

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21  
BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21  
No. W.S. 1,150

ROINN  COSANTA.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS.

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 1,150

Witness

Thomas McInerney,  
Southpark,  
Ardrahan,  
Co. Galway.

Identity.

Commandant Gort Brigade;  
Comd't. Ardrahan Batt'n. Co. Galway.

Subject.

National activities, West Galway,  
1906-1921.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil

File No. W.S. 754

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# ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

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STATEMENT BY

No. W.S. 1,150

THOMAS McINERNEY, SOUTHPARK, ARDRAHAN, CO. GALWAY.

I was born on the 12th December, 1883 at Cahermore, Ardrahan, Co. Galway, and was educated at Killamoran N.S. in the parish of Gort. I went to a night school in Northampton, Parish of Kinvara, Co. Galway, for two winters. I was 18 years of age when I finished day School so that I was attending the night school until 1903. The teacher in the night school was Thomas Harren a National teacher who taught at night after his usual day's work. He charged no fee. He taught us Literature, Arithmetic and Irish - O'Growney Parts I and II.

I left Cahermore in 1905 and went to Craughwell where I shod the Galway Blazers for eight years. I am the seventh generation of blacksmiths. In Craughwell I worked for the late Thomas Kenny, who, in addition to teaching me my trade, swore me into the I.R.B. in the year 1906. He was Centre for Craughwell and the membership was about twenty. I attended meetings roughly once a fortnight in addition to special meetings called to discuss some particular question. Kenny was later on county Centre for Galway. I ceased to work for him at Christmas 1914. There was plenty of activity by the I.R.B. in and around Craughwell during the eight years I worked there. McGoldrick an R.I.C. man was shot dead in 1909. There were other incidents in which I took part but I do not care to give details of them. In any event they are outside the scope of the period 1913-1921.

I omitted to mention at the outset that my father took a very active part in the struggle for the land in the days of the Land League. He was sentenced to and served three months in Galway Jail for interfering with the R.I.C. during an eviction in Cahermore. He was put on bread and water on two separate occasions during those three months for refusing to comply with the prison rules.

I joined the Craughwell Branch of the Sinn Fein Movement in 1908. At that time there were only three branches in County Galway viz. Loughrea, Kilrickle and Craughwell. The main objective of the branch was to support the Irish Language and home-manufactured goods. I remember that a man named Bartley Hynes of Killinny was summoned for having his name in Irish on his cart. He was fined for the "offence" but I cannot remember the amount of the fine. A ballad to the air of "The Old Plaid Shawl" was composed about the incident.

I joined the Irish Volunteers in the year 1913 when they were first formed in Craughwell. There were up to thirty Volunteers in the Company. It was named the Rockfield Company. The Captain was a man named Healy. He was elected Captain as it was thought that he had a better knowledge of drill than the other members of the Company. Thomas Kenny was an Officer but I cannot remember exactly what his rank was. We drilled openly twice a week. The R.I.C. were always present on these occasions. They had a great dislike of the Craughwell men. They even followed the Craughwell Hurling Team every time they played a match. A man named Smith who was Head Groom at Rockfield House was our drill instructor up to the time of the split between the Redmondite and the Irish Volunteers. He was a British ex-soldier and was pro-British in his outlook but he knew his drill well and was a good instructor. He ceased to come after the split. He was replaced by another British ex-soldier named John Naughten from Athenry. He remained with us for some time and by the time he left our own Officers were able to do the job themselves.

I left Craughwell in 1914, returned to Cahermore, and commenced to organise the I.R.B. In a short time I had a Centre in all the neighbouring parishes. On my return home I

also joined the Ardrahan Company of the Irish volunteers and took part in all their activities which included drilling twice a week mainly foot drill and occasionally extended order drill and scouting cross country.

I went with the Company to a big review of Volunteers in Athenry during the year 1915. I remember that the Company was armed and that the late Larry Lardner was in charge of the whole parade and that The O'Rahilly and -----Judge were on the platform. The O'Rahilly and Judge both addressed the volunteers but I cannot recollect anything of what they said. There was no conflict between the R.I.C and the Volunteers that day. Peter Howley was Captain of the Company at that time but I took charge of it going and coming from Athenry. Captain Howley may have been in prison at the time.

Early in 1916 Liam Mellows selected me as a Brigade Scout, Volunteer John Cleary of Athenry was the nearest Brigade Scout to me. Volunteer William Thompson of Ardrahan Company did a good deal of scouting for me during Easter Week 1916. On Easter Sunday 1916 my Company (Ardrahan) mobilised at Early's Wood near Peterswell. The majority of the Company turned out - about sixteen men. Peter Howley was in charge. All were armed with shotguns and some had revolvers as well. On Sunday evening about 4 p.m. we got McNeill's countermanding order. It might have been Padraig Fahy who brought the Order. He was there and he was the most likely person to have brought it. He was Brigade Secretary at the time. The only people who knew why we were mobilised were Captain Peter Howley, Brigade Secretary Padraig Fahy, John Coen (an I.R.B. man) and I (a Brigade Scout). The Company got orders from Captain Howley to disperse and they returned to their homes. I did not return home as I thought that I might be arrested.

I cannot remember whether it was Easter Monday night or the following morning that a dispatch came to either Captain Howley or Padraig Fahy, that the Rebellion was on in Dublin. Likely it was Monday night as we mobilised again on Tuesday morning. The same members of the Company who had turned out on Easter Sunday again turned out on Tuesday morning at Tullyra. Captain Howley received a dispatch from Mellows that day (Tuesday) to guard the Limerick/Galway road in and around Ardahan to prevent British Forces from the south coming unawares at the main body of the Volunteers at Moyode Castle. The Company took up positions in the wood at Tullyra. I remained with them until Wednesday morning. On Wednesday I visited Gort, Kiltartan, Ballycahalan, Kinvara and Ballinderren Companies and found them all mobilised and standing to arms in their respective areas. As Brigade Scout I was in touch with all those Companies during the week.

On Thursday Captain Howley got word from Moyode Castle that the Volunteers there were about to leave as they had received information that the British Forces were moving in towards their position. On the same day (Thursday) I received information that the Kinvara Company was marching towards Moyode Castle without having orders to do so. I got in touch with them and ordered them to return to their own area immediately. The idea was that the Kinvara, Gort, Kiltartan, Ballycahalan and Ballinderren Companies were to stand to in their own areas until they were required to go into action as the necessity arose.

It was either Thursday evening or Friday morning that I received a dispatch that the main body of the Volunteers were moving south from Moyode to Limepark, and that the roads

should be scouted in advance. The scouting was done by the Ardrahan Company and the movement of the main body to Limepark was carried out without incident. The Ardrahan Company then stayed with the main body at Limepark. I again visited the Companies named above. They had remained standing to all the time until we heard on Saturday that the main body had dispersed.

On Monday the 1st May I was arrested in my own home in Cahermore by R.I.C. and taken to Ardrahan R.I.C. barracks. Seven Members of the Ardrahan Company who had also been arrested were already at the barracks when I was brought in. They were Volunteers William Thompson, Martin Thompson, Michael Silver, Patrick Silver, Martin Tannian, Martin Keighery and one other whose name I cannot recall. The R.I.C. took us to Galway Jail in eight motor-cars each car taking one prisoner handcuffed to one <sup>of two</sup> R.I.C. men <sup>in each car</sup> I do not know the strength of our escort on the journey to Galway as I could not see them. *J.M.C.*

When we arrived in Galway we saw about 200 other County Galway prisoners. All the prisoners including myself were taken to Dublin by train on the following Saturday. We were first taken to Richmond Barracks. There was room ~~there~~ only for twenty-five and the remainder were marched over to Arbour Hill Barracks. There were about twenty-five put into cells there so the remainder were put up in the gymnasium. We were kept in Arbour Hill Barracks for a week. I remember Michael Fleming of Clarenbridge being with me in Arbour Hill. His five sons who also turned out for the Rising were also prisoners but I cannot say if

they were in Arbour Hill with us. Michael Fleming called me to look at the British Military bringing the bodies of Sean McDermot and James Connolly for burial at Arbour Hill, but I did not hear him as I was asleep at the time. Michael told me about it afterwards.

The next day we were brought to Kilmainham Jail where there were two prisoners put into each cell. Pierce McCann was in my cell. We were a week there together. McCann was a very devout man and spent all his time praying or learning the Irish Language on which he was very keen. When he came across a difficult word he wrote it on a piece of paper and pinned it on the wall. He took a good look at it then turned his back on it trying to memorise it. When he was certain that he knew the word he took down the piece of paper until he met the next difficult word.

Eoin McNeill was a prisoner in Kilmainham at that time also. I remember that he gave me a new shirt. He got a parcel containing half a dozen new shirts and he gave me one of them. I needed the shirt very badly as I had had no change from the time I was arrested nearly three weeks before.

Many of the County Galway Volunteers were tried at Kilmainham and sentenced to varying terms of imprisonment. We were marched from Kilmainham to Richmond Barracks on the 20th May. It was only a very short journey. I remember the date well and am very definite about it. There were twenty-five in each room in Richmond Barracks. Eoin McNeill and Pierce McCann were in my room. Sanitary arrangements and

conditions generally were very bad. McNeill protested against these conditions and after a day or two we received clean blankets. I was deported to England on the 31st May, 1916, and released under the general amnesty at Christmas, 1916.

When the Gort Battalion was re-organised in 1917 I was elected Commandant. I held this rank until 1922. I was attending to general routine of the Battalion and during the Conscription scare I cycled twice weekly to Galway City, a distance of fourteen Irish miles.

In 1919 I raided ex-soldiers' houses for arms in Peterswell and Ballymena. Disarming Police patrol at Eserkelly. The burning of Derrybrien and Peterswell barracks, and a Police Hut at Kilbecanty. The ambush of Sergeant Elliot at Ardrahan. In 1920 I had a number of men ambush a Police patrol at Kinvara, Kilmacduagh and Castledaly. Disarming Police at Peterswell. My house was burned in September, 1920. The Court awarded £800 for the burning of house and furniture but this sum was never paid. In 1921 ambush at Coole and Cloughballymore. The cutting of telegraph poles and the tearing up of the railroad. Attempted ambush of Tom Carr at Tierneevan.

Truce Period Usual Volunteer activities. I was called to Dublin on several occasions often twice a week. I was I.R.B. Centre at the time. I was one of the District Justices for South Galway. I had to see to the enforcing of decisions and to order and preside at Courtsmartial.

General The reason why there were not more ambushes in this area is scarcity of arms. I sent £40 across to



England for arms. The arms got as far as Dublin and were seized on by G.H.Q. as I had interfered with the H.Q. method of purchase. I hold letters from Mick Collins to prove this. I had direct communication with G.H.Q. Dublin from 1920 to 1922. I still hold these letters and dispatches.

About thirty volunteers were engaged in the attack on the R.I.C. patrol at Castledaly, and four in the disarming of the two R.I.C. men at Peterswell. My house was burned in September, 1920. The R.I.C. probably heard of the ambush prepared for them near Kinvara. In any event they always knew me as an active Volunteer Officer.

One spy was executed in my area. His name was James Morris and he lived one mile from the town of Kinvara. Two further cases of suspected spying were also investigated but there was not sufficient proof in either case and they were dropped. None of the local R.I.C. was friendly. They all accompanied the Black and Tans and Auxiliaries on their raids.

Patrick Loughnan belonged to Beagh Company. He was a fine athletic man over six feet in height and was about twenty nine years old at the time he and his brother Henry were murdered by the Auxiliaries. He was one of the men I selected in the Beagh Company area and swore into the I.R.B. Under my orders he raided the house of John Carr, Tierneevan, Gort, for an automatic pistol which I knew Carr had in his possession. Carr was an ex-R.I.C. man. Patrick Loughnan had a surprisingly weak voice for so big a man. He was masked when raiding for the gun but the Carr family took note of his voice. John Carr's son William joined the Black and Tans shortly after the raid and when Patrick Loughnan and his

brother Henry were arrested by the Black and Tans, William Carr was with them. I am of opinion that William Carr was in the house when it was raided for the automatic and that when the brothers were arrested he recognised Patrick's voice. Patrick Loughnan and his brother Henry were brutally murdered by the Tans and the whole area was shocked by the news.

The local people were very good indeed. They subscribed generously to arms fund and other collections and the Volunteers had their support right through the War of Independence.

I append a detailed account of my prison experiences in the year 1916 under the title "The Truth About the Treatment of Irish Prisoners in English Prisons". It was written while these things were still fresh and clear in my mind. I also append a list of the Officers of Gort Battalion from 1916 to 1921.

Gort Battalion Area

List of Officers from 1916 to 1921.

1916

Padraig Ó Fathaigh Brigade Secretary.

Tom McInerney Brigade Scout.

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1917

Battalion Commandant Tom McInerney.

Vice-Commandant: Peter Howley.

Quartermaster: P. Ruane

Adjutant: P.J. Piggot.

Thomas Helly: Captain, Ardrahan Company

John Burke do. Kinvara do.

John Fahy do. Peterswell do.

John Coen do. Kilbecanty do.

John Hayes do. Gort do.

John Hayes do. Kiltartan do.

Paddy Flynn do. Derrybrien do.

John Quinn do. Kilmacduagh do.

Thomas Gibbons do. Ballinderreen do.

John Flaherty do. Beagh do.

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1918.

Battalion Commandant: Tom McInerney.

Vice-Commandant : Peter Howley.

Quartermaster : P. Ruane.

Adjutant: P.J.Piggot.

Thos. Helly : Captain, Ardrahan Company

John Fahy : do. Peterswell do.

John Coen : do. Kilbecanty do.

John Hayes: do. Gort do.

Martin Nolan : 1st Lieut. Kiltartan do.

Paddy Cahill : 2nd Lieut. do. do.

Paddy Flynn : Captain, Derrybrien Company.

John Quinn : do. Kilmacduagh do.

Thos. Gibbons: do. Ballinderreen do.

John Flaherty: do. Beagh do.

John Burke : do. Kinvara do.

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1919

Battalion Commandant : Tom McInerney  
Battn Vice-Comdt : Peter Howley  
Quartermaster : P. Ruane.  
Adjutant : P.J. Piggott.  
Captain : William Thompson, Ardrahan Company.  
do. : John Burke Kinvara do.  
do. : John Fahy Peterswell do.  
do. : John Coen Kilbecanty do.  
do. : John Hayes Gort do.  
do. : Paddy Flynn Derrybrien do.  
do. : Thomas Gibbons Ballinderreen do.  
do. : Tom McLoughlin Kilmacduagh do.  
do. : J. Flaherty Beagh do.  
1st Lieut : M. Nolan Kiltartan do.  
2nd Lieut : Paddy Cahill do. do.

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1920

This year the Battalion got the status of a Brigade with direct communication to G.H.Q. I hold the correspondence.

Brigade Commandant : <sup>Tom</sup>~~Peter~~ McInerney. *VMG*  
Vice do. : Peter Howley  
Quartermaster : P. Ruane  
Adjutant : P.J. Piggott  
Assistant Adj. : John Joyce.  
Captain Ardrahan Company W. Thompson  
do. Kinvara do. J. Burke  
do. Peterswell do. J. Fahy  
do. Gort do. Joe Stanford.  
do. Kilmacduagh do. Tom McLoughlin  
do. Derrybrien do. P. Flynn  
do. Ballinderreen do. T. Gibbons  
do. Kilbecanty do. J. Coen  
do. Beagh do. J. Flaherty  
1st Lieut. Kiltartan do. M. Nolan.  
2nd Lieut. do. do. P. Cahill

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1921

Up to July 1921.

Brigade Commandant : Tom McInerney.  
Vice Commandant : Peter Howley  
Quartermaster : P. Ruane.  
Adjutant : J.J. Coen.  
Captain Ardrahan Company John Joyce.  
do. Peterswell do. J. Fahy.  
do. Gort do. Joe Stanford.  
do. Kilbecanty do. J. Coen  
do. Kinvara do. J. Burke  
do. Derrybrien do. P. Flynn  
do. Ballinderreen do. T. Gibbons.  
do. Kilmacduagh do. T. McLoughlin  
do. Beagh do. J. Flaherty  
1st Lieut. Kiltartan do. M. Nolan.  
2nd Lieut. do. do. P. Cahill

Note There was disunion in Kiltartan, therefore all the Volunteers would not work under a Captain selected from either half-Company.

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Part of 1921 from July onwards.

Truce Period. The Brigade was divided into two Battalions with David Reynolds Brigade O/C.

First Battalion.  
Commandant Joe Stanford  
Vice Comdt. John Fahy  
Adjutant P. Glynn  
Quartermaster D. Ryan

Second Battalion  
Commandant Tom McInerney  
Vice Comdt. Peter Howley  
Adjutant John Joyce  
Quartermaster W. Thompson.

Second Battalion Company Captains.

Ardrahan W. Burns  
Ballinderreen T. Gibbons  
Kilmacduagh T. McLoughlin  
Kinvara J. Burke  
Kiltartan No Captain 1st Lieut. M. Nolan.  
2nd Lieut. P. Cahill  
New Quay Captain Sean Fahy.

This period Michael Brennan was elected Divisional Commandant 1st Western Division.

I have evidence to prove that the Officers for each of the above periods are correct.

THE TRUTH ABOUT THE TREATMENT OF IRISH PRISONERS IN  
ENGLISH PRISONS.

As one who happened to be arrested in connection with the 1916 rebellion I wish to state my little experience of prison life. I was arrested on the 2nd May at about 5 a.m. by the local police and taken to the barracks three miles away. There I met seven others of my comrades who were arrested during the early morning in a cell about ten by five. We were kept there till 3 p.m. During that time there were some remarks made by England's hirelings to try to discourage us. At 3 o'clock 8 motors pulled up outside the barrack door. We were brought out one by one and placed one in each motor handcuffed with an armed peeler each side of us. Then before the motors started their Officer came along to each prisoner and told him to bear in mind that there was an armed police Officer each side of us and if we caused any trouble going along they would use their rifles.

Then the motors started for Galway Jail 12 miles distant. When we arrived in Galway we came off the cars and were marched inside the Jail gate with another set of peelers there to take charge of us until the key was turned on us. We were then marched to the office to give our name, address and occupation and to give up anything in our possession. While proceeding to this office there were two peelers guarding every man although the entrance gate was locked. One of those bullies grinned at me and said the others had a right to kill me coming along in the car. This was a nice remark from an Irishman towards another, but what better could be expected from any man who dons the livery of an Irish slave. "The red or black coat". After that part of the programme had been gone through we were placed each man outside his cell door ordered to strip off and stood as naked as the night we were born. Then

the warder came along and looked into our mouths, opened the cell doors, ordered us in, locked the door leaving our clothes outside. An hour later a warder came along with a pint of cocoa without sugar or milk and a piece of hard bread. I was not long enough fasting to have this kind of supper. I left it there untouched. So repeated the dose at 6 o'clock next morning. Hunger compelled me to have some of this.

At midday we were taken to have a bath. Nothing disgusted me more than this as about two hundred men had to go into the same bath in turn, the water not being removed. But some refused to go into it. It reminded me of the dipping of sheep. This evening another batch came in so we were crammed four in each cell with no bedding but one mattress between the four with one blanket each. We had an hour's exercise each day. At the end of the week we were lined up, got a part of our property that we handed up on coming in handcuffed every two together and handed over to the Military, marched to the Station and left for Dublin on the 1.30 p.m. train this being Saturday, 6th May. We arrived in Dublin at 6 o'clock. were taken to Richmond Barracks Yard where twenty-five men were packed *and detained there* no more room at the time. After an hour's delay standing in the rain some who were not fortunate enough to bring coats were wet through. We were marched to Arbour Hill Barracks. It was just nine o'clock at this time. We were driven into a soldier's Gymnasium as cattle would in the dark. The Officers' orders were that if we didn't keep very quiet during the night we would be shot without compunction. Then there were about sixty blankets thrown in to about one hundred and fifty men. Then a sergeant asked were we hungry. Many replied "Yes". He then divided a few dog biscuits to each man. The door was then closed and an armed guard left outside.

*L.A.9*

There was no sanitary accommodation but four or five buckets in the centre of the floor. We had to remain there in wet clothes during the night with scarcely room to lie. Next morning at 9 a.m. we got a tin of something like cocoa and about three ounces of bread. Later in the day we got two blankets each. We had no exercise for four days with the exception of about forty yards to the latrines six at a time with an escort of two soldiers with fixed bayonets. After going to this place it wouldn't do to be an illiterate. The first I observed written on the closet doors was "Isolation" on one and "Veneréal" on another especially provided for affected soldiers.

At the end of the week we were ordered out for exercise one morning about 9 o'clock before breakfast as they used to call it. After going out we were ordered to double. Some did and others were too weak. There was a big gate opened into another yard. We were marched into it and along by the side of the trench where our brave leaders were buried. All with the exception of Connolly and McDermott were shot at this time. There was a heap of quicklime thrown one side they had for shaking on the dead bodies. The morning after we heard a volley fired at about 3 a.m. I believe in Kilmainham. It is then that they added two more to the list of Ireland's Martyrs. The dead bodies were conveyed by motor to the trench at Arbour Hill. Now we had a week at Arbour Hill, a week of hunger and worse lying on blankets walking with vermin without even having a wash during this time. The soldiers used to throw in waste pieces of bread about the size of an ounce of tobacco. It would remind one of throwing apples to children. And at one time pelted



in a piece of soap. The lads took it to be bread so the pangs of hunger had driven them to rush to get it which caused a laugh for the Khaki-clad men who had thrown it for that purpose.

At mid-day on the 13th we were marched to Kilmainham. Eoin MacNeill was removed with us on this date also. Two prisoners were placed in each cell here - got one blanket each walking with vermin. The prisoner had his choice to put this blanket under or over him and lie on the boards. We were allowed two hours' exercise here each day and a wash every morning. We were not given soap nor a towel. We made a towel of our handkerchief. About 16th there was an improvement in the grub. For this we need not thank the British Government. It was due to some pressure brought to bear from another source. On 20th we got another shift to Richmond Barracks. There were 25 put into each room. We got two blankets each and had to lie on the floor. There was vermin in these blankets also. When an Officer came into our room Eoin MacNeill protested against such treatment. So we got clean blankets the night after. About the 23rd MacNeill's trial commenced. He was taken out from us so we hadn't seen him after. There was a big improvement in the grub in Richmond but the sanitary arrangements were bad. Two buckets for fifty men on a landing between two rooms. A prisoner could have access to the buckets by calling the sentry who is supposed to be standing outside the door with rifle and fixed bayonet. He will unlock the door and lock it when the prisoner comes back to his room. The end of the month finished our experience of Dublin Military prisons. On the eve of the 31st at 5.30 o'clock we were told we were to be deported that evening.

Each man got a haversack to carry rations. So we were lined up in the yard got a tin of bully beef each and a few dog biscuits and a few ozs. of bread. Two hundred were marched to the North Wall to catch the boat that was leaving at 8 o'clock p.m. We were driven into a cattle boat had to sit or lie on the cow dung. It was like a cow house badly carted out. Most of the prisoners got sea-sick. I suppose that the breath of cattle and sheep had an effect on empty stomachs. We arrived at Hollyhead at 12 p.m. On coming off the boat we were divided into three lots for three different prisons. Fifty for Knutsford, fifty for Wansworth and one hundred for Wakefield. I was on the batch for Knutsford. We took train shortly after 12 o'clock and arrived at the Knutsford Station at 6 a.m. The prison is only five minutes walk from the Station. We were marched into the Jail Yard, searched and locked in, one in each cell. A half an hour later we got some bread, margarine and a liquid they called tea. An old Sergeant called it "Good water spoiled". He wouldn't find fault with the treatment but for he had got a heart-scald himself from these "Champions of small nations". At 10 o'clock we were marched out into a yard. Here we saw the finest body of men we scarcely ever saw both in Volunteer and Citizen Army uniform upwards of five hundred and fifty. They thought a great deal of Galway fellows. They were glad to meet us. We asked what sort of a jail this was. One said "Not too bad now but for the past five weeks in prayer we lived". We had to spend one month in this jail for the first fortnight prayer was a part of our up-keep also but at times a second course of cursing. After a fortnight visitors from Manchester used to come in almost every day with sandwiches. This was a great help to the end of the month. On the 1st of July there was a batch told off for the Camp in North

Wales. I was in this batch. This change meant as much to us as our release. Anyone who had any friend to send him any money need not be hungry here as we had the use of a "Canteen".

There were two camps North and South. I was in the North. I believe it was a healthier place than South which was an old distillery formerly. There were batches of about sixty leaving the camps twice a week for London to put in their appearance before the Advisory Committee. On Saturday 19th July I was on the batch for London. We left the camp at about 8 a.m. and arrived there at about 5 p.m. There were motor lorries lined up at the Station to take us to Wormwood Scrubbs jail, where this Committee used to sit which is about one hour's drive from the Station. Pipe and tobacco were taken from prisoners after arriving at the Jail. We were then put into separate cells. The grub was fairly good compared to the other Jails. On Sunday we got an hour's exercise. We had to keep three paces apart on the ring and no talk but this order was not strictly adhered to. Here we saw some of the Rebellion prisoners that were sentenced to twelve months wearing the convicts' garb. They looked very pale but seemed to be in the best of spirits. Next day Monday, we were brought before the Committee and Tuesday back again to the camp. About the 25th there was a release list called. All my comrades were in this list for home with the exception of one, Paddy Howley is his name. When my name and his were passed over I said to him "Paddy we might as well make our mind easy about home for a while as our comrades are parted from us". "It looks like that" said Paddy not a bit depressed. At 5 o'clock that evening the released crowd were lined up four deep homewards bound. Our boys were lonelier leaving us behind them than we were for

not being with them. So we shook hands with them and saw them off for home with ringing cheers from both crowds. Of the 1,800 prisoners interned all but 560 were recommended for release. I happened to be one of the latter number so was Paddy. The first week of August another release list was called. This list included all who were recommended for release. Our firm belief was that we were to be kept until the war was over. About the month of August the last batch recommended for release went off for home. The 560 prisoners left were changed from the North Camp to the South which was formerly an old distillery. Soon after this change eight men were called out to clear the ashbins of their own quarters. This they refused and were sent to the North for punishment and all privileges stopped. The same scene occurred daily until 96 prisoners were in the North Camp. Then a regular system of communication was built up between the two camps. Collins played a leading part in organising this system. Then it was proposed that all the prisoners refuse to answer their names and numbers. About the first week in October the contest ended in a victory for the prisoners. A week later all the prisoners were removed to the North Camp. Then there was a roll call. About 340 refused to answer their names all appeals and threats were in vain.

These who refused were sent to the South Camp for punishment. The men immediately went on hunger strike. After three days the hunger strike was abandoned upon the Authorities agreeing to let us return to the North Camp without revealing our identity. Two days later new troops were brought into the camp. There was another roll call. Three hundred and forty-two refused to answer their names and were removed to the South Camp and deprived of all

privileges. We got four ounces of turnips for dinner instead of four ounces of beef in the North Camp. The unidentified men remained confined to the old distillery buildings under penal conditions up to their release at Christmas.

Signed Thomas McInerney  
(Thomas McInerney)

Date 22<sup>nd</sup> April, 1955  
22nd April 1955.

Witness: Con Moyrihan  
(Con Moyrihan)

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21  
BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21  
NO. W.S. 1, 150