ORIGINAL

W.S. 1,148

ROINN COSANTA.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913–21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS.

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 1,148

Witness

Patrick J. Casey,
38, The Rise,
Mount Merrion,
Dublin.

Identity.

Vice O/C. Newry Brigade, 1916-1922.

Subject.

National activities, Newry, Co. Down,
1914-1922.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil

File No. S.1935

Form B.S.M. 2

ORIGINAL

W. S. 1,148

COMMANDANT PATRICK CASEY

38, The Rise, Mount Merrion, Dublin.

Idle thoughts of an officer of the Irish Volunteers

Period 1915-1922 - War of Independence.

Details about myself - Born 8th May, 1899, at 15 River St. Newry. Parents - James Casey and Margaret King. Both grandparents (Owen King (farmer) of Fathom, and Patrick Casey (master mariner) were active members of the Fenian Brotherhood No important advance was made between '67 and 1916 in the Independence movement and so there is nothing of national interest to record about my father.

I attended the Christian Brothers Schools at ~~Kilmorley~~ KILMOREY St then at the Abbey, and finally at the "Car Stands" or St. Margarets in the centre of the town of Newry. Some of my mentors were Brothers Murray, Hayes, Grainger, Quinn, Gleeson, Geoghegan, and Mr. Peter McCann, B.A. From an early age - (9 or 10) - these men did more than anything else to influence and mould my outlook in the national ideal. Peter McCann was an extreme nationalist and a keen student of the Irish language of which he was a fluent speaker. He was a man of high ideals who had no time for the corrupt party politics of the early 1900's.

During the period 1912-13, the district from whence I came was in a state of turmoil; this was the town of Newry and, being so located between Orange and Green, one was virtually in the middle of the forces of reaction and those engaged in the fight for freedom.

The writer at that time was of tender years between about 13-14 years old. Men matured quickly in those days and long before one discarded the trappings of boyhood, one was actively engaged in things that rightly pertained to

those of more mature years.

I can well remember my native town being divided into two camps - the Orange and the Green. In the former the Ulster Volunteers were fanatically engaged in preparing themselved for civil strife. They were, of course, backed by their Imperial masters and their illegal activities were "winked at" by the British Government of the day. The National Volunteers, on the other hand, were subjected to close scrutiny, but this was not too severe whilst the nationalist forces under Redmond were paying tribute to His Majesty of England.

Rumours of a split in the National Volunteers were current in the Spring of 1914 and one evening at a Volunteer parade in the market at Needham St., the local split occurred and one had to decide between the National Volunteers and those with more advanced ideas - the Irish Volunteers. It is true that the number of recruits for the Irish Volunteers was rather small. However, the first Great War was about to begin and the issue seemed to appear in clear perspective - those who were to accept the domination of Britain and those few who preferred to serve Cáitlin Ni Houlihan.

I remained with the National Volunteers - the majority - and continued my training. Had I been old enough to join the British army I would certainly have gone in defence of Poor Little Belgium. My age saved me and I continued to drill with the National Volunteers and eventually paraded with them at the great hosting in Phoenix Park, Dublin, in the Spring of 1915. This was, of course, "winked at" by the authorities and it was in fact a gigantic recruiting drive.

After this gathering in the Phoenix Park, it became apparent to me, at any rate, that those who wished to serve the old Motherland must seek the hard road - one which merited the stern disapproval of the British Government.

In the Autumn of 1915 I met some of the extremist element in Newry and at once found myself in congenial company. We played Irish games, read the various revolutionary periodicals then appearing. Inspiration was sought from those Gaelic heroes of the past - Tone, Mitchell and O'Donovan Rossa. We were refreshed and exhilarated by our contact with those great leaders of the past.

Towards the end of 1915, we formed a serious group of fighting men and we used to meet every Sunday particularly in an old room beside the R.I.C. barracks in Hyde Market, Newry.

In the early Spring of 1916, we met frequently and awaited the call to arms. This did not come and we heard of the Rising in Dublin with some disappointment. But, with the exception of Paddy Rankin, none of our group took part.

1917 and 1918 came and went and the tempo of national affairs was quickening. We moved closer and closer to the Gaelic ideal and to the cause of complete separation from England.

In 1919 we had a major raid for arms on Ballyedmond Castle, Killowen. It was believed that the arms of Ulster Volunteers were located there. The raid, in which I took part, was a well-planned spectacular affair. Volunteers converged from Louth, Armagh and Down on the Castle. Telehpone wires were cut and we were left in possession of the countryside from about 10 p.m. until 2 or 3 a.m. the following day.

Our first real engagement in the shooting war took place in the village of Newtownhamilton. This was a fairly Orange town and our first attempt was to capture the enemy barracks by a ruse. It was planned that Frank Aiken, accompanied by some Volunteers including myself dressed in British military

uniform, should drive in motor cars to the barracks. In due course we arrived at the barrack door. According to plan, Aiken went to the barrack door and knocked loudly. The door opened a little, but on a chain. The constable said: "Who goes there?" Aiken said: Lieutenant Browne from Dundalk Barracks. The constable then said: "Give the password". At this we knew the game was up - a couple of rounds were fired through the door and we departed.

A short time afterwards, plans were laid to take the place by storm and, in due course, we arrived by bicycle from many parts of the surrounding country to take part in our first action. It was a great adventure and we were all thrilled at the thought of our first real action.

Some of those who took part, to my knowledge, were - Frank Aiken, J. McCoy, J. Quinn, Pat O'Rourke, Pat McAleenan, Charlie Magennity, Jeff O'Hare, Jack McKinley from Shinn, Bill Grant, myself, and I must not forget Mick Fearon from Meigh.

At about 11 p.m. the battle opened. It was a fine night in the month of May and we were all thoroughly exhilarated. The barracks was an interior building and the houses on either side were occupied by us. Our dynamiters were McKinley (Sinn) McAleenan (Sinn) and Rafferty (Sinn) and soon holes were blown in the gable walls of the barracks. Through these breeches hand grenades were fired and petrol and paraffin poured After some time the place took fire and soon became a blazing inferno and so the fight continued throughout the night. At daybreak John Quinn and myself found ourselves in the barrack yard. The police at this time were forced out of the main building, but they still resolutely refused to surrender. The sergeant in charge was, I believe, of the name of Traynor.

After a ding-dong fight lasting all night, we withdrew at 6.30 a.m. in full daylight. We destroyed the enemy citadel in the middle of the district, predominantly Orange

and most antagonistic to every effort or fight for freedom.

My companion on the way home was Paddy O'Rourke of River St. and, on my way, I remembered that it was my 21st birthday (8.5.'20). The Summer of 1920 passed and during this time we diligently drilled and spared no effort to acquire arms of any and every sort. We had during this time a general round-up of arms from civilian sources, and this yielded quite an assortment. In this year too we carried out raids on income tax offices and the destruction of unoccupied police barracks. The R.I.C. had abandoned a number of these and the Volunteers had information that these were to be reoccupied, fortified and used as blockhouses throughout the country. I led the raid on the Custom House at Newry and, accompanied by Pat O'Rourke and Tim Phelan of Tullamore, we destroyed by fire the empty police barracks at Mayobridge.

My position in the Volunteers at this time was Company Q.M. of the Newry Company. There was only one company of Volunteers in Newry up to the time of the Truce - 11.7.1921.

In or about October 1920 I was elected 1st Lieutenant of the Newry Volunteers and at about the same time I was initiated into the Irish Republican Brotherhood. I remember the initiation process well. I was sounded on several occasions and the question was eventually put as to whether I would become a member. I answered in the affirmative and so was duly sworn in before three or four other members of the Circle I was to join. Following this, I attended the first meeting of my Circle, the Centre of which was Pat Rankin. I now regarded myself as a fully-fledged revolutionary, bound with a terrific oath in an atmosphere of absolute secrecy.

By this time we had merited the close scrutiny of the R.I.C. and amongst the most aggressive of that body were Head Constable Kearney, Sergeants Little and Henry - all good Catholic Irishmen - moryah!

Appendix 6

National Archives Act, 1986, Regulations, 1988

ABSTRACTION OF PART(S) PURSUANT TO REGULATION 8

Form to be completed and inserted in the original record in place of each part abstracted

(i) Reference number of the separate cover under which the abstracted part has been filed: WS 1148/A.

(ii) How many documents have been abstracted: 1p.

(iii) The date of each such document: 23 April 1955

(iv) The description of each document:

WS 1148 Witness Statement Patrick J. Casey Pt.

name of individual

(Where appropriate, a composite description may be entered in respect of two or more related documents).

(v) Reason(s) why the part has been abstracted for retention:

(c) Would or might cause distress or danger to living persons on the ground that they contain information about individuals, or would or might be likely to lead to an action for damages for defamation.

(These will be the reasons given on the certificate under Section 8(4).)

Name: (J. Moloney.)

Grade: Col.

Department/Office/Court:

Date: 7 March 2003.

Towards the end of November 1920, it was decided to ease the enemy pressure by eliminating H.C. Kearney and, accordingly, on a Sunday evening in November 1920, he got what he richly deserved.

From this time onwards things began to move very rapidly indeed. A number of officers who had been our leaders and self-proclaimed patriots fled, including the

Chaos reigned in Newry on that foggy wet night in November. Lorries of Black and Tans were flying around the town; the forces of destruction and intimidation were let loose; houses were raided; the citizens ill-treated and the Sinn Fein Hall opposite my old home was burned to the ground. John Quinn and myself cycled to the Kilkeel district and stayed the night with his uncle, Edward Quinn of Attycal. Grant did not return to Newry until the June.

On the following day we cycled back to Newry where we separated. An inquest had been held on Kearney and a verdict returned of wilful murder against the Volunteers and the gallant Newry Urban Council (all or nearly all nationalist) assured everyone that it was not the work of Newry men. They also proclaimed their desire to help the enemy in every possible way.

The elimination of Kearney was carried out despite those in authority (Volunteers) who were moving too slowly for the more active spirits. The senior Volunteer officers, really men with feet of clay, vanished overnight, and so for a time the organisation in South Down was leaderless.

It was difficult to get the Volunteers together, and so the writer, in order to avoid arrest, went to Liverpool accompanied by Peter O'Hare and John Brady and remained there for a few weeks. Following this, in early January I decided that my place was at home with the fighting lads and so I repaired to my native heath. I still found it impossible to

rally a cohesive group and so I returned to Liverpool where I stayed for only two weeks.

Before going to Liverpool the second time, I stayed in the Cloughogue district principally with a kinswoman of mine, a Mrs. James Quinn (née Jackson) and my father made many efforts to see me and, eventually, we met by appointment at McShane's Bridge. He was in a very bad way through repeated raids by the enemy and he implored me to leave the country. After a lot of pressure I agreed to do this and joined a ship leaving the Newry Docks for Liverpool. The ship was the "Bessbrook" whose chief officer was my future brother-in-law, Peter Mullen. I arrived in Liverpool the following morning and went to stay with a cousin of my father, a Mrs. Lonergan (née Casey). During my second visit I made an effort to reach U.S.A. as I had promised my father.

I outfitted myself in sailor's garb and, equipped with papers made out in the name of O'Byrne, I waited for a berth each day outside the Sailors' Home. After many weary days thus spent, I was warned that a berth awaited me on board the S.S.Minnedosa which was lying in the Mersey. I went to my digs, packed my kitbag and reported at the pier head where I was told that I was beaten by a short head. Another fellow who was a few minutes before me had got the job. The job offered to me was that of coal trimmer (man who trims coal from the bunkers to the firemen). After waiting a little while I saw the Minnedosa sail down the Mersey on her voyage to St. John's, Newfoundland.

As I was turning away I met an old friend, Captain Jim Higgins of Dundalk. His ship, the ~~Teviot~~ Fetlar, was moored at the Pier Head. He greeted me and after the usual exchange he invited me to come back with him to Ireland. I honestly felt that I had fulfilled my promise to my father and I decided there and then to return to Ireland for the last time.

The following evening we arrived at Dundalk and, under cover of darkness and with the help of a bicycle, I proceeded northwards. My bicycle got punctured at Ravensdale and I borrowed another from a friendly farmer. I proceeded towards Newry and got a bed for the night with my kinswoman Mrs. Quinn of Fathom. I decided to make every effort to contact the local elements of the Volunteers and the following day I met Pat Fearon. In due course the local units were organised and I was appointed or elected commander of the Newry Company.

N.B. There was only one company in Newry during the entire war of Independence.

My immediate comrades and I were driven underground and so began in earnest the fight for freedom which was to conclude in a few short months.

In the year 1920 (I think), in the Springtime, an order came from G.H.Q. that all unoccupied R.I.C. barracks were to be destroyed and on the same night raids were to be carried out on all British tax collecting offices. I was in the raid on the Newry Custom House where we held up the occupant and helped ourselves to the wanted papers. A few nights after this, Tim Phelan of Tullamore, Pat O'Rourke and myself cycled to Mayobridge and, borrowing a can of petrol from O'Hare's pub, we set fire to the barracks and burned it to the ground. Phelan was slightly burned during the operation. We returned to Newry where Phelan ~~ree~~ received attention from Dr. Cronin.

Shortly after my arrival we carried out a number of raids on the post office in Newry and on the mails in transit. Tom Woods (Bessbrook) and I held up the Newry G.P.O. and took away letters addressed to enemy forces in the town. Shortly after this we collected the mails at the drop point on the railway at Egyptians Arch. Taking part in this were Jimmy Murphy (Monaghan) and myself. The mail

van sent to collect the mails was driven by a man named McClean who kept a garage in Canal St. We simply slipped up to him and said: "O.K. Drive on till we tell you to stop". He had the mails in his van at the time. We drove on through Newry and towards Cloughogue. There we dismissed McClean with the strict injunction that he was not to divulge our point of parting under any circumstances. We lugged the mail bags across ditches and through hedges and eventually settled down to make a preliminary examination of them in some scrub-wood. We were no more than seated when lorries of Black and Tans were scouring the roads about 300 yards from us. They questioned some schoolboys and an old woman and, fortunately for us, they directed them in the opposite direction to that taken by us. It was obvious that McClean had informed on us at once. We made several efforts to get him, but when he learned of our pursuit he vanished.

The Egyptian Arch ambush took place in December 1920. In this encounter the Volunteers took up positions with the main force occupying vantage points on the bridge and on either side of it. The fight this time was with British military forces and was of brief duration. Our losses were one killed, 3 wounded - two of the latter were fatally wounded. The Volunteer killed was Pat Canning of Derry, a lad of 21. Next morning the British troops coming on the scene threw the boy's body from the top of the bridge to the road beneath. The arch or bridge is of considerable height. Peter Sheils and Jeff O'Hare died of wounds. Charlie Grant, who received a slight wound in the foot, recovered.

About February 1921, we had another brush with the enemy. A Fifth Columnist, I think the name was Johnston, owning a farm about four miles north of Dundalk at a place called Plaster, was enjoying the protection of an enemy guard

consisting of Auxiliaries. The guard was relieved every Sunday morning and, on the Saturday night before our attack, a concentrated force composed of picked men from the 4th Northern Division were ordered to concentrate and destroy the relieving party.

The South Down and Armagh contingents or parties mobilised at the village of Meigh at the foot of Slieve Gullion and slept that night on the floor of the local school-house. In the morning we resumed our "march" on bicycles and, in due course, arrived at our venue. To arrive at their destination (Johnston's House at Plaster) the enemy could take either of two roads; they usually took the road on which we had planned their destruction. Mines were laid on this road and I was with the party covering the mine location. At the main ambush position where I was, the ground was much higher than the road, and lying, as we were, along the road edg of the field, we were exposed to view from a point which the enemy would approach. To conceal us from view we were covered with grass and fern - pulled and strewn over us. A part of our plan was to detach a small party to confine the unrelieved Auxiliaries in Johnston's and Andy O'Hare and John Quinn and one or two others proceeded on that duty.

After some time in our ambush position we heard sniping taking place at the occupied house. We waited some time with baited breath and then realised that enemy relief party who probably also/heard the firing, decided to take the unusual route and so by-passed our ambush position. In these circumstances we had to evacuate our position or face eventual destruction.

Frank Aiken, who was in command, ordered a withdrawal and I remember clearly that the evacuation was taking the shape of a disorderly retreat and I saw the danger which would result if an enemy force suddenly appeared in our rere. I mentioned the matter to John McCoy and another, and the

three of us, armed with rifles, took up our position at the extreme rere of the column and covered the withdrawal of the Volunteers. We acted as rearguard and secured the orderly movement and safety of our forces. Our effort was unsuccessful, but at least we withdrew without loss, and I am sure we caused grave discomfort in the enemy camp, which of itself was of considerable military importance.

It is significant to note that although this operation took place near Dundalk, few men from that town took part. I know of none. It is also true to say that, taking them by and large, the men of north Louth took little if any part in the fight for Independence. It was necessary to take men from all parts of Armagh and Down to do the work that should have been done by the Dundalk men.

In the months after Christmas of 1920, we imported a good deal of arms from England and on one occasion we got a number of rifles - about ten. To facilitate packing, the rifles had been sawn in two at the small of the butts. These rifles were brought on the S.S. Bessbrook by Pat Larkin of Newry, who was a member of the I.R.B. These arms were conveyed in a motor car to our dump at Carrogs by two Protestant Newry men - George Hosford and George Major. These men may not have been in complete sympathy with our movement, but they were honourable and reliable and were certainly not informers. They deserve great credit for their patriotism and they were alone amongst the Protestant population of Newry in their stand for freedom.

Whilst we were operating in Newry prior to the action at King St. Bridge, and before the formation of the regular flying column, we slept in various houses around the town, and now and again we stayed in the Fever Hospital. These houses were almost 100% the houses of the working class people; the middle and upper classes were too fond of the old

money bags and usually only facilitated us when they had no option. The Fever Hospital, in which we stayed a night or maybe two, afforded us an opportunity to bathe and to make some effort to get rid of that awful disease which plagued us right to the end - scabies. This disease was widespread and the Volunteer organ of the period found it necessary to publish details of a simple antidote.

Spring was getting on in that eventful year. I was a close companion of John Quinn at this time and, one night in March 1921, we had a meal at the Milestone (Quinn's shop). I had an appointment with a young lady named O'Byrne shortly afterwards. She was about 18, dark and pretty and I had, in a way, fallen for her. John Quinn knew about the appointment a and, when the time came, I met my girl and we walked along the Dromolane Road. We were almost at a spot called MacShane's Bridge when there was a rather sustained outburst of rifle fire from the direction of the town. My first thought was for Quinn, I knew that he would never surrender, and I reproached myself for having left him. My girl and I walked back quickly to the town, down Bridge St. and along the quays. She resided at Canal St. and, though we had to pass a police barracks in that street, I decided that, come what may, I would see her to her very door. To get through the cordon of police carrying arms was impossible, and so I dumped my gun in a hideout along the quay before meeting the bridge at King Street. Less than 100 yards beyond the hedge we ran into a patrol of police and were promptly ordered to "stick 'em up". There were about 20 police in the patrol and one fellow began to search me. I was unarmed now, but I just remembered that in my pocket were some papers, dealing with the Republican Loan or with some matters pertaining to the Sinn Fein Courts. We resolutely used to refuse to handle this kind of stuff and I swore ~~that~~ BECAUSE I had been silly enough to do so on this particular

day. The papers were in my inside pocket and the searcher put his hand on them but, then, for some reason, said: I'm not going to bother with these. I was relieved and, shortly after, we resumed our walk towards our goal which was the girl's home and which led past the R.I.C. Barracks in Canal St.

On the way back I met Jimmy Murphy (of Monaghan). He was armed and together we went to retrieve my gun. A few minutes after picking it up we were proceeding along the quay towards King St. Bridge when, out of the darkness of a gateway, two 'B' policemen stepped out and told us to "stick 'em up". My gun was loaded (a Colt automatic .45) in my pocket. To surrender was out of the question because it meant death either quickly or following a period of torture. In any case the final result was the same. Without hesitating, I fired through my pocket and one fellow fell. Murphy too had drawn his gun and fired one or two shots. After a very brief exchange of shots the second policeman put up his hands. We approached, relieved them of their guns and ammunition, and as the wounded man was not very badly hurt, ~~and~~ we left him to his comrade and took our departure with our capture. We moved quickly, because in a matter of minutes the place would be again alive with armed enemy. We went along the canal middle bank down to the Town Hall and got shelter in the house of a Nurse McKigney on the Mall.

On 17th March John Quinn and I were again at the Mileston (his shop) both fully armed as usual. We were rather at a loose end and, having heard that a dance was to take place at Barr (I'm not sure of the place name, but it was in that direction) at which a number of armed 'B' police would be, we decided to go and 'stick up' the place in the hope of capturing at least some arms.

Our party consisted of Quinn (John), Jimmy Murphy and self. We were fully a rmed and were equipped with bicycles. On w e went up Hill St. on the roadway, walking our machines. We passed by the Town Hall and into Sugar Island, heading for Canal St. and the Armagh Road. We had just entered Sugar Island when w e saw a patrol of police advancing towards us. The patrol consisted of about 12 men armed with rifles. We were still walking in the roadway and, although the street lamps were dim, w e had no difficulty in establishing the fact that they were, in fact, police.

To make a dash, on our part, would have been f atal. As w e walked I s aid to Quinn: "What will we do?" He replied: "We'll just carry on as if there was nothing unusual and continue w alking". We w alked right through the patrol, half of which was located on e ach side of the street. We passed, perhaps, unrecognised, or maybe this patrol w as not seeking trouble on this particular night.

We continued walking up Canal St. until we reached the top. There we mounted our bicycles and in d ue course arrived at the d ance hall. The sound of the dance music seemed unreal to us. We had little or no opportunity for dancing and, although at the age of 20 or so, we had not lost our yearning for a dance and a ssociation with the opposite sex; we were, in fact, outlaws to whom the term 'shoot on sight' applied, We covered the lower part of our f aces with handkerchiefs and, thus disguised, we entered the Hall and told everyone to "stick 'em up". The men were ordered to go to one side. They were searched, but we found no arms or anything else of value. Jim Murphy, who was fond of alcohol, located a bottle of whiskey in one f ellow's pocket and promptly purloined it. Telling the dancers to proceed, w e left the hall. Quinn, who had no love for alcohol, discovered Murphy's bottle and, taking it from him, promptly smashed it against a w all.

Drinking was frowned upon by the Volunteers and, generally, anyone who drank even mildly was regarded as untrustworthy and of no use to any self-respecting revolutionary movement.

We had many jobs to do and any spare time was spent in perfecting our knowledge of arms. The month of April 1921, was already halfway through when we decided to have another go at the enemy. This decision resulted in the fight at McEvoy's corner, King St. Bridge, Newry. The date of this particular fight during the War of Independence can be accurately fixed by reference to the newspapers of the period. From memory after this lapse of time, I should place the date somewhere at the end of April, 1921. The fight took place in broad daylight and the time would be a bout 7.30 p.m. This was not an ambush in the accepted sense of the period in that it did not take place from prepared positions. It was an aggressive assault carried out in daylight facing the enemy man to man in the open.

The Volunteers taking part were:- Andy O'Hare, John Quinn, myself (Pat Casey), Dominick Doherty, James Murphy (Monaghan), Peter McNulty and Peter O'Hare.

We were determined to have a brush with the enemy and on the evening in question we assembled in the Transport Hall which was then located in the Mall almost opposite an old forge which may still remain. A patrol of police was reported in the vicinity of Bridge Street and a later report from scouts indicated that the patrol was moving along the quays towards King Street Bridge.

Our idea was to get them in a halted position. Their practice was to halt at various places and remain there for some time. The patrol consisted of 12 police, a sergeant or a Head Constable. The scouts reported the patrol halted at McEvoy's Corner and we immediately moved to the attack. We were armed with grenades and revolvers.

Andy O'Hare and John Quinn were in the leading file (in front). We moved in double file, mounted the slight rise in the road to the Tidal Bridge and down the slope towards the patrol. As we moved we drew the pins from our grenades so that no hitch should occur at the last moment and to ensure that the bombs were not thrown with pins undrawn.

The twelve men comprising the patrol were standing with their backs to McEvoy's pub facing the canal. The N.C.O. in charge was standing at the outside kerb of the footpath. I can never understand why we were not halted as we approached the patrol; but there you are, we were not; we advanced towards the enemy and when about five yards from them we threw the grenades. The advancing Volunteers passed between the sergeant and the patrol and, as Andy O'Hare passed through, he turned and with his pistol shot the Head Constable or sergeant standing at the outside of the kerb. The rear files could not get through without being involved in the grenade explosions. About six bombs were fired at once and the fuses were timed at about four seconds, i.e., four seconds between the time of striker release until they burst.

I and those with me reached the low wall of the canal bridge when the bombs burst. We were about 20 yards from the explosion. So close was I to the explosion that I could feel the air being extracted from my lungs with the vacuum caused. When I looked up, the entire patrol was lying on the ground and consisted of dead and wounded.

We retired across the Tidal Bridge and with the others obtained temporary shelter in a house in George's Lane. From there I went up Mary St. to the steamship 'Bessbrook' which was lying in the harbour. I was known to the crew and spent the night there where I slept soundly.

The echo of the explosion had hardly died down when enemy lorries were scouring the town. Troops, Black and Tans

and R.I.C. were posted at strategic points and they were firing in all directions, evidently in panic.

This action was a success and the entire patrol was disposed of between killed and wounded.

After this fight we made the townland of Corrégs (near Warrenpoint) our base. We were now organised on proper flying column lines. We were constantly under arms and always carried our revolvers in holsters quite openly. At night sentries were posted and these were usually provided by the local company of Volunteers. We had the usual routine military training and made many excursions from our base to carry out operations in the South Down Brigade area particularly.

During this period and until the Truce, we slept, sometimes in beds (5 or 6 to a bed), sometimes in cattle sheds, and very often in the open on the mountainside. Mostly we slept in our day clothes, just removing our boots and lying down. Our arms and ammunition were always beside us. Our lives by this time were forfeit and we proposed to sell them as dearly as possible.

The absence of baths and regular changes of linen led inevitably to a severe attack of scabies and nearly everyone was affected. It was nothing unusual to see Volunteers scratching themselves as if they had St. Vitus dance.
One evening, I should say at the end of May or early June, John Quinn and another Volunteer were strolling some distance from the bivouac area when they encountered two rather suspicious looking characters. Quinn told them to put up their hands and, instead of complying, both opened fire with

revolvers. The fire was exchanged and one of the police in mufti received a bullet in the leg. Both police quickly mounted their cycles and rode off. They were evidently sent around to scout our position. Shortly after this, the enemy arrived in force at the scene of the afternoon's encounter. They went to the nearest house, Magill's. There were two sons of the family in the house at the time. Whilst the police, who had surrounded the Magill household, were searching the house, we opened fire on them with rifles from about 300 yards range. One of their number - a Constable Lynass - was killed and some others wounded. These gallant police thereupon murdered one of the Magills in cold blood and took the other boy off with them. They murdered the second boy after arrest by tying him head down to the back of their lorry. His head kept bumping off the ground as the lorry proceeded on its way This enemy force beat a hasty retreat to Newry, leaving us in possession of our little fastness of Corrogs.

During the fine summer mornings preceding the Truce, it was a common sight to see across the little valley the people of the townland of Ballyholland rising out of the furze and brushwood where men, women and children had spent the night in terror of the enemy, who usually did their murdering in the night hours. It is curious to record that throughout the fight for freedom, the people of Ballyholland were a spineless lot who never did and never would do anything to help the fight.

I remember one evening in broad daylight going to Ballyholland crossroads to intercept a patrol of three or four men which passed there frequently. As we entered the district people withdrew indoors, taking in the children and shutting all doors. We might have felt as perhaps do plague bearers had we not been sustained by the righteousness of our cause. These people gave neither moral not material help to us in

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(ii) How many documents have been abstracted: 1p

(iii) The date of each such document: 23 April 1955

(iv) The description of each document:

WS 1148 Witness Statement Patrick J. Lucey p. 17.
Details of a personal nature

(Where appropriate, a composite description may be entered in respect of two or more related documents).

(v) Reason(s) why the part has been abstracted for retention:

(c) Would or might cause distress or danger to living persons on the ground that they contain information about individuals, or would or might be likely to lead to an action for damages for defamation.

(These will be the reasons given on the certificate under Section 8(4).)

J Moloney

Name: (J. Moloney.)

Grade: Col.

Department/Office/Court:

Date: 7 March 2003.

time of need. They were a poor grovelling lot and it would have served them right if they had tasted some of the Black and Tan atrocity menu.

A word here concerning the personnel of those engaged in the struggle for Independence may not be out of place. Pat Rankin took some part in 1916 Rising and was imprisoned afterwards. He was in charge of South Down Brigade.

He had to be escorted from one hiding place to another and I acted as one of the escort on several occasions. We were usually armed with revolvers.

On the formation of divisions, Aiken took over and I cannot recall what happened to Rankin. He seemed just to fade out.

About March 1921, we decided to destroy Church St., Newry, R.I.C. barracks. It was only occupied by two or three police as kind of caretakers. It had some strategic importance and could be reoccupied in force at any time. I was officer in charge of Newry Company at the time and assembled a party at Courtenay Hill for the purpose. The intention was to knock on the barrack door and when this was opened to rush the place, disarm the police and destroy the barracks. I proceeded to the barrack door accompanied by two others - Pat Rankin was close by though not actually with those at the door. I knocked and, to my dismay, the door was opened on the chain and this precluded any attempt at surprise. I fired two or three rounds from my revolver in the hope of getting the fellow who opened the door and we then retired in the direction of Creeve.

About April or May 1921, Andy O'Hare became brigadier,

and I would like to record that there was no finer or more fearless officer in the Volunteers. He was an excellent fellow in every way. Dominic Doherty was O/C. Newry Battalion. I was Vice O/C. Brigade with Andy O'Hare. Towards the end of June 1921, Andy went to England and I succeeded him as brigadier.

The Banbridge Battalion was commanded by John O'Rourke and the Kilkeel Battalion by Hugh O'Hagan.

Before our column was launched on a regular footing it may be of interest to give some idea as to how we lived and how we escaped arrest. To stay at home was out of the question and so we stayed at the houses of friends who were not suspected. My home was raided frequently, sometimes several times a week. My house was robbed and my young brothers and sisters subjected to every form of indignity by the British forces.

I had two narrow escapes at this time. One night I decided to stay at the house of Mary Hanratty, King Street, Newry, whose daughter, Kitty, was an active member of the local Cumann na mBan. They lived at the back of the house, the front being a pub. I knocked again, waited, and there was still no reply. I gave up hope of admission and went around to another pub on the quays owned by Pat MacShane. I was admitted at once. About 2 a.m. I heard the noise of lorry loads of Crown forces passing by the house in which I was staying. They went straight to Mary Hanratty's and surrounded the house before seeking admission. It was obvious that an informer was at work. However, the police didn't find their quarry and so some police tout must have been discredited in the eyes of the enemy.

On another occasion when visiting the Sinn area, I intended to spend the night at the house of a man named Pat Rafferty. For some reason or other which I cannot now recall, I changed my plan and stayed at the house of Hugh Downey. That night

again lorries of the enemy passed Downey's house where I slept and raided Rafferty's. Again the bird had flown and another informer must have been sorely disappointed.

I remember an incident in May 1921; John ~~Minn~~ Quinn's mother had been away on a health cruise and he was very anxious to see her. We were at Corrags with the column and I agreed to accompany him to Warrenpoint where his parents lived. We walked along from Corrags, both of us armed with revolvers and grenades. It was full moonlight when we entered the outskirts of Warrenpoint and everything was as clear as day although it was about 10.30 p.m. We approached cautiously and soon saw a patrol of Tans or Special Police approaching. We moved into the shadow of the hedge by the roadside and the police almost simultaneously did likewise. We were not in a position to give combat to such a large body armed with rifles and so we withdrew and returned to Corrogs. On the following night we tried again and this time we managed to get through to Quinn's house which, I think, was located in Church St. We had a bath, a change of linen and a good bed following a civilised supper. The following day was election day for the First Northern Parliament. We stayed indoors, John making the most of his time in a family reunion. I I remember that we had grand meals for breakfast and lunch such as we had not seen for months. I remember it well, for lunch we had roast lamb and peas as a main course. John Quinn senior presided.

After lunch, it was time for us to go and I might remark that the town on this day was bristling with Tans, Specials A. and B. John and I were ready at the door to move out and, just as the door was opened fully, we saw a large patrol of armed police coming in our direction. Instantly we decided to proceed and face what might be in store for us because to return, had we been observed, meant trapping and destruction.

Out we went and down towards the public baths; the patrol was about 100 yards behind us moving in the same direction. Every second we waited for a command to halt, or for a rifle volley, but to our amazement nothing happened. We had no cover whatever, and on reaching the road junction at the baths we turned towards Rostrevor. We still had to walk at least a mile before we found a road which led to the hills and our friends. On we trudged up this road and at one point car passed us carrying people to the polls. It was driven by a B-man who recognised us. The car slowed down and as it did so we stepped to one side, drew our guns and the 'Special', thinking discretion the better part of valour, accelerated and drove off at high speed. We regained the column without further interruption.

During the period November 1920-July 1921, we had many other activities such as dealing with police touts, raiding for mails, smashing telephone communication and trenching roads.

About three weeks before the Truce, Doherty left the column to go home on learning of the serious illness of a relative, and Andy O'Hare also left for Liverpool at about the same time. In the final stages I was thus in charge of the column and of the brigade.

I remember well receiving, on about 9th July, a letter from General Mulcahy ordering a Truce on 11th July at 11 a.m. The Truce came and we enjoyed the respite which I think was deserved. Very soon, in a matter of a couple of weeks, training and re-arming began on a serious scale in preparation for a resumption of hostilities. A camp was opened at the foot of Slieve Gullion and thither came officers, N.C.Os. and men from all units of our division to be trained in the use of arms, grenades, incendiary bombs, signals, tactics, mines and explosives generally. I remember one day at the camp we were visited by Chief of Staff Mulcahy. We were deeply impressed by his efficiency and heard with interest the 'slating' he gave

Appendix 6

National Archives Act, 1986, Regulations, 1988

ABSTRACTION OF PART(S) PURSUANT TO REGULATION 8

Form to be completed and inserted in the original record in place of each part abstracted

(i) **Reference number of the separate cover under which the abstracted part has been filed:** WS 1148/A

(ii) **How many documents have been abstracted:** 1p

(iii) **The date of each such document:** 23 April 1955.

(iv) **The description of each document:**

WS 1148 Witness Statement Patrick J Casey p 21.

name of individuals.

(Where appropriate, a composite description may be entered in respect of two or more related documents).

(v) **Reason(s) why the part has been abstracted for retention:**

(c) **Would or might cause distress or danger to living persons on the ground that they contain information about individuals, or would or might be likely to lead to an action for damages for defamation.**

(These will be the reasons given on the certificate under Section 8(4).)

J Moloney

Name: (J. Moloney.)

Grade: Col.

Department/Office/Court:

Date: 7 March 2003.

to the officers of the North Louth Brigade for their complete inactivity in the War of Independence. The officers of North Louth specially picked out for the lecture on their failure to fight were and I am sure their faces were red to get such a castigation in front of all the officers from Armagh and South Down.

It was about the month of August 1921 that Jeff O'Hare died. He was wounded at the Egyptian Arch (Newry) ambush and had been taken prisoner. The wounds he received were superficial and his death was caused by deliberate inattention on the part of the British. Dr. Flood, who attended O'Hare when wounded, gave me this as his opinion.

Peter Shields, who was killed at the same ambush, and whose body was buried secretly in a field near Omeath, Co.Louth, had been buried in a hastily made box in swampy ground. It was decided to give both O'Hare and Shields a public funeral. We disinterred the body of Peter Shields. We unearthed the coffin at about 11 p.m. by torchlight and I shall never forget the scene. A lead-lined coffin was provided and all we could do was to empty one casket into the other. A local plumber sealed up the lead container and it was brought to the Cathedral at Newry. Next day was Sunday and a public funeral of vast dimensions took place to these two heroes who had made the supreme sacrifice for Ireland. I was in charge of the armed escort and firing party. The whole town turned out and the cortege was certainly of impressive dimensions.

During the period of the Truce our cause had become extremely popular and thousands of recruits joined the Volunteers. It can be said that the vast majority were simply climbing on the band wagon. This popular attraction to the Cause was to become an embarrassment to us later on. It became obvious to us that should there be a resumption of

hostilities the fighting burden would fall on the same shoulders as hitherto. We in the north had an opportunity to prove this in other contacts with the enemy in the Spring of 1922,

I remember one evening about November 1921, I was at a dance (Sunday night) in the local Trades Union Hall, when a messenger came to me asking me to go at once to the shop of Andy Boyd, a local hardware merchant. I went immediately and found two prisoners who had escaped from Ballykinlar Camp. They were, of course, Volunteers and had escaped in the uniforms of British soldiers. Their names were Colgan from Maynooth, and Fitzpatrick from West Cork. I advised them to stay in Newry where they would be perfectly safe and to lie low for a few days until the hub-bub of their escape had died down.

They were bent on getting to Dublin to proclaim to all and sundry their escape and to get a share of hero-worship. I suppose like all the others who were imprisoned, very many of whom made no effort to avoid arrest, considering that the comforts of an internment camp were to be much preferred to taking their chances with the fighting Volunteers. Personally I knew of many such people who all but invited the police to come and arrest them.

However, to get back to this incident, no amount of persuasion had any effect on the escapees and so, Andy Boyd having provided the car, I agreed to go with them, accompanied by a local Volunteer lad, Phil McCorry. There were in the car Boyd, McCorry, Colgan, Fitzpatrick and myself. At the top of Bridge St. Newry, we were stopped by a patrol of police under a D.I. They were unarmed because of the Truce. McCorry and I were similarly unarmed for the same reason. The police asked our names (they knew Boyd and me) and then told us to proceed. The escapees gave fictitious names.

On the way up the Dublin road I again tried to persuade our friends to abandon the journey and return to Newry, but it was of no avail and on we went. We passed through Dundalk about midnight and on through Drogheda. I began to think that my fears were unfounded when, at Julianstown Road Junction, a military lorry was placed across the road completely blocking it. We were at once surrounded by police and military. We were told to get out and were thoroughly searched and questioned. The escapees gave wrong names and Boyd said we'd just been to a coursing match at Cloughogue near Newry. In the course of the search a revolver was found on Boyd. He said, rather naively that he had this for carrying notes at the coursing match. This, however, did not satisfy the curiosity of the police - I felt that it rather amused them. Just then a soldier ran over and said that he had found a revolver in the car. This was Boyd's - I did not know he was carrying arms; had I known, I would have forbade him to do so. He had no intention of using it and I am afraid it was just an effort at a little swashbuckling.

We were now loaded into two lorries under a heavy escort of soldiers and Tans and, amidst a storm of curses, we were conveyed to Millmount Barracks at Drogheda. As we entered the barracks the sentry who, apparently was very nervous, discharged a rifle shot which went over our heads. In accordance with usual military routine, the sentry was relieved and questioned. We, the prisoners, were lined up before the guardroom. A young officer of the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry came along with the captured revolver in his hand. He examined the barrel and said that the man who owned the gun should be ashamed of himself, it was in such a filthy condition.

Another British officer, a very nice fellow indeed, came along and, having been an officer at Ballykinlar Camp,

immediately identified the escapees with the remarks: "Well, how are you Fitz. and you Colgan? Tell me, how did ye get out?" Fitzpatrick replied: "We can't tell you that, because we might try it again".

Eventually we were put into a covered lorry and sentries were posted fore and aft with fixed bayonets. We settled down for the night, lying on the floor of the lorry. The chimes of the local church rang out each quarter hour. At about 4 a.m. a Black and Tan came to the lorry, threw his leg over the tailboard and with revolver in hand started to threaten to shoot the whole .... lot of us. The sentries never made any attempt to stop him. The Tan appeared to have quite a lot of drink taken and went away eventually and we were left in peace until daybreak. We were pretty cold and our breakfast, which consisted of a huge pan of rashers and onions and a bucketful of hot strong tea. The British soldiers were, in the main, very good fellows indeed as were the officers and N.C.Os.

At 10.30 a.m. we were paraded before Captain Matthews the C.O. Fitz and Colgan were sent back to Ballykinlar and we were released. I remember Fitzpatrick asking a British sergeant to get him a bottle of whiskey, which the sergeant obligingly provided. Fitz paid for it of course.

Just after Christmas 1921, I was in Dublin, on what business I cannot now recall. We had a car and my companions included Jim Goodfellow and Andy O'Hare. At the end of our business I decided to visit my sister Dora, who was a probationer nurse in Baggot St. Hospital. I saw her for a few minutes and we were just about to move off when a policeman came along to us. I might mention that we were fully armed with pistols and grenades. He said there had been a serious bank robbery and, as we looked most suspicious, he desired us to go with him to Donnybrook police station. As we were completely innocent, and being then well-disposed

towards the police in their efforts to apprehend criminals, we decided to go to the police station. We duly arrived and spent the night there. It is rather amusing to recall that we retained our arsenal and could at any time have shot up the place and taken our leave. However, the Truce was still on (after the Treaty) and, as I say, we were neither criminals nor the friends of criminals. We spent the night playing a popular game at that time - "Put and take". In the morning, after 9 a.m., the station sergeant 'phoned the Liaison Officer, Commandant MacAllister, at the Gresham Hotel. He told the sergeant we were O.K. and to release us at once.

I remember the morning of the signing of the Treaty. As previously mentioned, the Volunteers had all along been preparing for a resumption of hostilities and part of my duties was to visit constantly the battalions in the brigade district. On this particular day, I was in the Banbridge district and was staying at the house of a company commander, Brian McKevitt, whose father was a schoolmaster in a country school near Banbridge. When we awoke in the morning, the 'Independent' had arrived and contained all details of the terms and signing of the Treaty. I remember well McKevitt, senior, saying that the terms were not a settlement and would lead to bloodshed. How true, in fact, were his words to become in the matter of a few months!

The Treaty was now a fact and, as part of our divisional area included North Louth, we took over Dundalk Barracks (military) as well as the various police stations. The taking over of the material in the barracks was effected by John Quinn as Q.M. He told me afterwards that his signature on the various handing-over documents, which were initials 'S. Ua C.' (Sean Ua Cuinn) caused quite

a lot of comment and amusement to the British officer handing over.

We had now a barracks and were provisioned by the new Provisional Government on whose behalf Aiken had taken over the military barracks. He preached the doctrine of complete disagreement on the one hand and justified (to himself) the taking over of the barracks as a base from which to launch attacks on the Six County area. Apparently, Aiken had received promises of almost unlimited supplies of arms to fully equip the Volunteers in the Northern area. In this connection it was decided to have rifles, revolvers, etc. transferred from all Volunteer units in the liberated area to the Volunteers in the Six County area. This was done so that, in the event of capture, the British Government could not say that the Provisional Government was passing on the handed over arms to the Volunteers in the north. The arms transferred from the southern units were, of course, replaced by Collins from handed-over British stores.

We now had a base in which it was possible to train and equip men and from which it was possible to prepare and launch attacks on the northern area. Early in 1922 it was decided at high level that so far as the Six Counties were concerned, there was still fighting to do. Accordingly, we did resume the fighting and I remember on one occasion during this period a rather spectacular contact with the enemy. A large patrol of B. Specials used move along the streets of Newry each evening. Their beat used take them through the main street (Hill St.) up Bridge St. and along Queen St. We decided to attack and destroy this patrol which was usually 30 to 40 strong and we planned that an ambush should take place at the end of Queen St. nearest Bridge St. where a dead wall runs for some distance. Opposite to this was an estate which was known to the old

people as Turner's Glen (Turner, who had lived there, was one of the 1798 United men who turned informer).

We entered the glen through the main gates and took up our positions opposite the Queen St. dead wall. We were well armed with two sub-machine guns, rifles, grenades and revolvers. Our intention was to allow the complete patrol to enter Queen St. and to proceed until the tail had cleared the Bridge St. corner and then to annihilate them against the wall. Had our plans succeeded, it is quite certain that there would have been few survivors in that patrol; but, alas, the patrol did not turn up and one may be forgiven for thinking that some informer in our camp gave a 'tip-off' to the patrol and so saved their lives.

We waited for hours behind those walls and the night was not by any means a warm one. Eventually we decided that as 'Mahomet would not come to the mountain - the mountain would have to come to Mohamet'. Accordingly, it was decided that we should seek out the enemy in the open streets and to give battle wherever we found him.

There were about eight of us and we patrolled the town of Newry. We walked in the middle of the road along Queen St., Needham St., Monaghan St., Edward St., Trevor Hill, past the Town Hall and up Hill St., but we could find no one "to tread on the tails of our coats". We had proceeded up Hill St. and had reached Hyde Market. John Quinn and I were together in the front file, when we saw first the glazed peaks of a police patrol and then the burly black figures loomed out of the darkness. The whole affair happened very suddenly and Quinn immediately wheeled and shouted "Stick 'em up". The police apparently thought that we were B. Specials and endeavoured to parley with us. Then someone of our Volunteers in the rear fired a shot and immediately the battle opened and we were now facing each other lying or kneeling on the street. In the

silence of the night I can well remember the terrific noise of rifle fire, the chatter of sub-machine guns and bursting of a grenade or two.

The encounter did not last long because at any moment we were sure to be surrounded by the enemy. The police retreated rapidly and broke off the engagement. We made our way up Hyde Market and so across country to our old base at Corrogs near Warrenpoint. When we checked over our men it was soon realised that those who took part were those who had been tried and proven in the old fires. The Truce boys were absent.

We had no intention of seeking shelter over the border; it was an easy thing to do, but it was decided that if there was fighting to be done, it should be confined within the enemy-held country and shelter should not be sought in the I.F.S. unless in an extreme emergency. We occupied a large house owned by an unfriendly member of the landed gentry. Next morning we were amazed to find that a truce had been concluded between Michael Collins and Sir James Craig, and so we marched back again into Newry to the scene of our somewhat bloody encounter of less than 12 hours previously.

This truce held for a few weeks and again feverish preparations were in hand for a further effort to liberate the northern counties. The H.Q. of this effort was centred in Dundalk barracks, recently taken over by us from the British. Aiken was chosen as the leader of this effort which was a planned full-scale rising. I remember well the tremendous activity in and about Dundalk. Thousands of rifles, sub-machine guns, grenades, boxes of ammunition, land mines, detonators, etc. were passed over the border by various routes and dispersed through the six counties. At the same time, enemy-held posts along the border were under constant attack.

Around this time we were very short of detonators and I was sent over to Glasgow to see if some could be obtained. I had introductions to the various Scottish units. I boarded the boat at Belfast and felt a bit uneasy when R.U.C. came aboard to make an inspection. However, I duly reached Glasgow and finally found myself at Uddingston, a district of that city. The local Volunteers were paraded in the village hall and afterwards I had a talk with the local commander - I believe his name was Maguire. It was arranged that on the following night we would raid a colliery to get the detonators. I told them they were required urgently and that we could not wait. Along we went on the following night to the colliery - held up the watchman and bound him. We went to the magazine and secured a substantial quantity of detonators. On our way from the raid I fell into a slag pit and was covered with coal dust and slime. I was billeted that night at a schoolteacher's house in Bothwell. The other chaps went to their homes and were promptly arrested during the early morning. I may add that my fall into the slag pit saved my bacon, otherwise I would have accompanied one of the Volunteer officers to his home and so would have gone down for seven years' penal servitude like the others. I went down to Liverpool by rail with my haul and crossed to Ireland via the Dundalk boat.

I remember one morning at this time taking a few men with me to snipe the R.U.C. barracks at Jonesboro', just on the border. We opened fire from the wall at Ravensdale Park. The police replied and soon we noticed one of them coming out of the barracks dressed only in shirt and trousers. He ran to a machine gun post and opened fire on us. The exchange of shooting lasted for quite a while, but the machine gunner never regained his redoubt. He was bowled over on the return journey.

On another occasion we crossed swords again in more or less the same locality. A patrol of police was seen nightly coming up the road towards Dromintee. It was a road junction overlooked by MacGuill's stores and pub. Aiken was in charge and it was the intention to destroy this patrol which usually came in one or two lorries and went in the direction of Newry.

Frank Aiken was with the main force at Maguill's and I was detailed to take charge of an incendiary bombing squad. I had about 8 or 9 men with me and we were equipped with small arms and Molotov cocktails. Our orders were to throw these cocktails at the lorries and burn them and their occupants. My position was on the Newry side of Maguill's on the same side of the road. By the way, these cocktails consisted of bottles filled with petrol and paraffin with an elastic band around each. The band held a large two-headed fusée or match. To throw, the match was struck and the bottle fired; the bottle broke or should break, in a moment a blazing inferno was created. Other cocktails consisted of phosphorus. MIXTURE.

We were in position only for a short while when we heard commotion and some shooting. Apparently what happened was that one of our lads, Frank McMahon (Newry), went out to reconnoitre in front of our position - that is, Aiken's main position. He went a short distance down the road towards Forkhill when, to his surprise, he encountered a police patrol on foot advancing stealthily along each side of the road. He wasn't quite sure, because the night was very dark, that they were in fact police and so he halted them. Immediately firing opened and soon the fighting flared up all along our position. Eventually Aiken decided to withdraw, the foot patrol had upset all our schemes. The order to leave did not reach me and so all the others had gone for some time before

I realised the situation and was able to 'pull out' in time. By now, the fire from the foot patrol was reinforced by the machine gun of an armoured car which arrived on the scene. We duly crossed the border and got to Dundalk in the course of a couple of hours.

On that same night, another party left Dundalk barracks on a reprisal mission. Some nationalist youths had been taken from their homes and were brutally murdered. When the reprisals party returned to Dundalk next morning, we learned that a terrible trail of death and destruction had been left in their wake and the original killings had been avenged many times over. I remember that my feeling at this reprisal was one of horror when I heard the details. Nothing could justify this holocaust of unfortunate protestants. Neither youth nor age was spared and some of the killings took place in the presence of their families.

Writing this, 35 years later, I still have the view that it was a horrible affair - nothing could justify such a killing of unarmed people and I was surprised at the time that Frank Aiken had planned and authorised this.

Eventually a day was fixed for a general rising in the six northern counties and so, as the date approached, the preparations became more intense and feverish. Our plans were to apply a general scorched earth policy in the entire area. I was Vice-Brigadier of the Brigade and the brigade staff was distributed over the three battalions - Banbridge, Newry, Kilkeel. I was assigned to take command of the Kilkeel district, the battalion commander of which was Hugh O'Hogan.

The rising was to begin at 9 a.m. on a Monday morning in the Spring of 1922, I cannot now tell which month it was. However, I left Dundalk Barracks on Sunday evening in a car driven by Mickey O'Hagan of Dundalk. I was alone (except

for O'Hagan) fully equipped and armed. O'Hagan and I reached Rostrevor on our way. We had a puncture there and proceeded to repair it on the roadside near the Great Northern Hotel. Whilst we were stopped, a lorry of police passed by - evidently in search of us. I had stopped at Warrenpoint to visit my sister Dora who lived there and, apparently, the news was passed along to the police. As we had nearly completed the puncture repair operation, another car arrived. In it was Malachy Quinn (adjutant of the brigade). Malachy appeared to be almost breathless with excitement and told me that he had been sent especially by Frank AIKEN with instructions that I should report back to Dundalk at once.

My immediate reaction was one of annoyance and vexation because there was a lot of necessary preliminary work to be done before 9 a.m. on the following day when the rising was to begin. Let me say now that our orders were to attack and destroy all enemy posts and to destroy all enemy forces whether R.I.C., R.U.C., British soldiers or B. men in our respective districts.

Malachy Quinn motored ON HIS to Kilkeel to warn Hugh O'Hagan that, so far as our division was concerned, the rising would not take place. In this part of Co. Down (south east) the rising was to be for us a fight to the finish, for, apart from the fact that our land retreat could be easily cut off, two destroyers were anchored in Carlingford Lough, and these maintained constant patrols in the Lough.

I returned to Dundalk that evening as directed and I saw Frank Aiken. I asked him what was the position and he replied that our Division was taking no part in the rising, but that there was no cancellation so far as the remainder of the NORTHERN counties was concerned. He gave as his reason the fact that the Armagh Brigade was not fully equipped and for that reason he felt justified in withdrawing his Division from action.

I pointed out that the South Down Brigade was fully armed and that we should be permitted to take our part. He was, however, adamant and his orders were paramount. I told him also that our failure (Armagh and South Down) would mean, if nothing else, increased concentration of enemy forces in the other northern counties, but this aspect of things did not appear to interest him.

On the following morning the rising in the rest of the Six County area did take place and was quickly suppressed with considerable loss of life and arms on our part.

I could never understand Aiken's real motive in not fighting his Division on this important occasion. He remained in Dundalk barracks inactive and remote from his command and so petered out this latest, and maybe the last, rising in the Ulster area.

No fault could be found with the men of South Down or Co. Armagh. They were disappointed that they were not permitted to take their rightful place with their fellow Northmen in the (as they thought) ultimate fight for the complete liberation of Ireland.

That finished the fight for Ulster, and so, gradually, eyes were turned to the conflict already raising its ugly head in the south.

Signed Patrick Casey (Commandant)
South Down Brigade, of
Irish Volunteers.
Period 1916 – 1922.
Date April 23 1955

Signed: Patrick Casey (Commandant)
South Down Brigade of Irish Volunteers

APPENDIX "A".

John Quinn, Newry.

Quartermaster, 4th Northern Division, I.R.A.

As one who was closely associated with John Quinn during the period 1916 to 1921, I should like to record a few notes. He became actively associated with the Volunteers in 1918 and took part in almost all the engagements in the 4th Northern Divisional area.

To my personal knowledge he took part in the fights at Newtownhamilton, Egyptian Arch, attack on McEvoy's Corner, Newry, attack at Needham Place, Newry, fight at Corrags and derailing of troop train, May, 1920, the liquidation of Head Constable Kearney etc., etc.

Quinn was of low stature, frail and pale, but wiry. At the close of the fight for Independence he would have been about 20 years and at that time he was Divisional Quartermaster. He was a keen amateur racing cyclist and believed in keeping himself fit even during the darkest days. I recall him wakening up in one of the various hides-out we had and taking a bottle of olive oil in his hands. And he would massage his legs for a period before getting up so that he could keep in trim for his cycle racing. John was a total abstainer and had no time at all for those who took drink. This could be said indeed for all the Volunteers of that time. A drinker was quickly eliminated from the ranks and this more than anything else ensured the success of the cause. I cannot recall any better soldier than John Quinn. He was as cool as the proverbial cucumber in a fight and never, at any time, did he show any indication of panic or fear.

Talking of the question of keeping himself fit, I can always remember his attitude to the dirt, lice and fleas which were so often encountered in our travels. In those days if one had a bed it was usually only for a night. Quinn always carried a spare shirt, usually a blue one, which he would don on retiring and he would change back into his day shirt in the morning.

Quinn was not a prude and always had an eye for a pretty girl. In those days it was the fashion for girls to wear plaited hair which were called pigtails, and many a time we'd walk after a couple of 'fillys', as he called them, betting jocosely on the length of the pigtails.

In addition to his cycle racing, John Quinn was very interested in point-to-point races and was quite a rider of note. I remember one night in the spring of 1921 there was a concert of some kind in Newry town hall and Quinn and I went to the balcony. The show progressed and at a stage half way through we saw a posse of police entering and remaining at the one doorway. Quinn and I were armed but we had decided beforehand that we would not be captured alive if possible. We were cornered and had to consult together as to how we would get out. There was only one way - to clear the balcony and drop into the main hall. So when the lights dimmed we moved quietly to the front and at a given signal we slipped over the balcony and dropped into the hall. There was some commotion and people were knocked about but in the melee that followed we moved to the door and made our escape.

After the liquidation of Kearney, John Quinn and I rode to Kilkee and stayed the night with his uncle, Edward Quinn, Attacal. John had a racing bicycle and I had another supplied by him. In the morning we rode down the hills and I remember how difficult it was for me to regulate the downward progress by means of a backward pressure on the pedals of the racing machine.

In the attack on Newtownhamilton, Quinn and I were together during the entire fight and, as dawn broke on the morning of the 8th May, 1920, we were fighting from an outhouse in the R.I.C. backyard. The battle began at 11.30 p.m. and finished at 7 o'clock the following morning.

The Truce came and after that we had much training and general activity. The Treaty was signed and Aiken took over Dundalk Barracks on behalf of the Irish Government. Shortly after this Quinn and I were motor-cycling along the road to Greenore. We rested at a spot along the road and during a conversation my friend said, "Pat, I will never survive the next fight". Nor did he.

In August, 1922, the Civil War started and John Quinn and I parted company, taking different sides. I was in Wexford when I heard of his death and I was deeply depressed at the passing of this stalwart lad. I learned afterwards the details of his capture from Commandant Cunningham, the officer in charge of the raiding party. Cunningham described the capture to me. It took place in a farmhouse at Ardee. The place was surrounded and there was a good deal of shooting. In the middle of the firing Quinn opened the door and threw a grenade and immediately after the burst or explosion he made an attempt to get away. He fired on a young soldier,who was standing near the door, but missed him. The soldier fired and hit John. He was taken to hospital where he passed away. So John Quinn's remark to me about his next fight was prophetic. Ireland gave birth to no better or braver soldier than Seán Quinn. He died of wounds in the spring of 1923 at the early age of 22. May God rest his soul.

APPENDIX "B".

Those taking part in military actions in the 4th Northern Divisional area which comprised County Armagh, South Down and North Louth during the fight for Independence, 1916 to 1921 -

(1) Elimination of Head Constable Kearney. John Quinn (dead), Peter Shields (dead), Pat Fearon (dead), myself (Pat Casey), and James Goodfellow (dead).

(2) Newtownhamilton barrack attack, 7th May, 1920. Frank Aiken, Camlough, John McCoy, Mullaghbawn, Patrick O'Rourke, Newry, Pat McAleenan, Pat Rafferty, Jack McKinley, all from Shinn, Newry, John Quinn, myself (Pat Casey). There were many others from County Armagh whose names I don't remember.

(3) Attack at McEvoy's Corner, Junction of Quays with King Street, Newry, Andy O'Hare, Dominick Doherty, Peter O'Hare (dead), John Quinn (dead), myself (Pat Casey), Matt Grey and Jimmy Murphy (dead) of Monaghan.

This attack was on an enemy patrol consisting of Head Constable and twelve men, attacked by grenade and revolver. It was a success. The complete patrol was knocked out between killed and wounded.

(4) Shooting of Constable Gabbie on 30th June, 1921, in Newry. Pat Fearon.

(5) Ambush at Corrags. Frank Aiken, Seán Quinn, Pat Hughes, Pat Casey, Ted McEvoy and Jimmy Murphy.

(6) Ambush at foot of Hyde Market, Newry. Those taking part in that were John Quinn, myself (Pat Casey), Pat Fearon and Ned Fitzpatrick.

(7) Abortive attack at Plaster outside Dundalk. John McCoy, Frank Aiken, John Quinn, myself (Pat Casey), Hugh Gribbin, John Wright alias O'Rorke, and James Byrne of Banbridge, Pat Rafferty and Pat McAleenan both of Shinn, Newry.

I was present at the main ambush position and so was Gribbin. John Quinn and Andy O'Hare were located at a house occupied by Auxiliaries. Quinn and O'Hare were the only ones in contact with the enemy. Auxiliary lorries did not pass our ambush position. The attacking forces consisted mainly of men from Armagh and Down.

Narrative begins:-

During the period 1912 to 1913 the district from whence I came was in a state of turmoil. This was in the town of Newry. And being so located between Orange and Green, one was virtually in the middle of the forces of reaction and those engaged in the fight for freedom.

The writer at this period (1913) was of tender years being 13 years old. Men matured quickly in those days and long before one discarded the trappings of boyhood one was actively engaged in things that rightly pertained to those of more mature years.