack Cunningham, Dan Looney (in association with a number of Volunteers including witness - Joe Morgan - Jack 'Congo' Moloney, Dick Willis, Jackie Bolster and Tadhg Byrne. Most of the new recruits fell out of the organisation when the conscription scare had passed and the strength of the unit returned to normal - in the region of 60.

During the early part of 1918 (I think) we were very busy organising Sinn Féin in the district in association with P.C. O'Mahoney (later Secretary, Kerry Co. Board of Health) who was Sinn Féin organiser at the time. I was elected secretary of Mallow Sinn Féin Club at the time and, later on, I contested the Local Government election in the Sinn Féin interest and was elected a member of Mallow Urban

District Council and of the Board of Guardians under the Poor Law Acts. It was about this time that I first met Liam Lynch when I cycled to a Sinn Féin meeting in Fermoy.

There was no activity in the area in connection with the General Election in December 1918, as David Kent, Bawnard House, Castlelyons, was returned unopposed. However, with a party of about 30 Volunteers, mainly from Mourneabbey, but including six from Mallow, I went to Waterford City to carry out protection duty during the election. We remained in Waterford for about 4 days, I think, and during our stay we were involved in many clashes with the 'separztion' women (British soldiers' wives) and the members of the Redmondite Party who were bitterly opposed to the Volunteers.

About this time the Cumann na mBan organisation was started in the Mallow area. The pioneer members were, as far as I can recollect, Siobhán Creedon, Lil Jones and Madge Daly. These three were later very active in the Intelligence Service and in dealing with the transmission of dispatches as well as in arranging accommodation and refreshments for Volunteers passing through Mallow. Siobhán Creedon was employed in Mallow Post Office and was in a position to pass on messages of military importance, which passed through the Post Office to our Intelligence branch. It will be noted that, later on, she drew the attention of the Mallow I.O. to the intense military activity which preceded the attempt by the British to surround the ambush party (I.R.A.) at Mourneabbey in February 1921.

Up to January 1919, the Volunteer organisation in Cork consisted of one brigade of about 20 battalions. It was decided to divide the area into three brigades and our battalion (Mallow) was incorporated in Cork II Brigade which covered the area from Fermoy to Millstreet in North Cork. There were seven battalions in the new brigade, viz:

Mallow, Kanturk, Millstreet, Charleville, Fermoy, Castletown-roche and Newmarket. The brigade was established at a meeting held on January 6th 1919 and the first officers were:-

O/C.	Liam Lynch	Fermoy
V.O/C.	Dan Hegarty	Mallow
Adjt.	Tom Barry	Glanworth
Q.M.	George Power	Fermoy.

The usual drills and parades were held about this period and, in addition, there was plenty of activity in connection with the work of Sinn Féin as well as the other Irish Ireland organisations - Gaelic League, Gaelic Athletic Association. The success of Sinn Féin at the General Election in December 1918 gave a general boost to our activities. I should have mentioned that around this time the Volunteers were being trained in musketry, having some shooting practice with .22 rifle practically each weekend.

There was nothing out of the ordinary to report until 7th September 1919, when a party of British military, on their way to Church (Wesleyan), were attacked and disarmed in Fermoy. This operation was carried out by Liam Lynch and the Brigade staff. The following members of the Mallow unit took part in this operation:- Dan Hegarty (Brigade Vice O/C.), Bryan Kelly, Ned Waters, Owen Harold and Leo O'Callaghan who drove the car which took the party to Fermoy and back. On the day of the raid I cycled to Fermoy to attend a Sinn Féin meeting and on my return journey was accompanied by Dan Hegarty (Brigade Vice O/C.) who, in the excitement of the raid, apparently missed the Mallow car and was left behind. He was apparently provided with a cycle by some of the Fermoy Volunteers.

It was about this time that the Volunteers became known as the Irish Republican Army and all members took an oath to support and defend the Irish Republic against all enemies foreign and domestic. The raid at Wesleyan Church was one of the first, if not the first, major activity of the I.R.A.

Normal army activities (drilling, scouting, musketry and training in use of cover) continued in the early part of 1920 until the general order for the destruction of all evacuated R.I.C. posts as well as the papers held by Income Tax offices was issued. This general operation took place, I think, on 7th April 1920, but the only evacuated post in Mallow district was at Ballyclough. This post was demolished by members of Mallow Company under Jack Cunningham in co-operation with the members of the Ballyclough Company. I remember that when we examined this building before destroying it we found that holes had been made in the wall dividing it from the adjoining house, which was a licensed premises. These holes did not go the whole way through the wall but could have been completed in a very short time in an emergency. It would then be possible to push Mills bombs through the holes into the adjoining licensed premises which, it was apparently anticipated, would be used in the event of an attack on the barracks.

During the summer of 1920 several raids were carried out on the mails on the Mail Train between Cork and Dublin. At least two or three were carried out at Two-pot-house where the mails were removed from the train and transported by car to Brigade H.Q. which, at the time, was in Dromahane area. I think it was at Denis Curtin's, Ballysimon, Dromahane. Several members of the Mallow and Two-pot-house companies took part in these raids. The car was usually driven by Leo O'Callaghan, who had only been released a short time before from Cork Jail where he had been imprisoned in connection with the raid at the Wesleyan Church, Fermoy. This would be about July 1920 and at the time I was Q.M. of the Mallow Company.

About this time also we secured information from one of our members employed on the railway at Mallow that a large

consignment of petrol in two wagons was at Mallow awaiting transfer to the British military at Tralee. The information was passed on by Jack Barrett who stated that the petrol was in two-gallon tins. I was contacted by the Company O/C. (Jack Cunningham) and requested to arrange a dumping place. This I did at the disused pumping station belonging to Mallow Creamery on the banks of the Blackwater. With several other members of the unit, including Jack Cunningham, Tadhg Byrne, Jackie Bolster, Dick Willis, Pat Sullivan, 'Congo' Moloney, Jerh. Daly, witness (Joe Morgan) took part in this raid. The petrol was removed to the pre-arranged dump and some considerable time afterwards was removed across the river to Mallow Pike. This latter move must have been early in October 1920, because, I think, the petrol was in the original dump at the date of the raid on Mallow Barracks (September 28th 1920).

At the time of the capture of Mallow Barracks I was employed in a clerical capacity by Cleeves, Creamery Proprietors, Mallow - later to become The Condensed Milk Company (Ireland) Ltd. where I am still employed in the Knocklong Branch. I was also Q.M. of Mallow Company, I.R.A. On the instructions of the Company O/C. (Jack Cunningham) I took up a position in the Town Park, adjacent to the barracks, where I was to be ready to make available some of the petrol dumped in the pumping station (of which I held a key) and which had been obtained in the circumstances outlined in the previous paragraph. I left the office of my employers about 9.50 a.m. on the day of the raid and proceeded to the Town Park where I awaited instructions re the petrol supply, but received none. When the brigade column withdrew from the barracks after the successful raid and moved across the Town Park, I joined Jack Cunningham and Owen Harold and went 'on the run'. I was on active service

from this date until 1924. The material captured in this raid included:- 27 rifles, 2 Hotchkiss guns, 1 revolver, lances, swords, bandoliers, saddlery and several thousand rounds .303 ammunition.

I should have mentioned previously that a brigade flying column was formed early in September 1920. It was in training in Mourneabbey area under Ernie O'Malley, while Liam Lynch, Brigade O/C., was in charge of the party. It was while the column was in Mourneabbey that the possibility of capturing Mallow military barracks, which was occupied by a party of the 17th Lancers numbering about 50, was brought to the Brigade O/C.'s notice by Tadhg Byrne (Battalion I.O.). The matter had been mentioned to the latter by Dick Willis and Jackie Bolster who were employed in the barracks at the time. The first members of the brigade column were, as far as I can recollect:-

Liam Lynch - O/C.	Dan Vaughan, Boherbue
Ernie O'Malley (Training)	Tom Coughlan, Charleville
Jack Cunningham, Mallow	Patk. Healy, Millstreet
Paddy O'Brien, Liscarrol	Dan Shinnick, Castletownroche
Mick Sullivan, Meelin	Jim O'Neill do.
Paddy McCarthy do.	George Power, Fermoy
Dan Brown do.	Iar Condon, do.
	Dan Daly, Rathcormac.

As I was now 'on the run' I was recommended for the brigade column by Jack Cunningham while others who joined the column about this time were:- Dick Willis, Jackie Bolster, Leo O'Callaghan (all from Mallow), Con McCarthy (Charleville), Jerh. Donovan (Castletownroche). The column was billeted at Creggane where the course of training which had begun at Mourneabbey was continued. The training, which was carried out at Myles McCarthy's, Creggane, was in scouting, outpost duty, the use of cover, with some musketry practice for the new recruits. Having completed a week's training we lay in ambush for a few nights on the Lombardstown-Banteer road, but no enemy forces passed.

It was now about mid-November, or maybe later, when the column moved from Lombardstown to Kilcorney where we remained for a night. We moved next day to Millstreet area where we met a number of men from the Millstreet Battalion. We were then informed by Liam Lynch, who was in charge, that we were to move into Millstreet that night to attack the Black and Tans who usually paraded the streets at night. Arrangements were made to have the confessions of those taking part heard by Fr. Joe Breen who, at the time, was C.C. in Millstreet. The confessions were heard at Murphy's, Rathduane.

The attacking party, including the column, moved to the vicinity of Millstreet which was reached about 9 p.m. The party was broken up into several sections to each of which was attached a local Volunteer to act as guide. I was attached to a party which took up a position behind a wall in the market yard from which we were in a position to enfilade about one half the length of the Main St. (eastern end) while other parties moved into laneways and streets opening on to the other (western) half of the same street. Included in the party at the Market Yard were:- Dick Willis, and Jackie Bolster with Hotchkiss gun; Paddy Healy, Mick Healy and Joe Morgan (witness). The latter three were armed with rifles. We were in position for some time but did not see any Tans. We heard a shot at the other end of the street and a few minutes later we were informed that Paddy McCarthy had been shot. At the same time we got orders to withdraw. We had not been in position more than 15 minutes. We withdrew to a prearranged meeting place on the outskirts of the town where we found the other members of the party with the dead body of Paddy McCarthy. With some other members of the column I took the body of our dead comrade to Eugene O'Sullivan's, Gortnavehy, where it was waked. He was buried next night with full military honours from the column at Lismire.

With other members of the column witness returned to Millstreet on two nights following these incidents. They took up a position in a house opposite the R.I.C. Barracks but there was no enemy activity and no reprisals. We then withdrew to billets at the foot of the Clara Mountain where we were when news was received of the ambush at Kilmichael. Having regard to the possibility of increased enemy activity in the area where we were billeted, we were ordered to vacate our billets and move into Kanturk Battalion area. We remained in the latter area for a few days where we were billeted at Hanley's, Dandy's, Borheen, and a number of other houses.

During our stay in the Kanturk area 10 or 11 lorries of 'Auxies' arrived in the district. They halted on the main Kanturk-Killarney road. After a short time, one of the lorries moved up the boreen to one of the houses in which two members of the column from Kanturk were billeted. These men, who had left their rifles in the house, had gone home for a change of clothes. Although the driver of the lorry of 'Auxies' had to drive into the yard of this farmhouse in order to turn the lorry, the 'Auxies' never entered the house. When, however, they returned at a later stage on the same day to search the house, two girls in the house had dumped the rifles. This helps to show the co-operation which was forthcoming at all times and under all conditions from the general public both male and female. When this incident occurred I was in Hanley's, further up the boreen, in company with Dick Willis and Jackie Bolster who had the Hotchkiss gun. We moved out of Hanley's house into the adjoining fields where we took cover until the enemy withdrew after about an hour.

Early in December 1920 we moved into Ballyclough area where we billeted at Connor's and Barry's. Normal training

went on until the column disbanded just before Christmas 1920

In January 1921, I went to a training camp at Madd in Kanturk Battalion area where representatives from Newmarket, Millstreet, Kanturk, Mallow and Charleville battalions were undergoing a course of training in scouting, tactical exercises, the use of cover and the duties of outposts and scouts. The Mallow Battalion was represented at this camp by Jack Cunningham, Ned Murphy, Jerh. Daly and witness (Joe Morgan). The only others whose names I can recall were Denis Murphy, Kanturk and Ned Ryan, Charleville. This camp was in charge of Paddy O'Brien, Liscarrol, Brigade Q.M. The training officer was 'Dorney' Regan of Castletownroche, Battalion.

When the course of training at this camp terminated columns were formed in each battalion area. The first members of the Mallow column, as far as I can recollect, were:- Tadhg McCarthy, Ned Waters, Batt Walsh, Ned Murphy, 'Congo' Moloney, Tadhg Mullane, Leo O'Callaghan, Denis Mulcahy, Con Buckley, Jerh. Daly, Jack Cunningham, O/C., and witness (Joe Morgan). The column was armed with rifles and about 50 rounds of ammunition for each, while some members also carried revolvers. I think most of the arms were part of the stores captured in Mallow Barracks. Some of the column billeted in the Lombardstown area at Murphy's and Healy's, while others who were in their home area were able to make their own billeting arrangements.

Towards the end of January the column moved into Mourne-Abbey district where ambush positions were taken up on a number of occasions, but the enemy did not turn up. On January 30th 1921, I proceeded into Mallow with the Column O/C. (Jack Cunningham). We were to meet some members of the local company with a view to bombing some houses which were being frequented by the Black and Tans. Owing to the

imposition of 'curfew' we failed to make contact with the locals and the job had to be called off. The column O/C., however, decided that we would remain in Mallow that night so we stayed for a short time at the Railway Hotel where Owen Fahy - a Volunteer and Intelligence officer - was 'Boots' and, later in the night, we moved to Jack Roche's, ^EBeacher St.

While in the Railway Hotel we learned that a small party of Tans used to travel to the railway station each night to post letters for the Night Mail which left about 9.30 p.m. The party, which usually numbered three or four, arrived in the station about 9.20 p.m. or 9.25 p.m. The O/C. (Jack Cunningham) decided to attack this party on the following night and sent for some members of the column who were to report to the railway station about 9.p.m. on 31st January 1921. The following members reported as arranged:- Denis Mulcahy, Jerh. Daly, Ned Murphy, Leo O'Callaghan, 'Congo' Moloney. With the O/C. and witness this made a total of seven.

Five ('Congo' Moloney, Denis Mulcahy, Jerh Daly, witness and the Column O/C. (Jack Cunningham) took up a position behind the wall adjoining the road to the station entrance while Leo O'Callaghan and Ned Murphy took up a position at the opposite side of the railway in order to cover off the possibility of any attack from the rere. All were armed with revolvers. When the party of 'Tans' was seen to approach - it was hard to pick them out in the dark - the party lining the wall to the station opened fire. There was no reply from the enemy, but the sound of the gunfire was heard by the Black and Tan and R.I.C. garrison in their barracks about 200 yards away. Our party immediately withdrew across the railway towards the positions held by Leo O'Callaghan and Ned Murphy. The whole party then retired to Murphy's, Laharn Cross via Ballyclough.

Following our withdrawal, the Tans and R.I.C. in the nearby barracks rushed to the railway station and fired shots indiscriminately at all and sundry. A number of railwaymen - three, I think - were shot dead while a large number were wounded.

On or about 8th February 1921, the column moved into Glendine area where we remained for a couple of days. We then moved to Gleannavigue in Mourneabbey area. While here, a report was received that a convoy of enemy forces (Black and Tans) had passed along the Glen Road to Cork. This is the main Cork-Killavullen road. We took up a position at Beanaskeha on this road - about 3 miles from Killavullen - early on the morning of 12th or 13th February and remained there until dusk when we withdrew to our billets as the enemy convoy did not pass. I was billeted at Jack Sullivan's of Gleannavigue.

On the evening of 14th February 1921, the column O/C. (Jack Cunningham) received instructions from the Battalion O/C. (Tadhg Byrne) to report with the column to Mourneabbey early next morning. I was unable to travel with the column as I was not well and was advised by the O/C. to remain in my billet. The column moved into Mourneabbey area that night and until I was contacted by the Battalion O/C. (Tadhg Byrne) on the following evening, I did not know of the happenings at Mourneabbey on the morning of February 15th. With Tadhg Byrne I moved from Gleannavigue that evening into Ballyclough area where we both billeted for about three days at the end of which period I was feeling in good form again.

About this time the column O/C. moved into the Ballyclough area with a few members of the column to arrange to trench the main Mallow-Buttevant roads. He was accompanied by Leo O'Callaghan and Ned Waters, when I contacted them at Connor's, Croughta. With the assistance of the members of

Two-pot-house and Ballyclough companies, a trench was opened in the road at Boherash Cross about 5 miles from Mallow. About 60 members from the two companies were engaged as the trench had to be cut to a depth of four feet and a width of 10 across the full width of the road which, at this point, was about 30 feet.

The actual digging party was in charge of Jack Cunningham while, with Ned Waters and 5 members of the Two-pot-house Company, I took up a position at Two-pot-house Cross where we arranged a barricade of farm carts taken from a nearby farmhouse. We then selected a covering position inside the roadside ^{fence}. With the exception of Ned Waters and myself, who were armed with rifles, all the others carried shotguns. Our position was about 500 yards from the site of the trench. A similar flanking party was in position at the Buttevant side of the trench within about two miles of Buttevant at Kilcluisha. This party was in charge of Leo O'Callaghan.

When the trenching had been completed we returned the farmcarts to the owner's premises and withdrew to our billets. It was rumoured in the district next day that, shortly after the trench had been completed, a lorry load of Tans had run into it - one being killed. This party set fire to the farmhouse and outoffices of a farmer - Lucey I think was the name - who lived nearby.

It was now close to the end of February and I think that it was at this time - certainly not later than the first days of March - that orders were received from the Brigade O/C. to move the column into the Kanturk Battalion area. This order was issued in order to get things moving in the Kanturk area where things were rather slack. We moved to Nadd where we did a few days training in conjunction with the Kanturk column. The training took the usual form of

drilling with instructions in scouting, the use and care of arms and outpost duty. The training was carried out under Jack Cunningham and Denis Murphy. There were also rounds of guard duty to be done by the column members in conjunction with the members of the local company. This duty was rather heavy at this time as the Brigade H.Q. was at Paddy McCarthy's, Nadd. The guard units were usually composed of equal numbers of column members and local Volunteers, e.g., one man from each column (Kanturk and Mallow) and two local Volunteers. They went on duty in pairs of one column man and one Volunteer.

About 2 a.m. on the morning of the first Monday in March 1921, (7th I think) a party of about twelve from the combined columns left their billets in Nadd to proceed to take up a position at Fr. Murphy's Bridge on the Banteer-Duincha Road where it was proposed to ambush a patrol of Black and Tans. The members of this party were, as far as I can remember, Jack Cunningham, Jerh. Daly and witness (Joe Morgan) (Mallow Column), Denis Murphy, Ned Donoghue, ... McCarthy, ... Kennedy, ... Lehane and 'Rocky' Leary (Kanturk). We arrived at the selected position about 8 a.m. and remained there until about 4 p.m. but the enemy did not arrive. We then billeted in the area that night and resumed our position next morning about 8 a.m. The patrol arrived about 12 noon and were ambushed. One Tan was killed and the others surrendered and promised to resign from the enemy forces. Four rifles and four revolvers were captured. When jumping over the fence to disarm this party I wrenched my knee and it was only with considerable difficulty that I managed to walk back to my billet in the 'Barracks' at Nadd. In connection with this engagement, I have a keen recollection that a member of the Kanturk Column named Shiels was due to report to the 'Barracks' to take part in this job, but he

failed to report on time so we left without him. He did not, in fact, report to the column at any later date. It was generally accepted a little later that he was responsible for giving information to the enemy about the ambush which was to take place at Mourneabbey on February 15th and which led to the loss of several Volunteers including two executed for waging war (Thomas Mulcahy and Patrick Ronayne).

On the return of the ambush party from Fr. Murphy's Bridge on the evening of 8th March 1921, I returned with Jerh. Daly and Jack Cunningham to our billet in the 'Barracks'. This was the name given to the farmhouse of David Herlihy where a large number of the column members usually stayed when in the district. As my knee was now very painful I was confined to bed and when arrangements were being made for a party to proceed to burn Dromagh Castle on the night of 9th March I was unable to travel. Jack Cunningham and Jerh. Daly from our billet, who were included in this party, moved out before 6 p.m. that evening. Other Volunteers in the billet at the time were:- Ned Waters, Tim Kiely (a dispatch rider), 'Congo' Moloney (on guard) and two new recruits to the column from Ballyclough - Mick Walsh and Jack Ring. We were all gathered round the fire chatting with the owner of the house until Mick Walsh went on guard with Tadhg McCarthy shortly before midnight. Jack Ring moved out to his billet in Riordan's house at the same time. We then remained chatting at the fire for a few minutes and then all retired to bed. With 'Congo' Moloney and Tim Kiely I slept on a mattress in a room off the kitchen on the ground floor. The remaining pair, Dave Herlihy and Ned Waters, slept upstairs.

We were all soon fast asleep and there was no disturbance until about 7 a.m. next morning (March 10th), when I was awakened by strange voices shouting at us to "get out of it" in rather forceful language. 'Congo' was first

out - he was nearest the door - but we were close on his heels when we found the enemy in our midst. I do not know whether the door was locked, but I think it was not as members of the column on guard and other duties were coming and going at all hours. When we were on the floor we collected our clothes. I managed to get on my trousers and boots, but that was all. I was not allowed to lace my boots, but was hurried out to the yard. I was accompanied by Tim Kiely who was similarly attired. We were later joined by Dave Herlihy and Ned Waters in their bare feet. We were now surrounded by a party of about a dozen soldiers, some of whom searched us. We were then told by the officer in charge that we were to be shot. He then arranged a firing party at the gable end of the house. He marched us under escort around the house to the gable end and told us to face the firing party. At the time the officer was between us and the latter body when young Tim Kiely began to ask the officer some questions. This delayed the operation for a moment and while the officer's attention was distracted by Kiely's questions I made a dash for a gap in the fence surrounding the yard about 40 yards away. 'Congo' Moloney dashed away at the same time and in the same direction. Just as I reached the gap I felt a sting in my elbow and I was unable to continue owing to my injured knee (injured at Fr. Murphy's Bridge on 7th March). I took cover behind the fence. As I threw myself behind the fence, 'Congo' passed, still going strong. I rested for a few seconds and then began to move off under cover of the fence. As I moved, a soldier on the hillside opened fire, so I again took cover and waited until he had fired about 10 rounds. I then made another dash and got on to the open mountain where I was picked up within a short time by Tadhg McCarthy, Liam Lynch and the Brigade staff. We were later joined by Jack Ring, who had made his way to

to safety from Riordan's where he had been billeted. We moved on towards Horgan's, Crinnaloo, where we had some refreshments and where my wound was dressed by Liam Lynch. We moved that evening to Cahill's, Kilmacraigne, and later to old Kilcorney where I billeted for a few days. I then returned to Mallow area to Sheehan's near Dromahane, where I was attended by Dr. Vaughan. After a few days I was removed to the Fever Hospital where I was under the care of Nurse Griffin - now my wife - for a period of about three weeks. While I was in the Fever Hospital the British raided the Infirmary which was about 100 yards away, but they did not come near the Fever Hospital as they were informed by the doctor at the Infirmary that there were about 100 patients suffering from very infectious diseases there. Early in April 1921 I left the Fever Hospital and reported to the Column O/C. (Jack Cunningham) at Tim Connor's, Crougta, Ballyclough.

It was generally accepted at the time that there was some leakage of information which led the enemy to endeavour to surround Nadd where two battalion columns and the brigade staff were billeted. It appears certain that the information was passed on to the enemy by a member of the Kanturk column named Shiels. He was an ex-British soldier who was a member of the column for about two months before the events at Nadd. After Nadd, it was recollected by everybody connected with the columns that Shiels was always absent when an engagement was due. It will be noted that I have previously referred to his absence on the occasion of the ambush at Fr. Murphy's Bridge.

Shiels went to Kanturk on the morning we were leaving for Fr. Murphy's Bridge (7th). He was supposed to be going in to draw his British army pension. He did not again return to the column and he was afterwards seen in the barracks in

Kanturk in consultation with a British officer as well as drinking with members of the enemy forces in some publichouses in the town. These facts were reported in a dispatch sent by the I.O. in Kanturk (Michael Moore) to Brigade H.Q. on March 8th or 9th, but the dispatch never reached its destination. I don't think that the cause of the failure to reach Brigade H.Q. has ever been established. However, Shiels was identified as a member of one of the raiding parties at Nadd on the morning of March 10, 1921. He was dressed in the uniform of a Black and Tan. This was the last occasion on which he was seen.

On the instructions of the Battalion O/C. (Tadhg Byrne) I reported to Laharn Cross on June 15th 1921. There I found the whole column assembled. While the other members of the column moved off towards Millstreet area to take part in the Rathcoole ambush, I was ordered to make arrangements to proceed to Mallow to execute a spy - McPherson, an ex-British army sergeant major - who was supposed to be seen on Mallow Bridge each morning at 7 a.m. I think that his activities as a spy were discovered when he cashed some cheques, made payable to him by the British, in some shop in town (Mallow). I visited Mallow on two mornings, but there was no trace of McPherson, so other arrangements were made at a later date when he was captured and executed early in July 1921.

Late in June and early in July 1921, some members of the column lay in ambush in the Ballydaheen district on a number of occasions, but the expected enemy patrol did not arrive. It was hoped on these occasions to ambush a military patrol which patrolled the area during curfew hours. During the week prior to the Truce I took part in the sniping of the enemy posts in Mallow. Others who took part in this activity were Jack Cunningham, Jerh. Daly and Denis Mulcahy.

My rank at the Truce - Volunteer and column member.

After the Truce I attended a training camp at Liscarrol. Paddy O'Brien (Brigade O/C. Cork IV) was in charge of the camp, while the Training Officer was Sean Breen. At this camp there was a regular schedule of drilling, guard duty and military routine. I remained at this camp for about six weeks. I then returned to take part in the work of the Battalion Camp at Ballyclough where I took part in the training of the company officers of the battalion. I was engaged in training activities until early October when I went to a Training Camp at Rathcoole, where the subject was the care and use of small arms. I was accompanied to this camp by Jack Cunningham and Jerh. Daly and remained there for about three weeks. On my return to Mallow area I continued my work in the Battalion Training Camp.

When Mallow Military Barracks was taken over in January 1922, I moved in as a member of the maintenance party. I continued to serve there until late in the summer of 1922 when I was transferred to Buttevant Military Barracks. I served here until the outbreak of the civil war when I took part in numerous engagements against Free State forces throughout the brigade area. I was arrested with Jack Cunningham and Jackie Bolster in Dromahane area in November 1922. We were removed to Limerick Gaol where we were tried by courtmartial and sentenced to death. We were kept in a special wing for several weeks and were then allowed back into the main wing.

Sometime in the Spring of 1923 I was released on parole to enable me to vote as a member of Mallow Board of Guardians for a candidate for a vacancy as Dispensary Medical Officer

for Ballyclough area. My candidate was defeated. I returned to Limerick Gaol after about three or four days where I took my place on the team working on a tunnel to enable us to escape. When the tunnel was completed about the end of March 1923, I escaped with a number of other prisoners. I then returned to Mallow area where I remained until the 'Cease Fire' in May 1923.

Signed:

Joseph P. Morgan
(Joseph P. Morgan)

Date:

22nd February 1955

22nd February 1955

Witness:

P. O'Donnell

(P. O'Donnell)
Investigator.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BURO STAIRE MILITA 1913-21

No. W.S. 1097