W.S. 1,348

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21
NO. W.S. 1,348

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS.

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 1,348

Witness

Michael Davern, T.D.,
Cashel,
Co. Tipperary.

Identity.

Acting O/C. Company and Battalion;
O/C. Police (Brigade).

Subject.

National and military activities,
South Tipperary, 1913-1921.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil

File No. S.2684

Form B.S.M. 2

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21
1 0. W.S. 1348

STATEMENT BY MICHAEL DAVERN, T.D.,

Cashel, Co. Tipperary.

"Cut" Quinlan was a third cousin of mine. His father is buried in our family grave in Donohill. "Cut" had shot several landlords in Tipperary and was 'on the run'. He escaped out of the country and joined the French Foreign Legion and, during the Crimean War, he saved the life of a high-ranking British officer from [redacted] death.

Before he left for the Foreign Legion he was approached by Father Mullally of Annacarty parish and pressed to go to confession. "I'll give you all the help you want" said Father Mullally. With tears streaming from his eyes he told Father Mullally: "I'm sorry, Father, but I have two more to shoot". He shot the two landlords the following morning.

After "Cut" returned home he was arrested, tried and sentenced to death. But the high-ranking British officer, whom he had saved, travelled to Tipperary, and pleaded hard for him. Among other things the officer declared that Quinlan was the bravest man he had ever met. The result was that the sentence of death was commuted to transportation for life.

I am well aware that similar tales are told of other land-leaguers in other parts of the country - similar circumstances, bringing about similar reactions, I suppose - but the story of "Cut" Quinlan is vouched for in A.M.Sullivan's "Young Ireland".

Another relation of mine,"Uncle Bill", died in Clonmel Jail in 1902 while serving a life sentence. There had been agrarian trouble and, at the Races of Cashel, a man had been

killed - but not by my Uncle Bill. He was tried before one of the notorious Grand Juries. He would have been hanged but for the obvious discrepancies in the perjured evidence being made public.

With these and other local traditions constantly in mind it is no wonder I hated British rule.

My father was a local leader of the Irish Party and he was a close friend of Joe Devlin and John Redmond. He continued loyal to them as long as that Party remained in existence. We young people used to argue with him. "Dillon turned Parnell down". "Yes", he'd say, "but Redmond remained loyal to Parnell and that's why I stand by him". One up for the old man.

The Irish Party held an annual parade on St. Patrick's Day. On St. Patrick's Day, 1917, my father went as usual to get his green sash to wear in the procession. He found his sash had been painted green, white and gold! One up for us youngsters!

In 1913 I joined the National Volunteers and vied with the others in shouldering my wooden gun. We drilled three nights a week in Ballynahinch and we went on a route march each Sunday. In 1914, at the outbreak of the 1914-18 War, I pinched my father's shotgun and paraded with it. The following day I had my first personal visit from the R.I.C. who questioned me as to whether I had a gun or not. I answered: "Bring the informer here and let him give his evidence like a man". I was then only 14 years old. The Constable, Constable Walsh of Clonoulty Barracks, was the only Protestant in Clonoulty and the only good Irishman among them too. He Later proved himself to be a good friend to me and to the I.R.A. in 1920 and 1921.

When John Redmond made his famous recruiting speech at Woodenbridge in Co. Wexford, the captain of our company - Ned Quinlan of Ballynahinch - addressed us on parade. He announced that he was resigning in protest against Redmond's recruiting speech and added that if any of us wanted to follow his example let them take two paces forward.

I took two paces forward, followed by Bill Dwyer (Bob) who, incidentally, joined the British army a couple of months later! At the following parade, Patrick Ryan of Camus resigned. When Eamon Ui Duibhir heard of our resignations, he invited us to join the Irish Volunteers, which we did. I received my Volunteer badge, which was of gunmetal, green face, harp in centre and the letter V on same.

1916 - Easter Week. The only weapon I had was a .22 rifle which I had got from Dan Leary of Cashel. Dan, later, also gave me a Winchester repeating rifle and a .38 nickel-plated revolver. While awaiting orders, I attempted to clean the rifle by firing off a shot. The lead of the bullet got stuck in the barrel. Owing to countermanding orders from G.H.Q. nothing definite could be done during Easter Week. Before the end of the week I had my second visit from the R.I.C. - Sergeant Horgan and a constable. Horgan was very hostile. He warned me: "The quieter you keep yourself in future, me lad, the better it will be for you".

Some 15 men mobilised at Cappamurra in Eamon Ui Duibhir's house. They cut the telegraph wires while waiting for clarification of orders and counter-orders. In desperation, Eamon Ui Duibhir set off to contact Dublin, but he was arrested on the way and interned. All the others who had mobilised were interrogated by the R.I.C. Con Deere of Goulds

Cross was arrested. He was a wellknown sympathiser and a Volunteer, and when Pierce McCann (county commandant of the Volunteers) saw the police coming towards his home - Newpark House, Cashel - he climbed into a monkey-puzzle tree where he could not be seen. Unfortunately, his favourite dog tracked him down and, by barking up the tree, sent his master to gaol.

While our men were held in custody the only thing we could do was to collect cigarettes and other comforts and send them to the prisoners.

The first sign of rejuvenation was the homecoming of Eamon Ui Duibhir at Christmas 1916. When we went to Goolds Cross station to give him a hearty welcome home, we lined up in military formation in the station for the first time since the surrender in Easter Week.

When Eamon was home a few weeks, he told me he had asked Seamus Robinson who, for his part in the Rising in Dublin, was interned in Reading Gaol with Eamon and all the better known unsentenced leaders of the Volunteers, Irish Citizen Army and of Sinn Fein. Those interned with Eamon included such wellknown men as Arthur Griffith, Terence McSwiney, Thomas MacCurtain, S.T. O'Kelly, Cathal O'Shannon, Walter Cole, Padraig O'Malley, E. Blythe, Darrell Figgis, Joe McBride, M.W. O'Reilly, P.T. Daly, Sean Milroy, 'Ginger' O'Connell, Mick Brennan of Clare, leaders from the Four Provinces and from overseas, including Tom Craven of Liverpool, Seamus Reader and Joe Robinson (Seamus's brother) from Scotland. The political leaders discussed and planned policies for the future, and the Volunteers planned for the renewal of the fight for freedom. All this we heard from Eamon Ui Duibhir, and it was wonderfully encouraging to us and filled us with

renewed enthusiasm. Later, Seamus Robinson gave us a lecture in the Hall in Ballagh on his experiences during the fighting in Easter Week.

About the end of February or early in March 1917, Eamon instructed me to meet Robinson at Goolds Cross station. From the description I had got I had no trouble in picking him up. Our mode of conveyance was a pony and cart which was loaned by Sam Hudson, a travelling showman, whose circus was encamped nearby. The pony had been trained to perform all sorts of circus stunts, and at regular intervals on the journey home from Goolds Cross, she would rear up on her hind legs, pirouette right round, cart and all, without causing the slightest damage, and then she would quietly continue on the journey. This had happened two or three times when, coming opposite where the circus encampment was, she drew up with a jerk and nothing I could do would make her budge. Sam Hudson came out on to the road - he had probably been expecting us - and after a few friendly exchanges with the two humans, he whispered something into the pony's ear and off she went like a most biddable pony and we arrived at Kilshinane without further incident. Kilshinane was Eamon Ui Duibhir's newly acquired farm.

After the second or third 'stunt' by the pony, Seamus inquired, with a puzzled look in his eyes: "Do all the horses in Tipperary carry on like this one?" When I reassured him, he added: "Thank goodness"! "I expect I'll have a lot to do with animals in the future, and, in order to allay the possible suspicions of the R.I.C. as to my real reason for coming to Tipperary, I'll have to learn enough to make it appear that I'm really holding down my position as a 'farmer's help', or is it a farmer's boy?".

The next morning Seamus embarked on his new mode of life.

Not knowing how much Seamus knew about farming, or how little he knew, he was asked would he tackle up the ass for the journey to the Creamery. He put the britchen, which should have gone on the donkey's back, right over its head, put the straddle on its back, put the donkey under the cart and connected the britchen chains to the shafts. He then informed Eamon that he couldn't find any place to put "these things". "These things" were the collar and ~~heims~~ HAMES. "Many a time and oft" since then we poked fun at Seamus about "these things" long after we had elected him our first and only elected officer in command of the famous 3rd (South) Tipperary Brigade of the I.R.A.

It did not take him long to commence the work for which he had come to Tipperary. We were soon discussing the formation of a section of the Volunteers. At that time we had to be most careful who we'd ask to join us. We paraded the first time with about 15 men. Seamus drilled us on Clareen Road near Ballydine. After some weeks he appointed me section commander. He instilled into our minds very forcefully that he intended "this section to be the premier section in the 'Premier County'". I think after events proved his hope to be justified, as it grew to be one of the largest companies in the brigade area.

Our enthusiasm was now rapidly reaching the stage where mere drilling was not just good enough. We wanted to do something defiant, so it was decided we'd raise the tricolour high over a spot as near as possible to where the first section of the brigade was formed. We selected a very high sally tree at the Cross of Ballymore. I took the precaution of purchasing the three different parts of the tricolour in three different houses. Mrs. Cussen, sister of Ui Duibhir, did the necessary sewing. In the very early hours of the morning Seamus climbed the tree and nailed the flag to the top and then he cut each

branch on the way down so that no one could climb it again. He also got us to spread the rumour, as if it were a great secret, that the tree had been secretly cut, almost right through, so that if an R.I.C. man climbed it, it would break with his weight. The tricolour could be seen for miles around. It was Sunday morning and crowds came to see the flag as, naturally, it caused a great sensation at the time. For weeks after, other flags all over Tipperary were raised and flown.

The local police approached the owner of the tree for permission to cut it down, but Michael Dwyer of Ballymore Cottage, refused permission and the flag remained aloft till it was bleached white and in shreds.

Our next decision was a step further on the way to open defiance of British rule. We had been drilling in secret up to this. We decided to throw caution to the winds and drill openly and appeal openly for recruits. We went on route marches to Clonoulty, Rossmore, Knockaville, ~~Donasley~~ Donoskeigh and Golden. The recruits in each place we visited became the nucleus of a section. The sections soon developed into separate companies.

First disarming of British soldiers in Ireland after Easter Week in 1916.

About September 1917, we got information that a British soldier named Michael Maher of Ardmoyle was home on leave with a Lee Enfield rifle and equipment. Here was a golden opportunity for the next step towards open warfare. We were advancing quickly to the ~~striking~~ Sticking point - "the bayonet ~~striking~~ Sticking point" as Seamus used to tell us. We immediately decided that rifle was to be our first rifle. I mobilised Jack Dwyer (Sonny) Jack Butler, Con O'Keeffe (Glenough), Ned Reilly, Seamus and myself. This operation called for disguises, as we were all wellknown in the Maher family. I supplied sugar sacks with

holes for the eyes and arms. Sugar was distributed to shopkeepers in 2-cwt. sacks at that time.

We caught the whole family literally napping - they were all in bed. It was late, about 11 p.m. We got the rifle without any force being necessary.

The following day was Sunday and, while hurling at Ballymore Cross, about a dozen R.I.C. arrived. They stopped the game and questioned us. When I was asked where I had been the previous night, I gave the obvious answer: "In bed like everyone else".

Maher was due for a draft of the Irish Guards going to the front for the battle of Cambria. His courtmartial saved him from that bloody battle where the Irish Guards were almost wiped out. It gives me pleasure to state that during 1920/21 when Maher was a porter in Goolds Cross railway station, he was good friend of mine and the I.R.A. It was his sister, Hannah, who brought me change of clothes, and bandages to bind a wound I got during a fight with Black & Tans and military at Ballymore. Many questions were asked about that rifle in the House of Commons. The upshot was that shortly afterwards a general order was issued forbidding soldiers home on leave in Ireland to bring their rifles with them. But the order was not in time to prevent a second rifle being taken from another British soldier named Thomas Arthur, a famous boxer. He was disarmed of his Lee Enfield rifle at Goolds Cross railway station.

So much for the story of the first rifles forcibly captured from the British after 1916. These rifles enabled our men to become familiar with the Lee Enfield rifle. As other rifles came into our hands, they could be used immediately by any member of the company.

Our unit grew to great strength due to the energy of Seamus Robinson and others, helped in no small way by the Rev. Matt Ryan, that old Land League campaigner and 'gaolbird' who never missed an occasion to press home to the young men of the parish, and surrounding parishes, that it was their duty to join the I.R.A., as it was beginning to be called.

Our weekly drilling was transferred to Cappamore Bridge vicinity - usually on Sundays. We always found that the first men on the parade ground were R.I.C. from Dundrum Barracks. We took delight, on reaching a turn in the road, in disappearing into a wood or bog leaving the bewildered R.I.C. trying to locate us.

Raids for arms. We were fully mindful of the necessity of getting arms and when we had collected any old weapons we could get from friendly people, we had decided to raid the homes of hostile people.

The house of Major Edwards of Rathduff was selected for our first attempt, as we had received information that there were Carson rifles stored there. We selected a Sunday night, but, as it was a difficult night for the operation, we decided on a ruse. It was arranged that Bill Dwyer (Sonny), an All-Ireland hurler - who later became captain of our local company - would fit the bill, trusting in his powerful physique to hold any possible opposition until the main body, who were to be hidden close at hand, could reach the open door in time. Bill knocked at the door and, when questioned through the closed door, said he had a sample of oats which he wanted the Major to buy, as the money was urgently needed to stave off bailiffs who were to arrive at his father's farm the next day. When the maid, an Austrian girl, conveyed this message, the Major came down and opened the door. Dwyer immediately seized him and the rest of

us were at the door ~~immediately~~ at once. The maid came to the Major's rescue with a large nickel-plated .45 revolver which was used to destroy crippled animals. The revolver was immediately seized by Seamus Robinson. This revolver was to play an important part in the War of Independence from Soloheadbeg. We always claimed that (though Seamus was the brigadier and had captured the revolver himself, being the first to rush into the hall when the maid panicked and dropped it) - because it was an A/Company operation - that the revolver was company property. When Seamus had risen to the automatic and parabellum stage, he 'graciously' let us have our own property.

The revolver was a nickle-plated .45 and was the one used by Seamus Robinson at Soloheadbeg some months afterwards. I will deal with this later when speaking on events leading up to the rescue of Knocklong. There were no other arms in the Major's house. He told us he detested men like Carson and Larkin who stirred up trouble in the country. Enemies spread the report that the I.R.A. had manhandled the Major and wrought destruction on the premises, but Major Edwards publicly denied this and declared that we had acted throughout the raid like gentlemen.

1918: We continued to hold our bi-weekly parades. The company grew in strength to about 240. When the pressure of conscription was over, many of those who had joined us fell away; some refused to take the oath of allegiance to the Republican Dáil. We continued the raids for arms. We picked up quite a lot of useful weapons.

m To fill in our time we started to give help to the political arm - Sinn Fein - especially in Cashel where the Irish Parliamentary Party held great sway.

At the General Election of 1918, Pierce McCann was our candidate. I marched 80 men from what later became our battalion area into Cashel to protect the Sinn Fein party speakers and followers from attacks they had already been subjected to by hostile elements in the town. For some reason unknown, the British forces took no action against us that day.

Lectures were given twice daily at Eamon Ui Duibhir's old home in Ballagh to June 1918. Eamon Ui Duibhir had been arrested for some political offence: any old excuse was good enough for British agents.

In April 1918, Seamus Robinson was arrested for drilling us. He was sentenced to six months in Belfast gaol which he and Eamon Ui Duibhir helped to smash up under Austin Stack. At his trial in Dundrum, Seamus informed the R.M. that he (the R.M.) had no moral right to try him or any other Irish citizen in Ireland because "English law in Ireland is illegitimate". To show his contempt for the Court he sang all through the trial. When singing the "Soldier's Song" he would point to the R.M. when he reached "the despot" and at the R.I.C. when he sang "slaves". He also sang "My Dark Rosaleen". When he was released we poked fun at Seamus: "You deserved your six months in gaol for singing that sacred song in such a desecrated place". He was released in October 1918.

In October 1918, the brigade was formed and Seamus Robinson was elected Brigade O/C., Sean Treacy - Vice Comdt., Maurice Crowe - Adjutant, and Dan Breen - Quartermaster.

Lectures were also held in Michael Sheehan's house, Deerpark, Dundrum. In 1918, Bill Dwyer (Sonny) and I travelled to Sheehan's house and, meeting Paddy English, Caherhue (a lieutenant in B/Company), he informed us that two

soldiers had gone into Hennessy's, a local pub. They belonged to a party of British military guarding Cappamurra Bridge. We made up our minds to disarm them. While Dwyer and English remained at the village of Dundrum, I went to Michael Sheehan's house (Sheehan was now battalion Q.M.) to collect a gun I knew he had. Mick was reluctant to part with the gun and told me I should wait until Sean Treacy, who was expected, came. However, the Battalion O/C. Tadhg Dwyer, who was in Sheehan's at the time, overheard the argument. He asked were we going to disarm the soldiers and when I said yes, he demanded the gun from Sheehan and said he'd go with us. Tadhg and I moved off hurriedly towards the village crossroads where Bill Dwyer informed us that the soldiers had gone on in the direction of "Tipp" Bridge, Dundrum, and that Paddy English had lured them into letting him accompany them. We set off in pursuit on bicycles and passed them, dismounting on the far offside of the bridge [illegible] our line of retreat [illegible] We took up positions on the Dundrum side. The night was very dark and we assumed the three would be together, but one soldier was about five or six yards in front of the other. Tadhg jumped on the first soldier and knocked him to the ground. The second soldier bolted down the road with Paddy English and I on his heels. The soldier shouted "You wont get it". He put a bullet into the breech and had turned to shoot at Paddy English when I struck him on the head with a branch of a tree I had taken the precaution to have with me. We made off at once with the two rifles and kits. Bill Dwyer went straight away to Sheehan's, where an officers' meeting was being held, to warn them to disperse. In taking the equipment off the soldier a ring came off his finger and I brought it with me. When I examined it later I found it was gold and engraved with the letters "G.R."

Sheehan was arrested next day along with a man named

Lacy, a forester, who was staying at Sheehan's. Lacy was not a Volunteer and knew nothing about what had happened. Yet Lacy was "identified" by one of the soldiers as an "attacker" and Mick Sheehan was released!

When I was arrested in Nov. 1918, I was sentenced to two years hard labour and I occupied the same cell in which Lacy had served his twelve months' sentence. His name was scratched on the walls. Lacy was a native of Kilkenny and became an active Volunteer.

The day following the disarming of the two British soldiers, I had a visit from R.I.C. at 2 o'clock. About 7 o'clock, Seamus Robinson called and questioned me if anything had happened in the area. I did not inform him and, later, when he discovered what had happened, he wanted to know why I didn't tell him. I told him I was carrying out his own instructions - "not to give any information to anyone no matter who they were." Seamus had many times warned us not to discuss military actions even amongst ourselves unless at a meeting of the Volunteers. He generally finished this little warning with "walls have ears" or "beware the loquacious vapourings of too much I.R.Beering". However Seamus shortly after issued a brigade general order that all military actions were to be reported verbally as soon as possible to battalion and brigade headquarters. As our lines of communication became more perfected, this was changed to "written dispatches".

I had, incidentally, mentioned that Mick Sheehan had threatened to have me courtmartialled for what I had done. Seamus said: "I'd have courtmartialled you myself if you hadn't".

So much for the first disarming of British soldiers in

Ireland since Easter Week, 1916.

Soloheadbeg, January 21st, 1919. On this day, Dáil Éireann met for the first time and formed an Irish Government. On this same day, at about the same time, Soloheadbeg ambush was carried out.

About ten days earlier, Seamus Robinson had informed me that there was to be a hold-up of a County Council convoy of gelignite at Soloheadbeg quarry. The exact date could not be ascertained. Seamus seemed elated with obviously suppressed excitement. It was to be the first brigade operation. I did not realise until afterwards that it set the ball deliberately rolling into guerilla tactics. He was anxious for the success of the ambush, and, as he said, he did not yet know the calibre of the Tipperary Town battalion men; he wanted some men from his home battalion, men whom he knew he could go "hunting tigers" with. Unfortunately, I was unable to get a bicycle, but I mobilised Paddy Dwyer ('Crube), Ned Reilly, Con O'Keeffe and Pat McCormack. Only McCormack and Dwyer were able to remain the week lying in ambush for the convoy. That night, after the shooting in which two R.I.C. were killed, I met Seamus. He had come back to A/Company area. I had arranged his guard and guides to Clonkelly. The little group who met him had separated on the home journey when Seamus called me back and warned me to remind Jimmy Browne not to forget to remove the mud off his (Seamus's) trousers which had been left at Kilshinane. I called Jimmy Browne, who had gone some 100 yards or so ahead, but he took no notice of me and forged ahead. He was peeved because I had made him return an automatic which had been loaned to him; it was company property and I was responsible for it. As things turned out, this was fortunate, as we would have been having

our usual goodnight chat in front of my father's house in Ballymore.

When I arrived at Ballymore it was fairly dark with deep shadows near the front of the house. I saw and heard nothing out of the ordinary. When I opened the door, about a dozen R.I.C. appeared suddenly out of the darkness. I went in and, as I was closing the door, four of them pushed it open against me. Inside, they questioned me about my whereabouts during the day. They also asked me if I had seen Seamus Robinson that day. I informed them that I had seen him carrying a load of turf down the road. "What time?", they asked, and I answered "About 1 o'clock". Seamus had already told me that the ambush had taken place about that time. My mother heard me make the statement and she chimed in and said that she, too, had seen him with the load of turf. She spoke with such conviction that the R.I.C. believed her. After they were gone, I told my mother that she had told her white lie splendidly! but she indignantly retorted "I told no lie black or white, I saw him". It took some time to convince her that she had been mistaken. "But", she said, "I could have sworn I saw him". When I told Seamus about this some time after, he said: "Providence can play some humorous tricks".

The R.I.C. were insisting that they "only wanted to interrogate him". I had asked innocently a couple of times what was wrong, but they refused to inform me. When I started to strip to go to bed, they prepared to go, and, as they were leaving the house, one of them turned and said: "Two of our men were killed in Tipperary today". I expect they were trying their usual last minute stunt to catch me off my guard and say something like "You mean Soloheadbeg". All I did say was "Is that so?".

Immediately they had gone, I squeezed my way out through a small back window and went to where Seamus was hiding to tell him what happened and to let him know that the R.I.C. "only wanted to interrogate him". They seemed to have told the same thing to everyone they met. Seamus was determined he would not be interrogated, but he wanted to find out how soft their "soft talk" was. I said I'd soon find out. I called to Mrs. Crummy's shop. Her husband was an ex-R.I.C. The first thing she said was: "Isn't it too bad the way they are looking for poor Seamus?" I informed her: "There is no trouble in getting him now, he is laid up with pneumonia". "Where?" she queried. "In Kilshinane" I said.

When I told Seamus what I had done, he laughed: "Golly, that's fine". I then led Seamus to Michael Ryan's of Clonkelly (Mickey the bog).

The next night, Eamon Ui Duibhir's house in Kilshinane was ransacked by large forces of R.I.C. and military who tried to persuade the occupants that Seamus had been in the house that night. Jack Cussen, Eamon Ui Duibhir's brother-in-law, had opened the door to the raiders, and they, finding his bed warm, concluded that Seamus had just escaped them.

Seamus's muddy trousers. ✱ Jimmy Brown told us, the next day after the raid, that he had been so tired after 12 o'clock that night after such an exciting day that, when he started to clean the trousers, he was unable to get more than about a quarter of "half the mud in Soloheadbeg quarry" off the trousers, when he had a brain wave. He turned the trousers inside out, folded them carefully and placed them at the end of his bed. They were a new pair of trousers and looked so innocent that the R.I.C. lifted them and threw

them aside and went on with searching the bed itself.

Seamus left the battalion area. As he was leaving, he said to me: "The next time you are talking to the police, Mick, tell them that I did not like to meet them solo as I could not leave them so low - solo - as we did at Soloheadbeg. He told me also to inform them that it was already all fixed up to meet them as often as they liked and oftener than they'd like, at Phillipp/. "We are not going on the run, Mick; we are just going on our gcoiméad". He went off, humming "The Rapparee" -

"Let George of England only send
His troops to burn our shoot;
We'll meet them upon equal ground
And fight them foot to foot".

Seamus paid us many visits subsequently with Treacy, Hogan and Breen. We did not meet Dan Breen so often after Knocklong as he was stationed mostly in Dublin doing his important quartermaster work, and we never saw Sean Treacy after his heroic death in October 1920. But Seamus, like the poor, was with us always to the end.

Knocklong - We always knew when the 'big four' were coming and had billets arranged for them with friendly farmers, particularly at Michael O'Brien's and Michael Lambe's, both of Kilshinane. About the end of May 1919, they arrived at Kilshinane accompanied by Andy Donnelly of Noddstown. We all stood talking at the gate leading into Eamon Wi Duibhir's house. Sean Treacy gave me a .45 Webley revolver, but told me at the same time "the price is £6.10.0." and that they needed the money badly as all the money they had was expended on the purchase of arms, and that unless I had the money next day he would not be able to leave the gun with me. I told him I'd run a dance somewhere on Sunday night and procure the money that way. Sean was reluctant,

as he thought waiting so long in one place was too risky. I reminded him that I had promised to have relief guards posted every night. In those early days the 'big four' always preferred to defend themselves during the day. The result was that the four accepted invitations to the dance.

They decided to stay that night at Michael O'Brien's, very much against my wishes, as the house was too wellknown to the R.I.C. At 7 a.m. next morning, I reported that the guards were going off duty as they had their work to do. I then went to do some work on my father's garden at Faheen Cross with two horses. I was not there very long when I saw four R.I.C. with rifles and revolvers coming from Dundrum direction. I was hoping they would proceed towards Ballydine but they turned in the direction of Michael O'Brien's house at Kilshinane. I immediately proceeded to O'Brien's house by a circuitous route, and, as I arrived at O'Brien's, the four R.I.C. arrived in the yard. Two of them proceeded into the house, one remained at a small wall in front of the hall door and the other went back on to the road and remained there. The only weapon available to me was a four-prong fork which I brought with me into the cow-house. I stood inside near the door of the cow-house unobserved and within 7 or 8 yards of the R.I.C. who was covering the halldoor. I expected shooting to start any second and I had my plans ready to slip behind the R.I.C. No.3 and strike him on the head as I had done to the poor soldier at "Tipp" Bridge, disarm him and attack the fellow on the road. Minutes passed that seemed hours and I concluded that they had found the poor boys asleep and taken them unawares. But I could not imagine two R.I.C. capturing the 'big four' without a fight. Judge my amazement when the two R.I.C. appeared at the door intact and apparently unruffled, join the man in front of the door and proceed back

to Dundrum.

When I had assured myself that they had really gone, I went into O'Brien's house to find the four of them continuin their meal (which had been slightly disturbed by the entrance of the R.I.C.) in the dining room on the left of the halldoor. Mrs. O'Brien said to me: "Oh, Mick, what would have happened if they opened the door?" to which Sean Treacy replied: "A couple of gallons of hot water, ma'am, would wash away all the blood". The visit of the R.I.C. was to ascertain if the dog licence had been obtained. Mrs. O'Brien searched for the licence on a file. One of the R.I.C. actually leaned against the door leading to the dining room and she, knowing that the lock was faulty and that the door would open easily, immediately drew his attention by asking "Is that it?" holding up some paper which had no connection with the licence. Finally she discovered it. The door and the division between the drawing-room and dining-room was ordinary sheeting boards, so that the reader can appreciate how near the four most wanted men in the country were to the R.I.C., and how near the R.I.C. were to their graves.

We then decided that it was better to spend the remainder of the week in Glenough area. It was then only Tuesday. and the dance did not take place until the coming Sunday night.

As Tadhg Dwyer, Battalion O/C., and Bill Dwyer, company captain, were then serving sentences in prison, I was virtually in charge of the battalion area. I notified certain members of each company and certain Cumann na mBan about the coming dance. The Cumann na mBan supplied the food and the dance was 2/- per head. On the Sunday of the dance, when cleaning Eamon Ui Duibhir's empty house in Ballagh, in preparation for the dance, we took the precaution of keeping

the door closed. It was customary for a patrol of R.I.C. to come to Cappamurra Bridge each evening and remain for some time, and often they met a patrol from Clonoulty. The house, though situated about 400 yards from the road, was in clear view from the bridge at Cappamurra. The R.I.C. duly arrived. My great worry was the fact that Con Dwyer, a local farmer and Volunteer, who was bringing water from a well in churns for the dance, would be bringing the water straight to the old house just about this time. But Con, like all his comrades in A/Company, was very much alert, so he deliberately projected the wheels of the cart into an old drain and, much to their (the R.I.C.'s) amusement, the churns fell into the ditch.

When the R.I.C. had disappeared, Con turned back and finished his job. How little the R.I.C. would have enjoyed that scene had they known that the four most wanted men in the country would be drinking tea from the water that Con was bringing.

Seamus, Dan, Sean and J.J. and about 70 or 80 couples attended the dance which was under a heavy guard and covered by excellent scouting. The dance continued without incident until 5 a.m. I paid Sean Treacy the £6.10. for the revolver and had 25/- left for company expenses.

I had been keeping company with Mary O'Brien of Rossmore, who was a prominent Cumann na mBan girl for some years, and Sean Hogan was " " in love with Bridie O'Keeffe of Glenough. Hogan intimated to me that he was returning with me to Rossmore. I informed Sean Treacy, who warned me: "Don't leave him out of your sight and I will wait for ye at Lacy's Cross" - which was hear Glenough. I pumped Hogan's bike and the four of us proceeded towards the village of Ballagh.

When we got there Hogan asked me for the pump again. I handed it to him; he put it in his pocket and said: "Tell the boys I'll be in Glenough about 4 this evening". I argued with him and told him of my promise to Sean Treacy and tried to get hold of his bike, but he jumped on it shouting "Two is company, three is a crowd".

Mary O'Brien and I proceeded to Lacy's Cross. For the first time in my life, I dreaded meeting Sean to tell him that Hogan had gone away. This was the first time I had seen Sean really vexed. He made no secret of his determination to have disciplinary action taken on Hogan. I convinced Sean that it was not my fault. Sean threatened what he would do when he got his hands on him. Little did he or I think that it was the R.I.C. who would lay hands on him first. "It is not your fault, Mick", said he, "and this is not the first time he did rash things". I will teach him sense when I get hold of him."

I went home without going to bed and went to work in the garden. Some time afterwards, Patrick McCormack, who had been at Soloheadbeg ambush, arrived with a verbal message from Seamus Robinson to proceed immediately to mobilise 25 men, or as many as we could arm, bring them under cover to within striking distance of Goolds Cross railway station. I carried out this order, mobilised the men at a spot about three miles away from the station. Then I had them billeted in an old shed about 1½ miles from the station. None of the men had any idea why they were there, but they were told that they would have no option but to fight in a few hours. They were quite happy and I told them that if the fight came off I had arranged for Father Matt Ryan to give them General Absolution. Never at any time did we deny any activity from our great friend Father Matt.

The following morning, Pat McCormack arrived at the old shed and informed me that the plans were altered and that Hogan was to be rescued at Emly, not Goolds Cross, and that they needed two good bicycles. I got my brother Paddy's bicycle and my own. I intended to go with them, but I was told that there would be great difficulty in getting contact, and that, if men were wanted, the Galbally ~~station~~ Battalion would supply them and whatever else was needed.

A very fierce raid by R.I.C., and they were very hostile, was the first intimation that the rescue of Sean Hogan had taken place at Knocklong. They searched the house minutely, but they never disclosed the r eason for the r aid. When I heard of the successful rescue at Knocklong, I was surprised, but, needless to say, delighted.

A few days elapsed without any official information other than what appeared in the papers. Then a young man of superior appearance arrived at my home and informed me he was Sean Keane of the West Limerick Brigade. It took him over an hour to convince me that he was not a ~~dismissed~~ disguised R.I.C. man. But when he told me that Sean Treacy had arranged for the return of the bicycles, it was only then that my suspicions were allayed.

He then told me the instructions he had for me. I was told to tell Eamon Ui Duibhir that Seamus Robinson was not wounded; that Sean Hogan's mother was to be told that he was not wounded and that he was all right; to tell Sean Treacy's mother that Sean was slightly wounded in the neck but it was of slight consequence. He also told me that they needed money very badly and he got some money from the Acting Q.M. (Eamon Ui Duibhir). He then gave me a covering address to ~~further~~ forward the money to Miss Lily Finn, Rathkeale, Co.Limerick.

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 1348/A

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

(iii) The date of each such document: 9 Feb 1956

(iv) The description of each document:

N. Ken Walker Michael Dawson T.D.

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(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.

I brought Keane to Eamon Ui Duibhir's, where we ascertained that there was only £7.10. in brigade funds. I urged Eamon to give it, but he rep;ied: "What in the name of God is £7.10. to four men on the run. Tell the boys that we will go out through the companies and collect more money. We'll see Paddy Ryan (Lacken) and Paddy Kinnane to collect in the Mid. Tipperary Brigade also". I proceeded to Alice Ryan of Church St., Tipperary, a prominent Cumann na mBan girl, and I met Commandant Sean Duffy of the 4th Battalion, who was later killed. I also saw Con Moloney, Acting Brigade Adjutant, and I informed him what had happened at Knocklong, and told him to inform Mrs. Treacy, Mrs. Breen and Mrs. Hogan. They suggested that I should go back home by Mrs. Breen's, which I did. When I informed her of what had happened and that two of the R.I.C. were killed, she said: "O, Christ, isn't it a pity that they didn't kill the four b.....s". The following day we collected over £100 and forwarded it. While collecting the money, we made no secret of what it was wanted for; it was for the gallant men who had rescued Sean Hogan. Some of the people who had not money in the house borrowed it from neighbours, and only one man r efused,

So much for the happenings before and after Knocklong, the fight which, above all others, was responsible for enthusing our people and preparing them for the coming dangers and hardships which were yet to come in the hard days of 1920 and 1921.

The two bicycles arrived back at Goolds Cross station addressed to me. Volunteer Jim Crowe, a porter at the station took off the labels, destroyed the consignment note and had the two bicycles removed to his own house which was adjacent to the station. The stationmaster, Daniel Lee, was not above

being hostile to us and was a suspect spy.

After the rescue at Knocklong, the British military, accompanied by R.I.C., conducted nightly raids in the area, but the Volunteers continued to drill bi-weekly. During this time we had compiled a list of all arms in friendly and hostile houses. We held up the mail train at Goolds Cross and captured all letters, brought them to a dump and did the censoring the day after. We returned same to the local post office as soon as possible so as not to interfere in any way with the business of the country.

About the end of October 1919, a Brigade Convention was arranged to take place at Meldrum Hall, Cashel. I knew that Seamus Robinson, Sean Treacy and Hogan were to attend. Dan Breen ~~returned to~~ *Remained in* Dublin. A friendly farmer, Con Dwyer, received a telegram from Dublin stating that "manures are being sent out today", a code by which we knew that the brigade officers were due to arrive that night. Goolds Cross station was scouted before nightfall, and I had a party of men numbering about 20 in readiness close by, in case of enemy appearing in great numbers. Some 18 or 20 minutes before the train was due to arrive, the local section commander reported four R.I.C. had come from Clonoulty barracks and that they were on the station platform. I consulted with the battalion commandant, Tadhg Dwyer, and urged very strongly that we should shoot them. Tadhg agreed it ~~it~~ was the only course left if we were to save our visitors from an unpleasant surprise and possibly death. Michael Sheehan, acting brigade quartermaster at the time, gave definite instructions they were not to be shot. He said that if the four were shot we could not hold the Convention and martial law would be re-established, etc. My argument

was that if our men were shot we could not hold any Convention. I appreciated the fact that the element of surprise was with the R.I.C. and that the four men coming off the train would have to walk up the steps into their arms. At this time I had ordered 50 of my own men to take off their boots so that we could get within range of the R.I.C. without being heard. Before a decision was arrived at, the train was heard coming into the station. We had to run about 200 or 250 yards and Tadhg Dwyer jumped right into the station, shouted to the four men to come this way. They immediately ran to the front of the train pursued by the R.I.C. who commenced to fire on them, and Ned Reilly, Con O'Keeffe and I fired from the top of the Bridge at the R.I.C., who seemed to ease their fire with the result that the three men for whom the British Government was offering thousands of pounds for their capture, escaped untouched. The R.I.C. retired into the stationmaster's house for the rest of the night.

In the course of the fight Sean Hogan lost a portmanteau containing ammunition and documents. As a result of an injury, his kneecap went out when he stumbled and the handle broke off the bag. It was too dark to see it and we had to move on. The bag was found by the signalman going off duty in the morning and he hid it in a heap of coal belonging to Sutton & Co. The following day, William O'Reilly, father of Ned O'Reilly, visited the store for coal and the signalman, Clifford, put the bag into the coal which was conveyed to Collanga. The big four went to Glenough, then on to Doon where a motor car, the property of Kelly Lynch, a bank manager, was commandeered. They were driven back to Dublin. The car ran out of petrol outside Lucan. Gilmore, a friendly driver, was

arrested and got six months in gaol for stealing the car. Shortly after, the Brigade Convention was held in Meldrum Hall and all the senior officers of the brigade were assembled that night, except the big four. Plans for organisation and for the fight were discussed. Supper was supplied by the Cumann na mBan, songs were sung and, not until daylight in the morning, did the gathering break up.

I was informed during the night that the bag which was missing was needed and that I was to get hold of it. On my way home that morning I arranged with Ned O'Reilly that I would go for it that night, which I did. On my way back through Ballagh I met a section commander named Ryan who informed me that the roads in Ballagh were clear and that he would ride ahead of me to make sure. He was to signal danger by turning his bicycle on the road and showing me the light o his bike. But the R.I.C. had taken the precaution of having two of their men lying in ambush on the outskirts of the village who were unnoticed by Ryan on his way through, and when he got to the village, he was held up by the two R.I.C. and prevented from turning his bicycle round, with the result that I was within ten yards of the R.I.C. before I saw them. When I attempted to turn on the road, with the weight of the bag, I was d elayed sufficiently to enable the R.I.C. to pounce on me. I had the bag in my arm as the handle was gone, otherwise I would have succeeded in turning. I was taken to Ballagh where the R.I.C. opened the bag and placed us both under arrest. I asked them why they were arresting Ryan as he had nothing to do with me. This statement was responsible for getting him discharged at the subsequent courtmartial.

On our way to Clonoulty Barracks, Constable Hayes

attempted to ride my bicycle in order to go to the barracks for reinforcements; we were giving them a tough time; I made a sudden dash for him, and Hayes, bicycle and all, including myself, fell into a nasty dyke of water.

Reinforcements met us at Clonoulty village and, as I was going in the door of the barracks, I was kicked by Sergeant Maloney. Constable Twomey struck a vicious swiping blow at my head with his rifle and, had I not ducked, the murderous blow would certainly have killed me. Before Twomey had recovered I struck him a few times, only to receive blows and kicks from about a dozen R.I.C. who had come into the day room. They continued to kick and beat me while on the floor with shouts of "where is Robinson and Treacy from you now?". Murtagh, a young constable, shouted: "You are only a pack of cowards to beat a young fellow like that; he's only a kid". The rest of them shouted: "He's a bloody murderer and we always knew it". This young constable Murtagh was shot dead some three weeks afterwards on Christmas morning 1919 by Constable Twomey. But at the subsequent inquiry, the verdict was "accidental death". During that night I had heard Twomey saying that Murtagh should join the I.R.A., and Murtagh replied: "Maybe I might".

We were handcuffed with our hands behind our backs, and put into a small cell in which there was about 6 inches of water, and left there for the night. Constable Walsh, to whom we referred some time ago, arrived in the morning and we heard him inquiring if the two boys had had any breakfast, and we heard some constable say: "They'll get no bloody breakfast here". "Let the b.....s starve" . And some one of them said: "Let them go to Johnnie-the-shoemaker (a known sympathiser), maybe he'd get it for them. We heard

Walsh say: "They wont starve while I am here, and if I had been here last night, they wouldn't have been beaten up either". Walsh went into his own home about 50 yards away and brought back tea. He demanded the removal of the handcuffs while we were having our tea. We were both very wet and he brought us dry socks that morning.

A convoy of eleven lorries of military arrived and we were conveyed to Cashel R.I.C. barracks where we remained for two days. Outside of my father and mother, Miss Statia Nevin, Right Rev. Dean Ryan, P.P., V.G., and Jim Dwyer, Battalion I.O., no one else was allowed to see us.

When we were being taken by lorry to Limerick Junction we were jeered at by many of the townspeople. We entrained at Limerick Junction for Cork. We enjoyed the precautions taken by the R.I.C. as we approached Knocklong railway station. I whispered to Ryan: "How little they know about the real story of Knocklong".

Cork was a relief from the R.I.C. cells. While awaiting transfer from "untried prisoners" I had a visit to my cell door from a man who asked me if I knew Seamus Robinson, Sean Treacy and Dan Breen. I assured him that I had never heard of them. I found later, to my chagrin, that my visitor was a fellow prisoner, Commandant Michael Fitzgerald, who afterwards died on hunger-strike.

Mick Fitzgerald, who was O/C. of the prisoners, was commandant of the Fermoy Battalion and had already been identified for the shooting of Private Jones of Fermoy when a party of soldiers were disarmed there. When Mick had asked me if I knew Seamus Robinson, Sean Treacy and Dan Breen I had said "No". Mick Fitzgerald was then speaking through a

spyhole in the prison door and, as I did not then know him, I was, naturally, not going to divulge that I knew any of those so very much wanted men. Afterwards, Mick asked me why I did not say that I knew them. I told him that, at the time, I did not know who he was, and I apologised for making a mistake, knowing the great man he was. Mick died on hunger strike in Cork Prison in October 1920.

Some weeks afterwards, when we had got very friendly, I asked Mick Fitzgerald if he knew a warder named de Loughrey. He said he did, and asked me why did I ask. I said: "De Loughrey has a verbal message for me to disclose where I have certain arms hidden in Tipperary, and I want to know if he is trustworthy." Mick assured me that he was 100% with us and that anything I said to him would be treated as confidential. I then gave de Loughrey an advertisement from the "Tipperary Star" - a picture of a hayshed - and put an arrow on the place where the arms and ammunition were hidden. They were immediately found by the local officers.

As some of the men awaiting courtmartial were almost bound to be faced with the death penalty, it was decided to plan an escape. After many days of deliberation, the plans were finally completed, which were that we would disarm the soldiers in the main hall before they went to the tower, and that, having so disarmed them, we would then procure the keys of the Governor's office and escape through the front door. Mr. Butler, who was Chief Clerk, and many of the warders in Cork Prison were fully aware of our plans and were prepared to co-operate with us in every way. Actually, some dozen revolvers were smuggled into the prison by the warders who were then in the British service. The escape was planned for a Sunday morning which, per usual, was a freer morning for

the prisoners awaiting courtmartial and, for many weeks previously, we had been kicking an old paper ball in the main hall on Sunday mornings, so that the soldiers would not be suspicious of us when the time had come for us to make our bid for freedom.

On the Sunday morning planned for the escape, two armoured cars were seen on the road leading up to the prison, and the warders informed us that there was a danger that our plans were known to the British. It afterwards transpired that a couple of I.R.A. men, speaking too loudly in a public house, were overheard by a woman who was able to give some meagre information to the R.I.C. and a precautionary measure was taken by them. If they had had definite information, they would, no doubt, have searched the cells and found the arms which had been smuggled in to us, and I am sure that they would also have taken greater precautions. The escape was called off.

Some time afterwards I was courtmartialled - in January 1920 - and sentenced to two years' hard labour for having a bag of ammunition, gelignite and documents which had been lost by Sean Hogan when he, Seamus Robinson and Sean Treacy alighted at Goolds Cross station in the previous November and where we had the fight with the R.I.C., previously described. I went on hunger strike, when I was sent to the hard labour wing and denied political treatment.

I was put into the punishment cell for striking a warder named Lee. Lee was very hostile to us and to all I.R.A. prisoners and, after striking him on a Sunday morning, I was put into a cell for solitary confinement. Mick Fitzgerald issued an ultimatum to the Governor that, if they persisted in keeping me locked up, they would go on hunger strike.

As a result of his interview with the Governor I was granted one hour per day on exercise - locked in for the other twenty-three. This continued for about six weeks. Then the late Commandant Tom Donovan (7th Battalion, Tipperary Brigade) was also sentenced, like myself, to two years' imprisonment for being in possession of ammunition. We were later joined by Paddy Dalton, a native of Waterford (afterwards a colonel in the Free State army). From time to time we were joined by other prisoners who had been sentenced to hard labour.

After seven or eight days' hunger strike as a protest for political treatment, we were sent by boat from Cobh to Belfast. The weather was unduly bad for the month of March, spring tides prevailed, and one can realise the seasickness of eleven men who had been imprisoned for a considerable time.

After about a fortnight in Belfast, we again decided on hunger strike as the only weapon available, and we were then transferred to Mountjoy Prison, Dublin, where we occupied underground cells for about six weeks.

By reaching to the top of the window and breaking a pane, I was able to communicate with men who were already serving sentences there, but who were allowed political treatment because not sentenced to hard labour. The first man I got in touch with was Cathal O'Shannon and, when I told him that I was one of Seamus Robinson's right-hand men, he took all measures to try and get a few cigarettes and matches which I had been deprived of

After some weeks, we decided finally that we were going on hunger strike to get either political treatment or release. The eleven men who took part in this hunger strike were:-

Tom Donovan, Tipperary; Charlie Daly, Cork; Eugene Cohalane, Cork; Owen Jackson, Cork; Ned O'Dwyer, Limerick (East) (afterwards killed in the civil war near Newcastle-west, Co. Limerick); Leo McKenna, Meath; Paddy Burns, Wexford; Paddy Whelan, Wexford; M.J. Davern, Cashel, Co. Tipperary; Dan Owens, Cork.

We did not take any food for about four or five days because we realised that, if we intimated to the prison authorities that we were going on hunger strike, they would transfer us to an English prison which would mean that our struggle would be harder and our fight much more difficult. So we planned the hunger strike so that we would be pretty weak and unfit to travel by the time the British woke up to our plans.

The first Sunday morning on hunger strike, I was visited by the late Canon Watters, Prison Chaplain, who asked me if I had been at Mass. When I answered "No", he said: "It's bad enough to be on hunger strike, to be committing suicide, but to be missing Mass!". My language in my reply was not what a gentleman or an Irish soldier would use. He was accompanied by Captain Munroe, who was the Prison Governor and who was well known to be hostile to Ireland.

After some days I was transferred to the prison hospital, where I was visited by two or three doctors every day. They assured me that there was no hope or release and remoter still was the chance of political treatment. As I had made up my mind to die as a protest against the treatment we had been getting, their outpourings did not mean very much.

After some twenty days on hunger strike, my condition became very bad, and doctors and priests were in attendance hourly. Three prison doctors informed me that I was within

hours of death and that a meeting of the British Cabinet had been held, at which it was decided that they were not going to concede either political treatment or release.

The then Lord Mayor of Dublin - Alderman Larry O'Neill - visited us. He was very distressed that our end was near and that the prospects of getting our objective were remote. He had been to Dublin Castle and to the Viceregal Lodge and he met the same refusal in both places.

The daily press had taken up the matter and saw it in a very serious light and it had given very broad headlines to our fight for political treatment. We could hear the people praying, night and day - reciting the Rosary continuously, outside the prison gates.

On the evening of 5th May 1920, I was informed that my parents had been acquainted of my condition, by wire, and that the Governor expected some of them to visit me during the day. That evening, I was visited by my father, Phil Ryan of Finlas, "Little" Phil Ryan of Usher's Quay, Dublin, and by Ned Ryan, a cousin of mine, who was manager of McGee's, "The Clock", Parliament St. Dublin. The Governor had informed them, on their way in, that I was in imminent danger of death and that the British, on their side, had made clear their position, which was final.

We were visited many times during each day by Fathers Dominic and Albert, who gave every consolation and encouragement. At 12 o'clock that night, I was visited by the late Father McMahon, afterwards Canon McMahon and Senior Chaplain in Mountjoy. He informed me that he was staying with us all night, in case of death, and he asked me was I aware that I was in imminent danger of death. I told him I felt that way and that I was actually longing for the relief

He asked me if I had anything troubling me. I told him about the visit of Canon Watters while we were on hunger strike in the main portion of the building and asked him to apologise to the Canon for my language. I told him that the Canon had said we were suicides, and I asked him: "Do you agree with his opinion?" Father McMahon burst into tears and said: "If I were in your boots, Mick, I would do the same myself". This was a great consolation for one who believed he was about to meet his God.

May 6th, 1920, was a day of great excitement in the city of Dublin, and the thousands who had been keeping vigil outside the gate grew to great dimensions. The visits of the Governor, the doctors and the priests were hourly. At about 8 o'clock that night, the three doctors, headed by Dr. Green, read some further proclamation from the British Government, the substance of which was that, in no circumstances, could the British Government release us and gave their many reasons for it, which I don't remember. The three doctors were in tears and it was quite clear that their sympathy was with us, as medical men, but to no purpose. When the Treaty of 1921 was signed, I often brought to mind clearly the great game of bluff that the British had played with us, eleven poor, insignificant soldiers. And it brought to mind more forcibly that, if only our plenipotentiaries had held as firm as we did, the many evils which followed the Treaty (on the strength of the threat of immediate and terrible war) would never have taken place.

I should have mentioned that, in my conversation with Father McMahon the previous night, I asked him to see Ned Dwyer of Limerick, who was then 15½ years of age, and to

inform him that he was free to go off the hunger strike and, not alone that, it was my express wish that he would, on account of his age. Dwyer's reply was: "Never! We will die together, and let the eleven of us be buried in Glasnevin together!". Ned was killed near Newcastlewest, Co. Limerick, early in the civil war - I think it was August - though still only a boy.

I was dozing asleep about 10 o'clock that night when one of the warders, who was friendly with us, woke me up and said: "We have great news. I think you are going to be released. The British are surrendering". Almost immediately on his visit, came the Governor and the three prison doctors who informed me that we were being released under the "Cat and Mouse" Act.

We were conveyed to the Mater Hospital almost immediately, and it took nearly half an hour for the ambulance to get through the dense crowds who had collected in the vicinity of the prison and the Mater Hospital. We were handed a document to the effect that we were to return on 13th June which, needless to say, we ignored.

This was indeed a great victory for us and for the nation, and we were the last political prisoners with unfinished sentences ever to be released from Mountjoy Prison. I.R.A. Headquarters then decided that they would neither encourage nor condone hunger strikes in the future.

On the day following my removal to the Mater Hospital, I heard a voice saying: "Where is young Davern?", and this man, whom I did not know previously, came over to me. "I am Phil Shanahan" he said. Of course, I immediately recognised who he was, as he was T.D. for the Harbour Division of

Dublin, and the only person ever to defeat Alderman Alfred Byrne. He said: "I have a couple of friends here to see you" and, when I looked up, Sean Treacy and Dan Breen were at the foot of the bed. Sean told me that he was going down to Tipperary that night to do a spot of work, and he said: "If you have any messages, I will bring them down for you". Having given him some verbal messages to deliver, I warned him that the hospital was a very dangerous place to be in, as I understood that it was surrounded by G-men. They were the political arm of the R.I.C. They had the Mater Hospital under observation because two I.R.A. men had been burned in a barrack at Ballybrack, Co. Dublin, and they were both dying in the hospital. Sean said: "This is the safest place ever for a person on the run, with all these fellows around".

Two days afterwards Phil Shanahan visited me again, and he jokingly said that he would never again have anything to do with these Tipperary fellows. "They are after burning the only decent house in my native town of Hollyford", he said, and handed me the newspaper to show me that Hollyford Bks. had been burned by the I.R.A.

On my arrival in Tipperary, I was met by hundreds of old comrades. Immediately, plans were put into operation for the company to take an active part in the war which was then being waged. Sean had already told me that men were publicly parading with arms for the first time, and I was delighted to learn that a column was about to be formed and that the war had really taken on a serious aspect.

About a fortnight after my discharge from hospital, we were notified for the attack on Clerihan Barracks. Eight of the men from our battalion - it was known as the Kilnamanagh Battalion - proceeded to Clerihan. I was in bed

about an hour when my old friend, Tom Donovan, heard of my whereabouts and visited me. He insisted that I should get out of bed. I gave the day with him at Maher's of Blackcastle repairing old rubber hose. That night, we proceeded, complete with ass and cart loaded with paraffin oil and petrol, to burn the barracks. The attack was called off for some reason, and we all proceeded to Furcell's of Glenagat where the men had tea. After travelling for about a mile in the Knockgraffon direction, Sean Treacy came back and asked where I was. He handed me his bike and said: "You carry on in front. I am sorry. I should have thought before now of you. You carry on".

I should have mentioned that, when the attack was called off, I had arranged to go with Tom Donovan, but the battalion commandant insisted that I should go back to my own unit. Donovan and I had arranged, when we were in jail, that we would both be together in the war, for whatever length it might take.

We stayed in Hennessy's of Knockgraffon and O'Gorman's of Ardassagh, two wellknown houses. On the following evening at about six o'clock, when we were preparing to return to our own battalion area, we called at O'Gorman's to collect some of the boys and found them engaged in dancing - plenty of music. One of the O'Gorman girls said: "Why didn't you bring the younger fellows up here, Mick, and leave the old man down at Hennessy's?" Hayes was very much annoyed on the march back, about this remark. He was about 40 years of age and the only one wearing a heavy moustache. When we came to a part of the road with very high hedges on both sides, Hayes fired a rifle and revolver in over the ditch. The task fell on me of recovering them as I had been responsible for Paddy's outburst. We marched to Lisloran and stayed at ... O'Grady's that night.

The area covered by the company was, by this time, very hot. Bill Dwyer was recovering from wounds received at Drangan. We had several skirmishes with the British military and R.I.C. in the area, particularly at Ballydine where we were lucky, on many occasions, to escape when they raided the area. On several occasions we visited Dundrum village, with a view to shooting some of the R.I.C. men and, when we did not get them, we cut telegraph poles and wires which isolated the local barracks.

We had, by this time, an inventory of all arms in the possession of both friendly and hostile people. On 1st September 1920, an order was issued by the Brigade O/C. "Arms and ammunition" which meant that we were to collect all the arms from either friendly or hostile people. This we immediately did.

Colonel Cockburn of the British army, who resided at Woodford, Goolds Cross, had often boasted that anyone who would raid his house would get a very hot reception. One morning, when the postman was calling at the door to deliver letters, we were in ambush in a concealed position near the door. When the door was opened for the postman, we rushed in and, a few minutes afterwards, the poor Colonel was looking down the barrels of a couple of revolvers. We got a considerable amount of arms, ammunition and other military equipment there.

We then proceeded to Company H.Q. which was at Ballymoore We were informed, about 9 o'clock that night, that there was a suspicious looking man at Crummie's publichouse at Ballydine, and, from information we received, we concluded that he was one of the R.I.C. I argued very hard that we should shoot him in the shop and take no risks, but, finally, it was decided to give him "hands up" when he cleared off

from the publichouse. He was Constable Norris. Immediately we gave him "hands up" he fired, wounding one of our men, Willie Ryan, and, although he was badly wounded himself, he succeeded in escaping in the dark. We conveyed our wounded comrade to Dwyer's of Ballinahinch where we had to bring a doctor - Dr. McCormack of Dundrum - some six miles across the fields to attend to his wound. The British Intelligence system was faulty. They appeared to get information when it was really of no use to them. We had Ryan removed a day or two before they raided the several places where we had him convalescing.

Active service columns were formed in October 1920. They were first called battalion 'active service groups', afterwards to be known as 'active service units'. We took up ambush positions two or three days a week and bad luck seemed to dog us on many occasions.

We had a splendid ambush position at Killinure (?) where we waited for a whole week, and we had only left the position about 20 minutes when a cycling patrol of British soldiers passed the way. This would have meant certain death for the lot of them, had they come only a little earlier.

On another occasion, we were just going into ambush position at Camus when two lorries arrived and, had we been in position a few minutes earlier, we would have been able to deal with them too. I said that we were very unlucky. Jim Gorman, on hearing this remark, said: "You mean the other fellows were damn lucky!"

Almost once a week we sniped some of the local barracks.

About the end of October 1920, an ambush was arranged

at Coolacussane, Dundrum. The local sergeant of the R.I.C., named Sullivan - a native of Kerry - arranged that a patrol of British military from Dundrum barracks would raid the house of Tom Carew, then brigade intelligence officer, at Golden Garden, on a certain day and time. The military had two ways of returning, either by road or by railway. The sergeant advised them to go back by the railway where he knew that we were in position to meet them, but the officer in charge, Lieutenant Turner, then decided that he would go back by road. Immediately, our scouts reported it and we took up position on the roadside, to be again informed that the military were coming by railway. This meant a fast run of about a quarter of a mile, and many of our men were not in position when the military appeared near what was the best ambush position. Some of the officers manned the bridge at Coolacussane and had the soldiers under direct fire, but the main body of I.R.A. were not able to get into close contact with them, with the result that only about 7 or 8 of them were wounded, including the officer, who fell first from Jim Gorman's perfect aim. We could not delay there too long as we were within a mile and a half of Dundrum Barracks which had then a very strong garrison, and within about six miles of Tipperary town where some thousand soldiers were stationed.

A couple of nights afterwards, the British raided Kilshinane House where the Brigade O/C. used to reside, and, the following night, a British party of masked men burned the house as a reprisal for the Coolacussane ambush.

The British then apparently decided that they were going to clean up the area, because round-ups and raids of all descriptions were the order of the day for the next couple of months; but our men were more determined than ever to carry

the fight on to the bitter end, even though we had lost such a great soldier as Sean Treacy (who was Vice-Comdt. of the Brigade) in October 1920.

We lost one of our best men, a section commander named Peter O'Dwyer, amd, despite the vigilance of the R.I.C. and British, he was given a military funeral at Ballintemple, within half a mile of Dundrum barracks. The graveyard was surrounded by about 100 military and R.I.C., and they had gone only half the journey to Dundrum, which was a quarter of a mile, when we fired the three volleys over our dead comrade's grave.

I returned home on Christmas night to see my mother and father, and I was just changing my underwear when, at about 12 o'clock, I heard the noise of a lorry, as I thought, in the distance. Immediately I left the house and I was gone only about 20 yards when the place was surrounded by an armed band of R.I.C. and military, who wrecked most of the house and stole, or destroyed almost, everything that was in the place.

We continued to go into ambush positions almost daily and, when Rearcross Barracks was being attacked, we gave the night sniping Dundrum Barrack which drew off most of the British military in Tipperary town to it; others went to Golden and had a feint attack on that barrack, with the result that the main body of military reinforcements were kept from Rearcross which was the main objective of the I.R.A.

We then decided that all bridges in the area should either be knocked down or blown up. Gelignite was scarce and the brigade O/C. had given instructions that it was

not to be used except in very special circumstances. This meant that we had to give long periods knocking down bridges over the river Suir, like Camus, Ardmayle, Ballygriffin, Knockgraffan, Red Cannon and several smaller bridges. The result of this demolition of bridges was that the British found it very difficult to use either armoured cars or armoured lorries in the area.

The enemy then decided that they would have patrols of great numbers - a couple of hundred strong - which would camp in the area and proceed to search houses and fields. The first such column of about 200 military arrived at Hunt's of Ardmayle. Though they were quite certain that their plans were of a very confidential nature and that only the officer in charge knew of them, they got a very severe shock when, the morning after, they arrested a dispatch rider, Paddy Dwyer, and discovered that he was carrying a dispatch which conveyed their entire movements and intended movements for the next couple of days to the Brigade O/C. The officer in charge decided that he would return to Templemore Barracks as it was apparent that our people were able to obtain information in a somewhat mysterious manner. Mrs. Hunt, who had the reputation of being a loyalist, had invited the British officer and his staff into her dining room to have supper. While serving the meal, she got several glances at his diary and immediately sent the information to the Battalion O/C. This incident would appear to have cured the British of sending their columns to South Tipperary. Needless to say, they never had the slightest suspicion of Mrs. Hunt, who proved herself to be a good friend to us on many occasions before and afterwards.

Information was received by Brigade Headquarters that a

military convoy was to pass by rail. Immediately all columns and active service units were ordered to Golden Garden, near the scene of the Coolacussane ambush. The rails were prepared for gelignite, with a view to blowing them up as the train would pass, and the position lent itself as a splendid opportunity for our men to have a successful fight with the occupants of the troop train. George Plunkett, G.H.Q. engineer, was in charge of the mining operation and I was in charge of the guard on same. The troop train did not arrive. I handed over the guard to Battalion Commandant Paddy Hogan, and, when the Brigade O/C., Seamus Robinson, saw me arriving in for breakfast with my men, he inquired what had happened the guard and threatened to shoot us. This was my first real row with Seamus. When I explained that Commandant Paddy Hogan was taking over charge with his men who had been in bed all night, Seamus apologised, saying: "I should have known you wouldn't do a thing like that - leaving the place unguarded". Hogan was killed the following night in a fight with overwhelming numbers of British military at Derryclooney.

We took up a position at Ballyrobin, some half a mile from the previous position at Golden Garden, and though trains passed, not one of them contained British soldiers. All the active service units returned to their own areas. We then concentrated very heavily and carefully on raiding the night mail train (Dublin-Cork and vice versa) at Goolds Cross, and, while we took thousands of letters and censored them, the information collected was of a meagre and unimportant type. However, we were preventing the British from using the ordinary mail for their dispatches and so on. On numerous occasions we searched the mail trains for British officers, or anyone connected with them, and made a

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: MS 1348/A

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

(iii) The date of each such document: 9 Feb 1956

(iv) The description of each document:

Witness statement Michael Dunne TD
personal information p44

(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).)

Moloney

Name: (J. Moloney.)

Grade: Col.

Department/Office/Court:

Date: 7 March 2003.

minute search of any suspicious persons. This again was done with a view to preventing their intelligence officers from travelling with any degree of safety.

We laid many traps for persons we were suspicious of, and actually got definite information against a man named Thomas Kirby. This man worked as a farm labourer at Mohera, Annacarty, and when things got a bit hot for him, he actually joined the British army in Tipperary. We got a local farmer to meet him, stand him a few drinks and assure him that his life was not in peril. One day, Kirby returned to the area. We captured him, executed him and buried his remains in a local bog, for, had we buried him in consecrated ground, the British would have found his body and would have carried out reprisals. He was attended by Father John Ryan, then C.C. in Clonoulty, who gave him the last rites of the Church. Kirby admitted he was a spy and felt very sorry that he had given information to the British.

We also courtmartialled one of our Volunteers named for giving information to the British military (when he was arrested) as to the men who were in the I.R.A. locally, and so on. I felt that he should have been court-martialled by the brigade and executed, but, on account of his four brothers, who were good soldiers of the I.R.A. - one of them was serving a 10-year sentence in Dartmoor, England, a convict prison - it was argued that he gave the information through fear, and we expelled him from the Volunteers and out of the brigade area. afterwards joined the Free State army and was granted a pension of £27 a year.

We had a good fight with the occupants of a train at Goolds Cross about the middle of March 1921, and we could

claim, within all reason, that four or five of them were wounded, as they were taken off the train at Goolds Cross, brought to Dundrum Barracks, and afterwards to the military hospital at Tipperary.

We then arranged with the 2nd Battalion active service unit - that is, with the late Commandant Dinny Sadlier, Cashel - that we would carry out an ambush at Camus. We were to be in position at 5 o'clock in the morning, but, unfortunately, it was 8 o'clock by the time we got into position. We had not actually taken up positions when three armoured cars arrived. They pulled up within 20 or 30 yards of us. They must have seen us, but, for some good reason, they proceeded on their way without attacking us. For us to attack them was suicidal and, if they only had had the courage to take us on, they would have annihilated our whole group, as we were in a cluster in a very exposed position, with a most difficult line of retreat. All we were expecting were two lorries.

During the month of April, we felt that the British were still having access to the bridges and able to get over them, so we decided on a further demolition, which we did. We felt that, although we had pot-holed the roads travelled by the military, it left much to be desired and that they themselves were bringing planks with them and getting over the bridges. So we decided on a further demolition of all the remaining bridges in the area. On 27th April, we brought some 60 men to carry out the complete demolition of Ardmayle Bridge. We had only some 26 or 27 men to guard them, and it took them from 8 o'clock, which was broad daylight, until 7 o'clock in the morning to complete the demolition of this bridge.

We proceeded to Goolds Cross that night and held up both mail trains and sent some horse-loads of mails to a secluded spot where they could be censored. We then went to Brian Moore's to sleep. We slept very soundly that night until the noise of lorries was heard at about 6 o'clock in the morning. Lieutenant Martin Purcell was sleeping in the bed with me. We dressed immediately and only got to the back door, when Volunteer Jim Crowe arrived in the back kitchen of Butler's house to inform us that there was a big round-up on. He (Purcell) said: "What will we do?" I handed him a revolver and told him to fight for his bloody life. Almost immediately, the military arrived.

After a very fierce fight, the military wounded two of our men, captured Lieutenant Purcell alive, but shot him afterwards, and section commander Peter Maher died in the Curragh (?) Hospital.

The enemy seemed to have machine guns on every pier and vantage point. I was about to go through a stile when I suddenly decided on going under the gate instead. I got a ricocheting bullet in the hip which was not of much consequence at the time. I crossed a road which should have been manned by the enemy, but, apparently, the R.I.C.sergeant previously referred to - Sergeant Walsh, deliberately omitted to inform them of the fact that they should man this road with an armoured car, which would have prevented our escape. I got weak from loss of blood and got into a bog. I put the heath over my head as a camouflage and, although they searched within yards of me for two hours, they failed to locate me.

A Volunteer named Ben McCormack, who had been working in the bog, saw my position and, when the enemy had gone,

he came almost to the spot where I was and helped me to get away to a house where the doctor - Dr. McCormack - was sent for.

Captain Bill Dwyer was seriously wounded in this affair, while being taken prisoner, and was only saved from execution by the Truce in July 1921.

Lieutenant Martin Purcell was also taken prisoner and murdered by the British in Tipperary military barracks. Section Commander Peter Maher died from wounds in the Curragh military hospital.

I was brought to Dwyer's of Killeen that night and, after a few days, Father James Moloney, C.C. of Clonoulty, insisted on my being brought to his house. I recovered rather quickly and was again on active service in about a fortnight.

In May 1921, Ned O'Reilly and I were proceeding to a meeting of active service unit leaders at Rosegreen, where arrangements were being made to concentrate all the men of the 3rd Tipperary Brigade, as a cargo of arms was expected to come in at some point on the Waterford coast (at Ring, Co. Waterford). We went by Andy Fogarty's house - afterwards T.D. for South Tipperary - at Grangemore, Cashel. We walked across an open field, went in by the front door, and Mrs. Fogarty said to us: "My God! The military are in the yard". We inquired if they had already searched the house and she said "Yes, and they have the workman under arrest". To retreat was out of the question, so we remained in the house. The military went away and we had a cup of tea. Mrs.Fogarty said: "Weren't you very lucky they did not see you?" We said: "All the luck was on their side this time because we did not see them!"

We then proceeded to Rosegreen via Kill Hills, a mountainy part of Tipperary. We had proceeded into the centre of a sixty-acre field when, without any warning, we discovered that we were under very severe fire. We saw nobody, but assumed that it was Captain Marshall of the British forces who used to bring a column of men, in civvies, around these parts of Tipperary. How we escaped, I don't kno as every place we moved to, the fire seemed to be concentrated on that particular point, O'Reilly and I parted. I made my way to Burke's, near Ballinure, and they guided me to John Kirwan's house. Kirwan brought me back to Andy Fogarty's from where we had started. During this time, I thought Reilly was killed and he was of the same opinion regarding myself. To my delight, I found that he too had called at Fogarty's and was billeted at a nearby house. Andy Fogarty brought me to the house, and I warned him to keep away from the door, that I would speak first. When I called O'Reilly, he immediately opened the door and was obviously ready to fire when he heard the footsteps. The following day we resumed our journey, only to discover that it was a column of our own men, under Commandant Sean Downey, who had engaged us the previous day.

We proceeded almost to Rathsallagh without incident when I saw a girl waving her hand. I took cover - to find that a party of Lancers were within a few hundred yards of us. When they had gone, we proceeded to Davin's of Rathsallagh, and there met the Brigade O/C., Seamus Robinson, Sean Fitzpatrick and Ernie O'Malley. When O'Malley heard of our escape from our own column, he said; in a joking manner: "I'd be sorry for you, Davern, but I wouldn't be a bit sorry if O'Reilly were shot!" O'Reilly, who had little sense of humour, if any, immediately began a wordy battle with

O'Malley, and, were it not for the restraining influence of the Brigade O/C., I would have witnessed the first duel between two I.R.A. officers.

After a couple of days at brigade headquarters, I returned home to the 3rd Battalion area to discover that an order had been issued that all post offices were to be divested of their telephone equipment. A column of 26 men proceeded to Dundrum on a Sunday night. I knew personally that it would be a difficult matter to take the 'phone out of Dundrum, as the man who was postmaster was hostile to us, and he would immediately ring up the military, some 250 of wh whom were stationed a couple of hundred yards away. So I decided on a ruse. I knew that John Crowe, draper, was a great friend of his, so I called on John and told him that we wanted some clothing. When I got him downstairs, I told him my real reason, that he would have to call the post-master to the door under the pretence that his wife was seriously ill. When the postmaster opened the door, I informed him that we were dismantling the post office equipment, which we did immediately, and rendered it useless for the remaining period of the Anglo-Irish war.

We then searched the local publichouses and arrested two British soldiers. I was very much in favour of executing them as a reprisal for the shooting of Lieutenant Purcell. Ned O'Reilly, however, refused to allow them to be shot.

We proceeded to Hollyford and Rossmore where we also dismantled the post offices.

For the next week or ten days, we visited the village of Dundrum nightly, with a view to having reprisals for the murder of Lieutenant Purcell. Again, we met unarmed

soldiers and, again, O'Reilly refused to allow them to be executed.

Clune ambush. On the road leading from Clune Cross to Dundrum, about 300 yards (near Mrs. Brown's cottage) was without fence or wall, giving a clear line of fire and was an ideal place to carry out an ambush. We had waited for several days in this position, which was behind a high fence overgrown with furze, and about 90 yards from the main road. About 10.30 a.m. some 25 military in charge of an officer cycled into the position and, notwithstanding that Mrs. Brown at that very moment decided on milking her goats, we attacked them. The military immediately fell on the road, some wounded and at least six or seven killed. The fight lasted for 1½ hours and several military lorries and armoured cars appeared on the scene before we left the position. We retreated in the direction of Glenough, but, were it not for a funeral coming on the road between Glenough and Clune, the military would certainly have prevented our escape. Horses were killed and cars broken by the British military in their efforts to encircle us. We crossed the Multeen river which was then in flood, but had to retreat again and re-cross it in order to escape.

We retired into Glenough, which is a mountainy area, and, after drying our clothes and having something to eat, Jack Ryan (Master) insisted that we would go for cigarettes to Rossmore. I opened a gate which was covered with galvanised iron, only to discover that about 100 military were engaged searching the house we were going to. We retreated cautiously and, fortunately for us, they did not see us.

That night, we decided that we would knock down two bridges between Drumbane and Clune. We finished the job about 5.30 in the morning and, very much against Ned O'Reilly's

wishes, we decided on going to Clonoulty. We had only proceeded about a mile when some 30,000 troops surrounded the entire Kilnamanagh Hills which extended from Doone to Rossmore and from Newport right on to Dundrum. For the next fortnight, they continued to search every house, field and valley but, fortunately, we were outside the cordon.

About this time, Sergeant O'Sullivan, who was in charge of the R.I.C. Barracks at Annacarty, was very anxious that we should take the barracks, and he was prepared to make all arrangements for us to do so, without loss of life. O'Sullivan had been very friendly to the I.R.A. and codes and all other information were given to us freely. A dispatch rider was sent to brigade headquarters, but the Brigade O/C. decided that "a barrack tapped ~~was~~ is better than a barrack taken". Unfortunately, O'Sullivan was taken away by the British military some short time afterwards and, despite all attempts to locate him, we were never able to do so. The only source of intelligence left then was Sergeant Rynn in Dundrum Barracks, but his position was very difficult, and we certainly felt very seriously the loss of Sergeant O'Sullivan. Rynn proved a very good friend to us and, when the R.I.C. was demobbed, he was anxious to go to his home at Newcastlewest, and he left us, fully armed with splendid references from the Brigade O/C., the Battalion O/C. and myself.

It was almost impossible to find shelter in the Kilnamanagh Hills after the Clune ambush, and we decided that we would have another ambush at Camus, near Cashel. Jim O'Gorman and I proceeded one evening to make a complete survey of the proposed ambush position and the surrounding roads, with a view to having them blocked. I called at my own home but delayed only a couple of minutes because

there was scarcely a day that there was not a raid of some kind. I then proceeded to my aunt's house at Kilshinane. This house had never been raided by either R.I.C. or military, and, in fact, it was the one road they had never travelled on. It was a bad road. After a good meal and a rest, O'Gorman and I decided to proceed to Camus to make our plans for the ambush the following week. My leg had become rather sore and swollen, and I suggested to O'Gorman that we should wait till the following morning which was a Sunday. O'Gorman decided that he would go on his own to Camus. I was already very familiar with the area. I had arranged to go to bed and actually had my shoes off - about 11.30 p.m. - when I got a premonition that the house would be raided. I was strapping on the guns when my aunt came in from the yard and said: "Sure, they never raided the place and they won't raid tonight". But I certainly had such a strange feeling that I decided to leave. Mick Kennedy, who worked on my aunt's farm, and who was a member of the I.R.A., was on the road, scouting. I proceeded to Maher's of Ballymore and told Mick to go to bed. Mick Kennedy was only in bed when the house was surrounded by detachments of military from Cashel and Dundrum. They told my aunt and uncle that I was in the house that evening, that night, and threatened to shoot them unless they divulged where I was. They brought Kennedy down to a lonely part of the road, put him against the pier of a gate and informed him that they were going to shoot him unless he revealed where I was. Although he knew well where I was, no threats would get him to divulge. They released him about 4 o'clock in the morning, and one member of the raiding party, who appeared to be rather friendly to him, said to him: "You are damn lucky that you're not Mick somebody else!"

This raid was the result of definite information given

by some informer. I asked my old friends Sergeants Walsh and Ryan, on many occasions afterwards, to disclose who gave the information, but they always refused to divulge. Before Sergeant Walsh died, he came to see me, and I had almost extracted the information from him when he said: "No, I wont! I'll bring it to the grave with me". The only thing he said was: "When I discovered that they were going to raid Kilshinane for you, I called to McNamara's publichouse in Cashel for a drink, and also to O'Leary's, where I thought I might meet some friendly lad who would give you the information, but, unfortunately, I didn't. But I can assure you, I was delighted when they returned without you". This raid was the result of definite information given, and, naturally, we tried everything we could to discover who the informer was, but it still remains a secret.

About the end of June 1921, it was decided that any of the members of the active service units, who were not known to the British, should dump their arms and that only those who would be executed, or charged with murder, if caught, would remain armed. Ned O'Reilly, Jack Ryan (Master) and I were three who would certainly find ourselves before a firing squad, so we continued to be armed. This order was more a directive than a water-tight order, and was suggested as the result of higher-up authorities' anxiety to (1) ease the burden on the civilian population which had been long, severe and heavy, and (2) the better to deal with the military situation that had developed in areas such as our brigade, where all the R.I.C. had been cleared away, except the very strong one in ~~large~~ Big towns protected by large military forces and one or two which were left in country districts for the purpose of military intelligence. The few R.I.C. Barracks left in country areas were also useful, in

that they provided opportunities of attacking British transport supplies which had to be brought to these isolated barracks.

We also decided that we would not stay in houses any more and we set up small camps in secluded areas where we could sleep until daylight in the morning. As daylight was about 4 o'clock in the morning at this time of the year, and sundown was about 9.30 p.m., the period for raiding and trying to surround us was, naturally, all to the advantage of the British, and, while they continued to try to capture us, we always escaped though we were on many occasions lucky to get out of the surrounding cordon.

I should have mentioned that, as an official reprisal for the shooting of D.I. Potter, some 4 or 5 houses were blown up by the British in May 1921. On that morning we were billeted near the village of Hollyford. About 4 o'clock, scouts reported military activity. I immediately got the 26 men together and, for the next 12 hours, we had great difficulty in evading the surrounding forces. Eventually, Jim O'Gorman, who had taken over charge that morning as he knew the area so well, decided that we would go into a little house in a bog and that, while we might be lucky enough to evade them, there would be only one thing left to do if we were discovered, and that was to fight it out with them there in the bog. They by-passed this little house, which would appear to have been the only one in the whole area that they did not search. It was about 8 o'clock that night when we got our first meal. Some of the hefty boys got in first, ate was was in the little home and then, pointing to a big lump of salt on the centre of the table, said to the rest of the boys: "You can eat away, now, lads! There's plenty of salt".

The people of Hollyford gave us a wonderful reception when we got back there that night, as they were sure there was no hope of our avoiding the surrounding parties. One would imagine that the people of that area would be glad of a release from us. But, no, they were simply in ecstasy when they discovered that we had again evaded the surrounding forces. We then learned that O'Keeffe's of Glenlough, O'Reilly's of Coolanga, Ryan's (Master) of Curraheen, O'Dwyer's of The Mount, Cappamora, and Carew's of Golden Garden, had been blown up. When we called at O'Keeffe's at Glenough, we found Mrs. and Mr. O'Keeffe, who were then very old people, sitting in an old barn which had not been blown up. They said: "So long as a hair of your head is not touched, we don't mind. Let the old house go to blazes!" The same spirit obtained when we visited the other people.

We decided that we would burn five houses of wellknown Unionists as a reprisal, but, again, the Brigade O/C., Seamus Robinson, put his foot down and said: "It isn't because they do a ~~cowardly~~ brutal act that we should do likewise."

We had, at one time, to seize the property of some of those Unionists who refused to pay the I.R.A. levy. We did not allow local men to seize their cattle. We did so ourselves, and, although the amounts we asked for were very small, they refused to pay and then we took ten times the amounts in cattle.

While we had very few outbreaks of lawlessness on the part of the civilian population, there were, however, some cases where individuals decided that they would get easy money. Had we allowed this to continue, it would have demoralised, not alone our own people, but the entire population. So we took very drastic action against such

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: WS1348 /A

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

(iii) The date of each such document: 9 Feb 1956

(iv) The description of each document:

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(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.

persons, and very few, if any, of them got away unpunished. One man who obtained money in a bank by false pretences, named - we had him arrested in a few hours after receiving the complaint - and others who seized cattle found a similar fate awaiting them. Under no circumstances, could we allow any robberies, either by hostile or friendly people, and, while the punishment meted out to the guilty ones was very drastic, we found it was really necessary. We were about to execute one man for robbery on 10th July 1921, but Father Maloney, whom we had asked to give spiritual aid and who had been such a great friend of ours, begged for mercy for him. I remember well his words were: "You will all be free tomorrow at 12 o'clock, and give this poor divil a chance!" Strange to say (or is it?) he did make good, got married and has always been a very good citizen since.

On 11th July 1921, the Truce was announced. On the Friday before the Truce we were informed that negotiations for a truce were almost completed and, on the following day, Saturday, the terms of the Truce were announced. We decided that we would give the enemy a farewell party at Annacarty barracks, so we got into position early in the morning, unobserved, and continued to snipe the barracks until 12 o'clock. Although the Truce was to be observed from 12 o'clock on, the R.I.C. and Tans continued to fire at us when they saw us retreating. We observed the Truce and did not reply. All arms were then dumped except in a few cases where they were needed for the preservation of law and order.

I was appointed Battalion O/C. of Police, but I had to go to Dublin for treatment in the Mater Hospital. While waiting to be taken in as an intern patient, I spent most

of my time at 71 Heytesbury Street, where I became acquainted with the Keating family, one of whom was to be married to the Brigade O/C. We were also entertained at all times by Phil Shanahan, Jim Kirwan and Jim Ryan of the Monument Creamery.

After some weeks in hospital under Surgeon Barniville, I returned to Tipperary, as many cases of lawlessness had broken out. When proceeding by train past Thurles station, I was joined by Jack Ryan, Master, who insisted that I should go to a dance in Golden. Though I assured him that I was not able to dance, I decided on going with him. We were held up by R.I.C. and Black and Tans in Golden village, and when Constable Twomey - already referred to - discovered who we were, he decided that he would shoot us. We got out of the car, pulled our guns and told him that, unless he got out of our way immediately, we were going to shoot. Just at that moment, a military officer appeared from the barracks and prevented what would otherwise have been a bloody scene. The dance passed without incident, but a dozen of the local I.R.A. men escorted us past the barrack in the morning.

Constable Twomey, who was a Corkman, continued to show his hostility in the village of Golden and other places that he visited. He was then transferred to Cashel where he insulted I.R.A. men on every possible occasion. In company with a lorry load of R.I.C., he visited my home and used most abusive and threatening language. This was afterwards investigated by Head Constable Gordon and Sergeant Walsh, but no action was taken against him. I decided that we would shoot him at the first opportunity. Paddy Ryan (Master), Mick Ryan (Larry) and I went into the town of Cashel for the purpose of shooting him. We had a girl, named May Hayes,

a barmaid in Cork, who was staying in his hotel, on the watch-out for his movements. She came into the hotel and said: "He's coming down the street now with another R.I.C. man". We decided that we would have to shoot the two of them. While proceeding out the front door of the hotel, Sean Fitzpatrick, formerly brigade adjutant, but then liaison officer, stood at the door in front of us and said: "What are you fellows up to?" Sean had no information in the world of our intentions, but he read in our faces that we were determined on doing some job. To shoot Constable Twomey then was out of the question, as we knew Sean Fitzpatrick could not stand over any such act. When I informed him some years afterwards of the errand we were on, he said that he saw by our faces that we were determined to do something drastic. The appearance of the liaison officer certainly saved Twomey from his deserts as he was one of the greatest scoundrels attached to the R.I.C.

Jack Ryan (Master), who had figured in many ambushes and fights and whose name appeared in "Hue and Cry", the official organ of the R.I.C., for the shooting of Sergeant McDonnell at Clonoulty, died from pneumonia at this time in the County Infirmary, Cashel. We gave him a well-deserved military funeral, but, when passing by Cashel Bks. the R.I.C. and Black and Tans came out in a very hostile attitude and booed and ~~cheered~~ jeered. Again, our men showed great restraint, with the result that the Truce was not broken, despite this malicious provocation.

I had to return to the Mater Hospital, Dublin, for a further operation shortly afterwards. I was visited by Austin Stack and Cathal Brugha - I was, about this time, appointed Brigade O/C. of Police - and both were very concerned about the many outbreaks of lawlessness in

Tipperary, particularly the taking over of creameries by the workers and the hoisting of the red flag, also the seizure of many motor cars by I.R.A. units. I assured them that, when I was able to get back to Tipperary, I would do what I could to preserve law and order.

I informed Austin Stack when I was ready to return to th Brigade, and he had a conference with me at 14 Wellington Quay, which was the Department of Home Affairs, of which he was Minister. He contacted the Brigade O/C. and arranged for a conference with me at Carew's, Cappamurra, Dundrum.

Seamus Robinson was accompanied by Dinny Lacey, then Vice O/C. We discussed the various happenings at great length and made many plans, with a view to restoring normal conditions in creameries and elsewhere. I informed them that my first task would be to re-open the creamery at the Black Bridge, which was a very large concern, and they told me that, if I wanted more men, to send to Devin's at Rosegreen, Brigade Headquarters, up to 3 o'clock the following day, and not to hesitate even to shoot if compelled to do so, and that they would send me plenty of men if I required them.

I notified about 20 members of the Republican Police Force to attend at the Black Bridge on the following morning. Only two turned up - William Freeny and Patrick Browne. There was a very hostile crowd of about 150 there. I tried, first of all, to settle the dispute by negotiations, but without result. I then ordered the two men to fire at the flag and shoot it down. They missed the flag, to the boos of the crowd. I took one of the carbine rifles from them, and, by the grace of God, I struck it and down it came. I burned it in front of them, ordered them out of the place,

and had actually to fire shots over their heads before they got out of the creamery premises. I was very anxious that the manager would discuss matters with me, as he was an uncle of my old comrade, Commandant Tom Donovan. He refused, and I had to shoot the lock off the door to gain entrance, I seized all the books, cash, etc., in the desk and handed them over to the owners of the creamery who had arrived on a lorry. I left my two men on guard. These were supplemented later by some 10 or 12 others that I ordered to the place, and they were supplied with food and bedding by the local farmers. The creamery was re-opened after a few days, and the farmers, who had been throwing their milk down the drains, were again permitted to r esume normal business.

I proceeded to Tipperary a few days afterwards and, with the aid of the Battalion O/C. of Police, Patrick Nagle, and the Battalion Commandant, Brian Shannon, succeeded in settling a dispute there, and normal trade was resumed.

I thought most of my worries were over then, but I got a report about 5 o'clock one morning that a Protestant man named Barron had been shot dead in his own yard. On investigation, I discovered that the motive was robbery. With the permission of the local commandant of the I.R.A., Tadhg O'Dwyer, I proclaimed a state of martial law in the area. All persons found away from their homes after 8 o'cloc at night were arrested, brought to a temporary place of detention which we had set up, and, after a few weeks, everything went normal again. A complete investigation of all rifles held in the area and in the adjoining areas was made, but, despite all our efforts, the ~~murders~~ murderers went unpunished. This was very regrettable, particularly as the man who was murdered was of ~~the~~ A Protestant faith.

Many Protestant people looked for protection and were given it. An assurance was given them that they were going to get the protection of the Irish Republican Army and the Irish Republican Police.

The signing of the Treaty was a bombshell to those of us who had fought for an Irish Republic, and almost the entire Tipperary Brigade resented the acceptance of same. With a few exceptions, the officers and men remained loyal to the oath of allegiance which they had given to the Republic, but a few who accepted the Treaty became active in organising the Free State army and, to our grave concern they began to recruit ex-British soldiers and many others who were hostile to us during the War of Independence, into their ranks. This, in itself, was the cause of great resentment and bitterness, and, when I was informed, while at a dance at the Convent, Dundrum, by Dan Breen, that Tom Carew had taken over Annacarty barracks, it seemed the breaking point had come.

I immediately mobilised many of the I.R.A. and proceeded to Annacarty, where a truce was arranged. Carew evacuated the barracks and gave an undertaking that he would not occupy them again. That night, we discussed very seriously the question of burning the barracks, and I often regretted that we did not do so as, in a month or so afterwards, they were again occupied by Tom Carew and about 20 of his followers. We surrounded the barracks and, after Carew had been wounded, the others surrendered. I decided that the barracks would be burned this time. I proceeded to Dundrum, got some petrol and burned the barracks a couple of hours after the evacuation.

I again returned to the Mater Hospital a few days later and had a very serious operation on my leg. While still a patient in the Mater Hospital, the civil war broke out in earnest by the bombardment of the Four Courts.

Cathal Brugha, former Minister for Defence in the First and Second Dáils, was brought to the Mater Hospital, badly wounded. From information I received, I knew his wounds were fatal. I spent many hours with him. He was perfectly conscious, happy and determined, but entertained no bitterness Shortly before he died, he spoke in Irish and, if ever I regretted not having sufficient knowledge of the Irish language, it was at those moments. He died in my arms, and I was the only member of the I.R.A. present. Brugha was certainly Ireland's greatest loss.

Signed: Michael J. Davern

Date: 9th Feb 1956.

(Michael J. Davern)

9th Feb. 1956.

Witness: Seumas Robinson

(Seumas Robinson)

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