W.S. 1,241

ORIGINAL

ROINN COSANTA.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS.

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 1,241

Witness

Michael Shalloe,
10 Garvan's Terrace,
Dungarvan,
Co. Waterford.

Identity.

Vice O/C. Waterford Active Service Unit.

Subject.

National and military activities
South Waterford, 1913-1923

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil

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ORIGINAL

STATEMENT BY MICHAEL SHALLOE,

10 Garvan's Terrace, Dungarvan, Co. Waterford.

I was born in Aglish, Co. Waterford, in 1897, of parents who were farmers.

During my young days I was an active member of the G.A.A. and played hurling and football with the local teams.

When the Irish National Volunteers were started in Aglish in 1913, I joined up like the majority of the lads in the district. We did our drilling with wooden guns but, when the split in the Volunteers came in 1915, the Company broke up. As a result, there was no activity in the Aglish area when the 1916 Rising began.

Late in the year 1916, a Company of Irish Volunteers was organised in the Brickey, Youghal, district. This could hardly be called a company as there were only about six of us in it as a start. Thomas Dee was the officer in charge of our unit.

The years 1917 and 1918 were mainly spent at drilling, lectures on military tactics and efforts to obtain suitable recruits.

We did, of course, help out Sinn Féin during the General Election of 1918 by canvassing and election work generally. It was a great source of pride to us when Cathal Brugha was elected T.D. for Co. Waterford over his Redmondite opponent in the election of December in that year.

There is little more of interest to relate about my connection with the Brickey Company, but things began to move a bit faster when I went to Youghal early in 1919 to work as an assistant in a hardware store.

I joined the Youghal Company of Irish Volunteers immediately on my arrival in the town. Our Company Captain was a man named Jim Kelleher, and there were upwards of thirty men in the Company.

The arms position was poor. I remember, however, that there were a couple of rifles and a few shotguns, but we had practically no practice as ammunition was much too scarce and valuable.

The first bit of activity I can recall was when the Company engaged in raids on houses suspected of having firearms. A few of us used do these jobs by night, and we picked up quite a few guns, mostly shotguns. In no case was any opposition offered.

We augmented our meagre store of arms by these raids and, better still, we prevented them from falling into the hands of the British who, at that time, were advising those people known to have guns to hand them over for safe keeping.

Raids on postmen and post offices now commenced. The mails taken by us were examined for anything relating to the Republican movement, and these were passed on to Battalion Headquarters.

I remember information being obtained through these mail-raids about a Youghal man, named Carty, who belonged to the tinker class. This man was passing information about local Volunteers to the R.I.C., and a couple of us

received instructions from the Battalion O/C to arrest him and bring him out the country, to be dealt with. Four of us carried out the arrest of Carty, and we were taking him out of the town one dark night when we walked into an R.I.C. patrol under Head Constable Ruddick. Shots were exchanged between us and the R.I.C., but two of our lads were captured and sentenced to long terms of imprisonment. I and the other Volunteer escaped, as did Carty, the informer.

In September, 1919, on the occasion of the successful ambush of the military in Fermoy by a party of Volunteers under Liam Lynch, I was instructed, with some others of the Youghal Company, to patrol the roads outside Youghal, watching for cars coming from Fermoy with captured rifles and equipment. We waited many hours on that occasion but no cars came our way, the captured guns having been taken to some other district.

Early in January, 1920, an attack was made by a large number of I.R.A. on the R.I.C. barracks at Ardmore, Co. Waterford, about five miles east of Youghal. Our Company wasn't in the actual attack, which was under the command of Jim Mansfield, Old Parish, Dungarvan, Commandant of the 3rd Battalion, West Waterford Brigade. The men who took part in the affair were all men of this battalion.

Our job was to act as outposts and prevent any sortie by the military in Youghal barracks who might be expected to come to the relief of the R.I.C. whose barracks was only five miles from Youghal. We were armed with revolvers and shotguns on the night in question and were fully prepared for action when we saw the Verey lights

Strangely enough, the military in Youghal did not move out to the assistance of their comrades in Ardmore. They may have come out later in the night, when things were quiet again, but we would have welcomed a scrap with them while the Ardmore attack was on.

Shooting of Head Constable Ruddick in Youghal:

In July, 1920, I was selected, along with Bill Foley of Youghal, to shoot the Head Constable of the local R.I.C., named Ruddick. He was in charge in Youghal and was a most officious officer and over-zealous in his efforts to arrest anybody he might consider to be tainted with Republicanism. He was reputed to be a bitter Orangeman.

Bill Foley and I decided that the best time to get this fellow would be when he was returning from church service on Sunday. He would, most likely, be off his guard on such an occasion.

On this particular Sunday, about noon, we saw Ruddick leave the church with an R.I.C. man, a civilian and a lady. Not knowing which side of the street he might take, Bill Foley and I stood in a doorway on opposite sides of the street to one another. As it so happened, Ruddick came along on Foley's side.

I saw Ruddick's party pass Foley and the latter drawing his revolver and letting fly. Ruddick fell to the ground and, when he fell, he made an attempt to draw his gun but failed to get in a shot at Foley who had quickly disappeared.

Concluding that the Head Constable was finished, I made off from the scene of the shooting, as people were beginning to gather around and I was well known at the

Actually, Ruddick was not mortally wounded. He received the bullet in his hip, but it laid him low for many a day and he never appeared in Youghal again.

For the next few months, our activities were mainly confined to raids on mails, blocking roads, destroying bridges and sniping at military patrols in the Youghal district.

On November 2nd, 1920, the day following the successful ambush at Piltown Cross, five miles north-east of Youghal, about fifty soldiers carrying canes came out of their barracks in Youghal after dark and started to smash shop windows. They paid particular attention to the Sinn Féin Hall and proceeded to wreck it. I got my revolver and, with a comrade named Paddy Reilly who was unarmed, we went for the Tommies and chased them back to their barracks. They were a cowardly collection.

The soldiers came out again later on. This time, they carried rifles and proceeded to look for Reilly and myself. Needless to say, we couldn't take on that number of well-armed men. At any rate, during the course of the disturbance, a soldier was found suffering from a gunshot wound in the Sinn Féin hall, and immediately the search for me was intensified. The British believed I had done the shooting and they shouted my name as they broke into houses looking for me. They searched the house, where I lived, upside-down, while I was watching them from another house across the road.

Next morning, I rather foolishly returned to the shop where I worked, but I wasn't long there when my brother called to warn me to get out quickly as the

as quickly as I could, bringing my revolver with me, and came over to Dungarvan where I made enquiries as to the whereabouts of the West Waterford Flying Column under George Lennon. I got in touch with the boys that same evening and was joined by Paddy Reilly, my Youghal comrade.

Rockfield Ambush:

About a fortnight after the Piltown Cross ambush of 1st November, 1920, George Lennon, Pat Keating, Paddy Reilly, Jim Prendergast, Pakeen Whelan and myself - all from the Column - were in the district of Rockfield, between Cappoquin and Dungarvan. We were moving across country when, in the distance, we spotted a lorry-load of military approaching on the main Cappoquin-Dungarvan road.

George Lennon, the Column O/C, ordered us, hurriedly, to take up positions to attack. The ground around us offered little cover, but we got down and "flaked" into the lorry as it went by. One of the lads chucked a home-made bomb at it which exploded, wounding some of the Tommies. The lorry proceeded some distance and the soldiers got out. We engaged them for upwards of half an hour when George Lennon ordered us to retreat, as we were badly outnumbered and were fighting from a very disadvantageous positition.

We suffered no casualties in this scrap but I know the British had several men wounded - what number, I cannot say. This ambush occurred early in the forenoon.

Kilmanahan R.I.C. Barracks attack:

I think the time was early in the month of January, 1921, when the Column was resting in The Nire valley in the

vicinity of Ballymacarbery, Co. Waterford, and about six miles south of Clonmel, Co. Tipperary. Word reached us that two particularly abnoxious Tans used frequent a public house in the village of Kilmanahan, so Bill Foley of Youghal, Commandant Pat Keating of Kilrossanty and myself were selected by George Lennon to go and shoot them.

Armed with revolvers, we went into Kilmanahan by horse and trap, driven by John Guiney, and waited hours for the Tans. They never turned up.

Disgusted at having our journey for nothing, we decided to have a crack at the R.I.C. barracks nearby. This turned out to be tougher than we expected. The building was in such a state of defence that one would need a salvo of artillery to penetrate it. However, we approached to revolver range, took what little cover offered and aimed carefully at the loopholes.

When we opened up, the garrison inside replied with bombs and rifles. I think they must have thought they were being attacked by thousands because they kept up an intense fire from every defensive position inside the barracks.

After about half an hour of this sort of thing, we withdrew, as our ammunition was almost exhausted. As we pulled out of Kilmanahan, the jittery R.I.C. were still blazing away furiously and continued doing so when we were five miles away. I don't know if we inflicted any casualties. We suffered none.

Ring, Robert's Cross, Engagement:

In the month of February, 1921, the Column, in charge of George Lennon (I was Vice O/C at the time), was

anxious to have a crack at the British regiment, known as "The Buffs", who were stationed there, but we knew from previous experience that it was useless entering Dungarvan and firing at the barracks. The British never ventured out to have a fight on these occasions; they just stayed put.

Lennon and I decided on a ruse to draw the military out the country and give them a hiding.

We sent a message to the barracks to the effect that Cathal Brugha was in hiding in the Irish College at Ring. It was hoped that this would have the desired effect. As a matter of fact, the British swallowed the bait all right but, as so often happened, something turned up to thwart us and save them.

Having sent in the message, the Column moved towards the Dungarvan-Ring road where an ambush position was decided on. We were moving in file along the road when, to our amazement, a military lorry came tearing out from Dungarvan laden with soldiers en route to Ring College.

We were taken completely by surprise. We never antitipated that the British would come on the scene so soon after receiving our bogus message and we were in no position to receive them. There was nothing we could do but scramble over the adjoining hedges and take cover - a rather inglorious end to what promised to be a second Crossbarry. So quickly were the military upon us that some of our lads at the rear of the Column were nearly caught in the beam of the headlights of the lorry.

The soldiers went on towards Ring, unmolested by us, and reached a point on the road about two miles from

who were moving along the road to take up ambush positions with us. The Ring men were also taken by surprise and scattered by a volley from the British.

I cannot give any details of this action as, of course, I was about a mile or more away, but I do know that one of the Ring I.R.A., named Declan Regan, was wounded in the hand rather badly. None of our lads were captured.

We, on the Column, were furious at the turn of events, and plans were laid to give the soldiers a proper pasting on their return journey to Dungarvan.

We selected an ideal ambush position on the Ring road and waited for results. We might have guessed what would happen. The British, knowing from the Robert's Cross encounter that there were I.R.A. in the vicinity of the Ring road, returned to Dungarvan by another road leading through Old Parish and avoiding the road on which they had come out to Ring. We could see the lorry lights as the military made their way back but, to our chagrin, all we could do was look on - they were well out of range of our rifles.

Engagement at Durrow, Co. Waterford:

It was on March 3rd, 1921, that I took part with the Column in what was the longest drawn out engagement with the enemy up to date.

We had come down from the Comeragh Mountains and were in the neighbourhood of the village of Durrow, about six miles east of Dungarvan and a miles from the coast, when a conference was held as to the best means of enticing the Buffs again out of Dungarvan.

At that period it was the custom of the British authorities to collect men assigned for jury work in the courts and bring them by train to their destination.

We learned that such a train would be passing early one morning from Fermoy via Dungarvan to Waterford city. So it was decided to hold up this train at Millarstown about a mile south of Durrow and lie in ambush for any British troops which might come out from Dungarvan, on learning of the hold-up.

We held up the jurors' train as arranged, took off the jurors, letting the train on to Waterford. We then took up ambush positions on the railway line which overlooked the coast road which runs from Dungarvan to Waterford.

We weren't very long in position when our scouts reported another train coming our way from Dungarvan. We moved off the line and, as this train passed, we saw it was full of troops, probably enroute from Fermoy, Co. Cork. We had a crack at them and they replied. This train kept going and, when it was out of sight, George Lennon proposed that we would follow it up to Durrow, a mile to the north, where it was likely that the military would detrain.

We went hurriedly across country to Durrow and discovered that the train had not stopped, as hoped. It had continued on to Waterford.

In the meantime, we learned from scouts that the military, for whom we had laid the ambush, had in fact come along to the ambush position a short time after we had left it to move on to Durrow. They had released the jurymen

and had returned to Dungarvan.

The time was now about mid-day and Lennon decided to split the Column into small parties and go in search of food. With a few of the lads, I was fairly close to Durrow when we spotted a large force of military at the railway station. We opened fire and they replied.

While this was going on, others of our lads returned and joined in the attack. The troops deployed in the neighbourhood of Durrow station and a long fight ensued.

While the scrap was on, a train pulled into Durrow station from Waterford, and a large body of soldiers left it and proceeded to join in the fight.

Although we were outnumbered by at least fifteen to one (a conservative estimate, in my opinion), we slogged it out with them to such good effect that they eventually retreated into the buildings of the Co-operative Store which immediately adjoins Durrow station.

The question now arose as to whether we should take the store by assault. The arguments against doing this were many. There were twenty of us against three hundred of the British. The ground, over which we would have to advance, offered very little cover. Our ammunition was running very low and there was always the danger of enemy reinforcements coming up on our rear, in which event we would scarcely have sufficient ammunition to fight our way out of trouble.

At about 4 p.m. that evening, Lennon decided, very reluctantly, to break off the engagement. We pressed him to have a last go at the British in the Co-operative Store, in the hopes that they would surrender, but he was adamant

in his decision. Having regard to all the circumstances, I think his judgement on that occasion was sound, so we lived to fight another day.

That other day wan't very far distant, although we could not foresee this at the time, nor were we to know that we were soon to lose two of our best and truest comrades in action.

Ambush at The Burgery, Dungarvan:

Following the Durrow engagement, the Column retired into the Comeragh mountains to rest and refit.

In the middle of March, 1921, a request was made by the O/C, Dungarvan Company, that the Column should afford protective cover for a party of local I.R.A. men engaged in demolishing Tarrs Bridge. This bridge is on the main Waterford-Dungarvan road. It was situated near the Burgery road, about a mile and a quarter from the town of Dungarvan, and its demolition would force the enemy to use bye-roads, thus leaving them open to constant ambushing.

The demolition operation may not appear to have warranted cover from the Column, but it should be pointed out that those engaged would be open to attack from (1) a British garrison stationed half a mile away to the north-east at Cloncookerine in the house of Charles Humble Nugent, a pronounced loyalist, (2) the military in Dungarvan, one and a quarter miles to the south, and (2) the Marines in Ballinacourty coastguard station, three miles to the east. In addition, the bridge was in constant use by troops coming east from Fermoy or Cappoquin. Its importance, therefore, can be appreciated.

On the night of March 18th, 1921, the Column moved

to the town of Dungarvan with three others from the Column to have a crack at a military patrol if it was out. We did meet a patrol, twelve to fifteen strong. We exchanged shots and then left the town, taking up positions on the Ballycoe road, adjacent to Tarr's Bridge.

When we were there, scouts reported that a lorry of troops had gone out from Dungarvan and it was there and then decided to suspend operations in Tarr's Bridge and, instead, ambush this military party on its return to Dungarvan. The route it would take was, we expected, via Cloncoskerine, Tarr's Bridge, The Burgery and then into Dungarvan.

It would be in the neighbourhood of eleven o'clock that night when we saw, in the moonlight, a private car containing military, following by a lorry of troops coming from the Cloncoskerine direction. As this private car came on to the Burgery road, it was fired on by a group of Column men stationed behind the fence there. At the same time, another party of our lads hit up the lorry as it left Tarr's Bridge to turn on to The Burgery.

When we (from the Ballycoe road) heard the firing, I and about five others doubled across a field towards the Burgery. Crossing the field, we came under heavy fire from the garrison at Humble Nugent's house at Cloncoskerine. These soldiers had come out and were moving towards the Burgery where their comrades were being ambushed.

We replied to the fire of the Cloncoskerine garrison and drove them panic-stricken back towards their base.

Jumping out on to the Burgery road where heavy firing was going on, I saw a few Tommies running down the

road towards Dungarvan, apparently after jumping out of their lorry. I shouted, "Halt", and and officer who, we later discovered, was Captain Thomas of the Buffs regiment, said, "We are friends". With that, John Fitzgerald, a Column man, and Captain of the Kilrossanty Company, and myself chased the British group down the Burgery road and caught up with Captain Thomas, a private soldier, and Sergeant Hickey of the local R.I.C. We marched them into a nearby cottage, having first disarmed them.

George Plunkett of G.H.Q., Dublin, who was with us at that time, then came along together with Captain Jack O'Meara, another Column man from the Nire Valley.

The British army officer, Thomas, was searched and any documents on him taken. I was strongly in favour of shooting this fellow whom I knew to be a bitter opponent of ours, but Plunkett wouldn't hear of it. He, Plunkett, extracted a promise from Captain Thomas that, if released, no reprisals would be carried out by the troops under his command. Thomas, too glad to escape the fate he deserved, gave the undertaking. He and the private were then released. This British officer proved his trustworthiness by burning and looting shops and houses in Dungarvan the following night.

While all this was taking place, shooting was going on all over the district. The British were running here and there like cornered rats, shouting and yelling in terror, while our lads "flaked" into them for all they were worth.

When, about midnight, the firing died down, we of the Column retired westwards towards the hilly country around Kilgobnet, six miles away, bringing Sergeant Hickey with us.

A conference was held to decide the fate of Hickey. The verdict was death. This man, Hickey, was an old enemy of ours. He was most zealous in helping the British to track down wanted men. Indeed, he could be described as the eyes and the ears of the enemy in the Dungarvan district.

After being attended to , spiritually, by the local Catholic Curate, Hickey was shot by a firing squad from the Column early in the morning of March 19th, 1921.

To revert to the events of a few hours previously - the lorry used by the British was captured and burned, but not before a very welcome box of Mills grenades was taken from it. These proved invaluable to us in the future as, prior to this, we had to depend almost entirely on the home-made bomb which was never very reliable or effective.

In the confused fighting at the Burgery the night previously, many soldiers were seen to throw away their rifles as they fled from the scene of the ambush. A couple of rifles were picked up by our lads but, in the darkness, many more were missed.

It was probably this fact (it was this fact) that decided George Plunkett to take a party of us back down to the Burgery the following morning, viz., 19th March, 1921, to search around for any discarded weapons.

When Plunkett mentioned his intention, all the Column men protested, pointing out that to return again in daylight was midness, as the enemy were certain to rush troops to the district as was always done after every ambush. We would be hopelessly outnumbered and the risk wouldn't be worth while.

Plunkett, however, would not be put off and he

called for twelve men to do the job. All the men present (about twenty) volunteered, so he selected twelve - six to go with him, of which I was one and the others were Pat Keating, John Fitzgerald, Jim Mansfield, Kelly Donovan, and one other whose name I cannot remember. The other party of six men were under Pax Whelan, the Brigade O/C. The latter group were to hold position on the Ballycoe road, about half a mile north of the Burgery, to prevent any attack on us from our rear.

Plunkett's group approached the Burgery about eight o'clock on that morning. We were advancing in extended formation across a field adjoining the road when I spotted a soldier on top of the lorry we had burned the previous night. I gave the warning but had no sooner done so than a burst of rifle fire rang out from the Burgery road. The British had apparently seen us crossing the field.

At the first burst, Pat Keating fell, mortally wounded in the stomach, and, in the next volley, John Fitzgerald was killed instantly.

We were now in a precarious position. We had no idea of the strength of the enemy force and they seemed to be firing at us from all sides. Our position, exposed as it was, was indeed a pretty bad one. However, we blazed away in the direction of the enemy fire and had the satisfaction of seeing one Black and Tan (later identified as Redmond) fall dead from the pier of a gate on which he had daringly perched to get a better shot at us. The four of us sighted our rifles on this fellow and made sure that his career as a Black and Tan was finished for all time.

We continued to fire blindly (we could see no target)

and be fired at, for about twenty minutes when the order was given to cease fire and retreat. Before this order was given, Plunkett crawled over to where Pat Keating lay and carried him on his back to the cover of a fence.

We began to retreat under continuous heavy fire from the British who still, obviously, feared to come to closer quarters because they made no effort to follow up. We held our fire all this time so as not to betray our position.

Slowly we withdrew out of range and then proceeded sadly to Kilbrien in the Comeragh mountains, six miles to the west, where we contacted the remainder of the Column.

Word was sent to a friendly house to collect Pat Keating. Pat was brought to this house and was attended to by a local doctor. The poor fellow died that same night, the doctor stating that the bullet which did the damage was of the explosive type, giving Pat no chance of recovery.

Shortly after these events, Plunkett left us to continue his duties elsewhere.

The Column continued to move from place to place, sniping enemy troops as occasion arose and having, many a time, narrow escapes from capture.

The British at this time (April-May-June 1921) strengthened their garrisons in the towns in our area of operations and, were it not for the friendly Comeragh mountains, we would surely have been trapped.

Strangely enough, the military never came further than the foothills of the Comeraghs. They seemed to have

Cloncoskerine - attack on military post:

It was during the period I have mentioned (I forget the exact date) when the Column was near Cloncoskerine, Dungarvan, that it was decided to have a crack at the garrison there. I have already referred to this garrison in connection with the Burgery ambush.

In company with about six men from the Column, we approached the house of Charles Humble Nugent where the military party were stationed. The building was about fifty yards in off the main Waterford-Dungarvan road and the ground for half a mile on either side of it was well wooded; it afforded excellent cover. Sentries could be seen patrolling the grounds. The night was dark.

One shot was fired first, in the hope that this would bring out the guard on duty. In fact, the result was that the British opened indiscriminate fire from the sand-bagged windows of the building without any regard as to where they fired. It was obvious that the lesson taught them on the night of the Burgery ambush, the previous March, had not been forgotten. They showed no inclination this time to come out and fight.

We kept up intermittent firing for the best part of an hour - with what effect, I cannot say - and, when the military showed no signs of coming out in the open, the six of us decided to move off.

For fully half an hour after we had left to join up with the main body of the Column, the British kept up a continuous fire with machine guns and rifles.

Piltown engagement:

The time was May, 1921, when, for some reason I

cannot now remember, I was in the Piltown, Youghal, district. Possibly the Column was in that area but I am not quite sure. At any rate, the Piltown men had been raiding the mails pretty frequently and it so happened that, when I was there, the Marines in Ardmore started round-up operations.

With another man of the Column, whose name I have forgotten, we were at Monatrea, near Ferrypoint, across the harbour from Youghal and about two miles from Piltown, when news of the round-up reached us. We moved inland towards Piltown to try and contact some of our boys, and were going down a road when a woman ran out of a house and warned us to turn back as the Marines had passed that way a short time previously.

We got into the fields to continue on our way when, quite close to us, firing broke out which was heavy enough to indicate that a large party of men were engaged. We took cover behind a fence and waited developments. Gradually, the sounds of the firing seemed to move away from where we lay and, after about an hour, it died away.

Shortly afterwards, we learned that a party of five or six of our lads had run into a force of British Marines ten times more numerous and that the engagement we had heard was the outcome.

One of our lads, named James Quain, was killed in the fight. I do not know what the British casualties were.

Cappagh Train attack:

In the month of Juee, 1921, George Lennon received information from Tom Lincoln, the Intelligence Officer to the 3rd Battalion, that a train load of troops would be

due to pass Cappagh Junction (two miles from Cappoquin, Co. Waterford) at a certain time one morning. It was decided to ambush the train.

The Column was, on this occasion, augmented by about twenty local I.R.A. men which made up an attacking force of about forty men. We had rifles, of course, but the local men had (mostly all) shotguns.

We reached Cappagh railway junction about an hour before the appointed time and were in position when the train appeared in the distance. Arrangements had been made to place the signals against the train, so that the driver would pull to a stop on reaching Cappagh - a place where trains only stopped on request. The level-crossing gates, a short distance beyond the junction, were also closed by one of our lads.

As the train slowed to a stop, it could be seen from our positions overlooking the railway that there were many soldiers aboard. The order was given to fire and we poured volley after volley into the carriages.

The soldiers replied half-heartedly but, after about a quarter of an hour firing, the train began to move out of the junction. It gathered speed, crashed the local crossing gates and went on its way. I think I remember one of our lads telling me that a British officer climbed on to the driver's cabin and forced the driver, at revolver point, to pull out of Cappagh.

We undoubtedly inflicted heavy casualties on the British that morning, but I am sorry to say I can give no estimate. None of our lads were hit.

George Lennon was O/C on that occasion.

Truce Period:

When the Truce came in July, 1921, the Column was in billets up at Kilbrien in the Comeraghs.

Discipline relaxed at the announcement of the Truce and we were allowed into the town and to dances and suchlike, without much restraint.

Training camps were set up in August and I was in charge of one of these camps at Kilbrien.

In connection with a landing of arms at Helvick Head, Ring, in the autumn of 1921, the Column moved west to Killongford on the Dungarvan-Ring road to counter any effort by the British to prevent the landing. The cargo was safely got ashore and conveyed by night across country to dumps in the Comeragh mountains. The name of the ship concerned was, I remember, the "Hannah Bremen". She came from Germany.

During the Truce period I was one of a small party who held up a convoy of Black and Tans at Dunkitt, Co. Kilkenny, two miles north of Waterford city. These Tans were being transferred to Gormanston, Co. Meath, and travelled in three Crossley tenders.

The convoy was disarmed and a large quantity of rifles and grenades captured. These were taken away in the tenders to the Comeraghs.

When the British evacuated their barracks after the Treaty of December, 1921, I took charge of various military barracks in the Co. Waterford and, just before the Civil War broke out in June, 1922, I was in charge of the Infantry barracks, Waterford.

Civil War Period:

During the Civil War I fought on the Republican side and was officer in charge in Waterford barracks when the Free State troops attacked that city.

After the capture of Waterford by the Free Staters, I retired with others of the Column westwards towards the Comeragh mountains. We had many other engagements with the 'Staters, particularly at Grange and Villierstown, Co. Waterford.

I was in charge of the Column following the resignation of George Lennon, the O/C.

During the period for six months before the Cease Fire of 1923, the Column was considerably reduced from wounds received in action and from the hardships of tough fighting during the winter.

We kept going as best we could until the order to cease fire was issued in June, 1923. We dumped our arms, as instructed, but were still harried here and there by Free State troops who were determined to capture us at all costs.

About six of us kept together, being repeatedly fired on (although we were unarmed) by the 'Staters until, at last, we decided that there was nothing for us but to quit our native land.

One night, about five of us put to sea in a small boat. We rowed out, not much caring where we were going or what was to happen. A tramp steamer picked us up and took us to Bristol. We eventually worked our passage to Canada, "jumped" the border into the U.S.A. where I remained until 1934 when I returned once more to my native Dungarvan.

SIGNED: Michael Shalloe
(Michael Shalloe)

DATE: 31 - 8 - 55