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ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BURO STAIRÉ MILEATA 1913-21
NO. W.S. 1,350

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS.

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 1,350.....

Witness

Jerome Davin,
Milltownmore,
Fethard,
Co. Tipperary.

Identity.

Commandant 1st Battalion
3rd Tipperary Brigade.

Subject.

Rosegreen Company Irish Volunteers,
Co. Tipperary, 1914-1921.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil

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Form B.S.M. 2

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21

No. W.S. / 350

STATEMENT BY JEROME DAVIN,

Milltownmore, Fethard, Co. Tipperary.

Commandant, 1st Battalion, 3rd Tipperary Brigade.

I was born in the year 1896 at Rathsallagh House, Rosegreen, Co. Tipperary. Our family had deep roots in Co. Tipperary as it sprang from a Davin, Prince of Breffni, who came south with Hugh Dubh O'Neill for the defence of Clonmel in the year 1650 and who subsequently settled near Clonmel. My father and my Uncle John were both members of the I.R.B. and both were local leaders of the Fenian movement of 1867. Maurice Davin of Deerpark, Carrick-on-Suir, who, with his brother Pat, won international fame in the athletic arena and who was a founder member and first president of the Gaelic Athletic Association, was closely related to my family, being a first cousin of my father.

I attended the local national school at Rosegreen for some years, after which I continued my education with the Patrician Brothers in their school at Fethard until my sixteenth or seventeenth year. After leaving school I assisted my father on the farm at Rathsallagh.

A company of Irish Volunteers was formed in Rosegreen in 1914 and I joined this company at the time of its formation. The late James O'Brien of Galbally, Co. Limerick, who was then farming at Tullamaine, was first captain of the company. All told, the strength of the company was 28. The usual routine of Volunteer companies of the time was carried out. We had parades once or twice a week. We were trained in foot drill and field exercises and occasionally we went on route marches.

On either Easter Sunday or Easter Monday, 1916, the company paraded under arms at Rosegreen. The arms consisted mostly of shotguns. A few of the men had Snider rifles and we had three revolvers of various patterns. The company was at full strength and, as far as I am aware, the only instruction received was that we were to stand to at Rosegreen and await orders from the late Pierce McCann of Dualla. As the expected orders did not arrive that day, the company was dismissed and the men were told to return to their homes. Efforts to contact Frank Drohan in Clonmel and Pierce McCann at Dualla brought no results, and there was no further activity in the Rosegreen area during that week.

It was, I think, shortly after the Rising of Easter Week that James O'Brien, the Company Captain, left the district and I was appointed to succeed him. We were fortunate that no member of the company was arrested in the general round-up of Volunteers and sympathisers which was carried out by the British forces immediately after the Rising. The company was kept together and for the remainder of 1916 and the year 1917 our activities were confined to parades and training, but then, due to the attention which we were receiving from the R.I.C., it was necessary to hold the parades secretly and at different places. In other words, we could not act as openly and as publicly as we did prior to the Rising.

It was, I think, too, about this time - the year 1917 - that I made the acquaintance of the late Seán Treacy, who later became Brigade Vice Commandant of the 3rd Tipperary Brigade and to whom I shall frequently refer in the course of this statement. It was also in 1917

that I was sworn into the I.R.B. by the late Paddy Hogan of Cashel.

There was then no brigade or battalion organisation in south Co. Tipperary, nor were the company areas defined. The various Volunteer units were known by the place names of the areas in which they were located. During the conscription crisis period in 1918 when our ranks swelled, a rough attempt was made to organise battalions. My company in Rosegreen was then included in what for the time being was known as the Cashel Battalion. Seamus O'Neill, now a Superintendent in the Garda Síochána in Galway, was elected Commandant; the late Paddy Hogan was elected Vice Commandant, and I was elected Adjutant of the battalion. Later on in 1918 a reorganisation took place and this time the Rosegreen Company, together with the Fethard, Mortlestown and a newly formed company at Clerihan, was formed into what for a short time was known as the 8th Battalion.

One night in the winter of 1918, accompanied by Michael Burke, Thomas Donovan (later O/C 7th Battalion and killed at Killenaule in 1921), James Kennedy (later Brigade Quartermaster) and Seán Cooney of Clonmel, I raided the rooms occupied by an ex British officer named Captain Hope Wilson at the Ormonde Hotel, Clonmel. We were, of course, searching for arms and we got a few rifles, either 2 or 3, and a few revolvers which Hope Wilson had as souvenirs of the 1914-1918 Great War. We handed these over to the Clonmel Volunteers.

After the ambush at Soloheadbeg in 1919, Seán Treacy, then the Brigade Vice Commandant, came to my area and it was then that he finally reorganised the whole brigade

area. I assisted him in this work and it was at my home in Rathsallagh that, on an Ordnance Survey map, we outlined the boundaries of each battalion and company area. In this reorganisation the Rosegreen, Fethard, Mortlestown and Clerihan Companies became the 1st Battalion and I was appointed by G.H.Q., through Seán Treacy, as Commandant of the battalion. This was unusual, for at the time the procedure was for the company officers to elect the Battalion Commandant. The other battalion officers elected or appointed were as follows: -

Battalion Vice Commandant	-	James Keating
" Adjutant	-	James Delahunty
" Quartermaster	-	John Purcell
" Int. Officer	-	John Delahunty
" Engr. Officer	-	Michael Nugent
" Signals Officer	-	John Devereux
" Transp. Officer	-	Frank Morrissey.

The districts, designations and Company Captains of the four companies were as follows:

Rosegreen	-	A. Coy.	-	Coy. Capt. Pk. Aherne
Fethard	-	B. Coy.	-	" " Pk. Ryan
Mortlestown	-	C. Coy.	-	" " Jn. Lonergan
Clerihan	-	D. Coy.	-	" " Jerome Lyons.

At this stage I would like to put on record that as the Brigade Headquarters was established in Rosegreen and as brigade or visiting G.H.Q. officers were frequently there, it was deliberate brigade policy to keep activities in the area to a minimum.

From early 1919, due to raids on my home by military and police, I was on the run and I spent some time with the late Paddy Hogan organising companies in the 2nd Battalion (Cashel) area. It was, too, about this time (May, 1919) that I received word from Seán Treacy for myself and Paddy Hogan to go to Emly and meet him there for to take part in the rescue of Seán Hogan the following day. Later that day

I received word from Treacy that we were not to travel as Ned O'Brien of Galbally preferred that strangers would not go into the area and that the Galbally men, with the brigade officers, would handle the job. The intention was to rescue Hogan at Emly, but as events turned out it took place instead at Knocklong.

One morning a party of military visited Rosegreen. This was unusual at the time (early 1919), so with a Volunteer I went to the village to see what they had been doing. I found that they had put up a large notice in the village offering a reward for information which would lead to the arrest and conviction of the persons concerned in the shooting of the two R.I.C. men at Soloheadbeg. From a good friend and a solid Irishman, the late Ned O'Neill, I got a sheet of notepaper, on which I wrote in block letters the following words: "Take notice that anyone caught giving information as to the shooting of the peelers at Soloheadbeg will meet with the same fate. Signed Veritas". I then tore down the poster which the British soldiers had put up and replaced it by my own notice. I mention this incident specifically because it was later, on two occasions, the subject of parliamentary questions in the British House of Commons, and again I felt it my duty as Battalion Commandant of the area to take some action to protect Seumas Robinson, Seán Treacy, Dan Breen and Seán Hogan, who by that time were wellknown to the populace in and around Rosegreen. In subsequent raids on my home it was noticed that the military and police raiders paid special attention to some Latin books belonging to my brothers and it was thought that they were looking for the word "veritas" in them.

The gelignite which was captured at Soloheadbeg was divided between the 1st, 3rd and 4th Battalions, and during the summer and autumn of 1919 Seán Treacy and I carried out experiments with explosives. It was then that the idea of what later became known as "mud bombs" occurred to us. The idea was simply a stick of gelignite moulded in sticky yellow clay and ignited by a fuse and detonator. We first tried it out on an old vacant house. The sticky yellow clay held the gelignite in position on the roof and the explosion blew a circular hole in the roof of the house. Treacy was delighted with the result and I remember him remarking to me at the time: "This Jerome will be part of our equipment for attacks on R.I.C. barracks". I mention this so that the reader may have an idea of how Treacy was always looking ahead. At that time (the summer of 1919) few contemplated that within a year attacks on R.I.C. barracks would be a feature of I.R.A. activity. Later we discovered that a coat of linseed oil on the yellow clay gave it a greater tackiness and made the bombs adhere better to slate roofs.

It is difficult to remember any other events of interest during the latter portion of 1919 or the early months of 1920 except that on a few occasions Paddy Hogan and myself paid visits to Dublin where we met some of the G.H.Q. officers. We generally cycled there and back. On one occasion Michael Collins gave me a message for a family named Fitzgeralds of Ballydrighid, Cahir. He had been trying to trace a boy of the Fitzgeralds who was in Dublin at the time of the Rising in 1916 and who had been missing from that time. Collins had been unable to trace him and I was to inform his family that he was still missing and believed killed in the Rising. Later I believe the

boy turned up down in some part of the west of Ireland. On another occasion Hogan and I called to Peadar Clancy's shop - The Republican Outfitters in Talbot St. There we were told we were to go to St. Enda's, Rathfarnham. At St. Enda's we met Michael Collins and Tom Cullen. Cullen gave us some revolvers, revolver ammunition and explosives to take back to Seán Treacy. Collins told us not to remain in Dublin that night but to start straight away for home again. Neither Hogan nor I felt like facing the journey back that night and, as we did not take what Collins said to us too seriously, we went to Seán O'Mahoney's hotel in Gardiner's Place and stayed there for the night. Next morning as we were going down Parnell Square on the start of our journey home, whom should we meet but Collins. Without giving us any reason for it, he certainly bawled us off for not having left Dublin the evening before as he had told us to do.

In May, 1920, Seán Treacy and I prepared plans for an attack on Clerihan R.I.C. barracks. I might put it this way: I prepared the plans for the actual attack, selecting the positions to be occupied by our men and the house which I proposed to take over from which the attack on the roof of the barracks would be made, while Treacy arranged with the other battalions to send picked men to Clerihan and for the blocking off all roads leading to Clerihan on the appointed night. The strength of the R.I.C. garrison in Clerihan was one Sergeant and eleven constables. As it was the nearest enemy post to Rosegreen we were particularly keen to get rid of it. Again, it was situated between four British garrison towns, Clonmel being 4 miles away, Fethard 5 miles, and Cashel and Cahir approximately 8 miles each, and Treacy felt that it would be an act of defiance and a

blow to the prestige of the British forces in these towns if we succeeded in taking the barracks. Personally I considered that the capture of the barracks itself was as easy as cracking a nutshell. Our main concern was to hold off the British troops if they came out from any of the four towns which I have mentioned, and thus it was that the intensive blocking of the roads and the manning of the road blocks was so important.

On the appointed night we went to Clerihan just after dark. Every detail was fully organised. We had a pump capable of pumping oil and petrol up to a distance of 60 yards. A load of yellow clay was brought in a horse's cart, as we intended to make the mud bombs as we required them. Milk churns were used as containers for the paraffin oil. The riflemen and shotgunmen actually went into their positions around the barracks. Treacy and I then made a final check-up. Seán had a look at the barracks and at the house which I had decided we should occupy. He agreed that it was suitable as our key point of attack.

It was at this point that Seumas Robinson, the Brigade O/C, arrived on the scene. He had just returned from Dublin. We told him everything was ready to go ahead with the attack. He told us that, in view of a recent G.H.Q. order, plans for major engagements, including attacks on barracks, would first have to be submitted to G.H.Q. for sanction. There was no alternative but to call off the attack. He was very definite that this G.H.Q. instruction should not be broken. Some of the officers present, including Ned O'Reilly and myself, were sorely disappointed, but Seán Treacy, in his cool, calm manner, gave us an example in discipline. He simply remarked: "All right Seumas, you are the boss".

Treacy and I then went to a position at the door of a publichouse, from where we covered the door of the barracks. We were both armed with long parabellum revolvers and we feared that the police might make a sortie out of the barracks whilst our men were being withdrawn, especially as we had learned that there was a British military officer in the barracks that night. While we were there we saw an R.I.C. man who had left the publichouse by a rear entrance crossing a wall into the barrack yard. Seán had him covered and I remarked that I knew him, that he had been in the pub for a pint and that he was harmless. This remark of mine must have been overheard by someone who knew me and who did not know Treacy, for later when this particular R.I.C. man was stationed in Lissronagh he got in touch with me and thanked me for saving his life, saying that he understood that the strange man would have shot him when he was crossing ^{the} wall had it not been for my intervention. He also gave me some useful information from time to time afterwards. To finish with Clerihan, we had a bloodless victory for the barracks was evacuated next day and we then destroyed it to prevent its reoccupation.

On the night of the attack on Drangan R.I.C. barracks Seán Treacy told Paddy Hogan (then Commandant of the 2nd Battalion) and myself not to go to Drangan until we first ensured that the roads from Fethard and Moyglass to Drangan were satisfactorily blocked by the Rosegreen and Fethard Companies. The attack started prematurely while the blocking of the roads was still in progress, and when we reached Drangan the attack was just over and the police had surrendered. Seán Treacy, Ernie O'Malley and a man named O'Dwyer from the 3rd Battalion who had a bullet wound in the wrist, came to Rosegreen with me from Drangan.

O'Malley's neck was badly burned and a nurse named Purcell from Glenagat attended to both him and O'Dwyer.

One evening in August, 1920, a Battalion Council meeting was held in a barn just in off the main Cashel and Clonmel road at Rosegreen. Seán Treacy attended the meeting. Most of those who attended came on bicycles and left their bicycles against a wall on the main road. Someone, I expect it was someone returning from a horse show which was held that day in Clonmel, seeing the bicycles at the roadside suspected that there was something on and informed the military in Cashel. Certainly the military must have got information, for a cycle patrol came out and they came straight into the yard and towards the barn. At the time of their arrival the meeting was over and only Seán Treacy, Patrick McGrath of Fethard, myself, and, I think, one other who had remained chatting, were there. Seán Treacy was the only one who was armed. The officer called on us to put up our hands. Treacy fired at him and wounded him. Some members of the patrol took cover and opened fire on the barn, but Treacy, from the doorway, kept them pinned down with revolver fire - he was using his favourite weapon, a long parabellum - while we burst down an old nailed up door at the rere. Meanwhile, Paddy Ahearne, the local Company Captain, who was in the vicinity, opened fire on the patrol, and we had then little difficulty in making our getaway from the barn by the rere door. Treacy then decided to go to Purcell's of Glenagat and he told me to report to Dan Breen, Ned O'Reilly and Seán Hogan who were at my sister's (Mrs. Looby's) house at Milltownmore. He knew that they would have heard the shooting and he just wanted me to assure them that everything was alright. In addition to the officer, Treacy's fire had also wounded two of the soldiers.

Next day I felt sure that the British forces would carry out reprisals in the area, and after a consultation with Treacy I went to Clonmel to try and get some arms to supplement what we had in Rosegreen. From the late Seán Cooney and James Kennedy I got four rifles and 200 rounds of ammunition. When I got back from Clonmel and contacted Treacy, the British forces were in such numbers in the area we were unable to go to where the Rosegreen Company had mobilised. They (the British troops) left without carrying out any reprisals. We expected them again on the following night and this time we had all preparations made to deal with them. Guards were posted on the village and on all houses which we considered were likely to be attacked, but no reprisals were attempted.

The next incident worth recording occurred in September, 1920, when a party of about 120 Lancers from Cahir raided Maher's of Blackcastle while a Brigade Council meeting was being held there. I remember it was a lovely fine day - a Sunday - and Seán Treacy had arranged on a hay bogey out in the haggart some stuff, such as revolver ammunition and drill books, which was to be distributed to the Battalion Quartermasters. I first saw the Lancers when they were coming up the avenue but not more than 100 yards away from us. One of our scouts, a man named Charles Maher, a member of the Rosegreen Company, closed the iron gates leading from the avenue to the haggart before the Lancers reached it, and this act of his momentarily checked their advance. Seán Treacy, James Kennedy, the Brigade Quartermaster at the time, James Delahunty, my Battalion Adjutant, and myself grabbed the stuff which was on the hay bogey and ran with it to a field on our left which was a field of oats. Con Moloney, the Brigade Adjutant at the time

who was with us, fired a few revolver shots at the Lancers. It looked, however, as if our capture was a certainty when the bugler who was with Major Darcy, the officer in charge of the Lancers, sounded "the assembly". I am positive that I heard Major Darcy say "give them a chance". Seumas O'Neill, Commandant of the 2nd Battalion, and Edmond McGrath, Commandant of the 6th Battalion, were captured in this raid. All the other Brigade and Battalion Officers got safely away.

Immediately after this incident Major Darcy was secretly removed by the British authorities from Cahir and cashiered from the British Army. I use the word secretly, for his wife, through a Cumann na mBan girl in Cahir, made contact with us to know if we could find out where he had been taken to. He was an old-time officer who had lived all his life in and around Cahir and he may have had sympathy for us. Again, at the time there was an assistant in a chemist's shop in Cahir with whom Darcy was slightly familiar. The assistant was in the habit of wearing knee breeches and on this account Darcy may have been simple enough to think he was an I.R.A. man. It was reported at the time that on the morning of the raid Darcy told him that he (Darcy) would be out raiding in the Blackcastle district in the afternoon and that this man informed the authorities of what he had heard. Whether that report was true or not one thing is certain and that is, that that chemist's assistant was never seen in Cahir from the day of the raid.

Before leaving for Dublin, where he met his death on October 14th, 1920, Seán Treacy was staying with me at

Rathsallagh, and it was at my sister's (Mrs. Looby's) house that he shaved and dressed before taking his departure. This would, I should say, be about a week before he was killed. He told me he was going to Dublin but did not say why he was going there. Before leaving Looby's he wrote his name and the date on a sheet of paper and handed it to my sister. She still has it in her scrap book. The news of his death came from Michael Collins by telegram to a covering address.

Seumas Robinson asked me to go to Tipperary Town and to make the funeral arrangements. A large force of British troops were present at Limerick Junction when the train bringing the remains arrived, but I must say that on that particular night they certainly were not aggressive. As a matter of fact, a party of them presented arms as the coffin covered with the tricolour was borne from the train to the hearse. From Limerick Junction to the church at Solohead the route was lined by British troops, but this did not prevent hundreds of people, including many Volunteers, from marching behind the hearse. Next day when the burial took place British troops were again present in and around the cemetery at Kilfeacle, but the only action they took was to seize some bicycles which were left around by their owners. The officer withdrew the military before the grave was fully filled in and there was no interference with the firing party who fired the three volleys with revolvers.

To my mind Seán Treacy's death was the biggest blow the 3rd Tipperary Brigade could or did receive. His personality commanded respect, and during the years I was associated with him only on one or two occasions did I ever see him perturbed or impatient, and that was at the time when, the conscription crisis over, men were leaving the

Volunteer companies. He would then remark: "What do they think they are doing. Don't they realise that the British Army is still here. It is only when blood is shed that they will realise it". After Soloheadbeg I often discussed these words of his with Tadhg Dwyer and other men who heard him. We were convinced that the taking of the gelignite was only a secondary consideration with Treacy at Soloheadbeg. His real motive was to commence aggressive action against armed forces of the enemy.

After Treacy's death we put one of his ideas into practice, the building of dug-outs. In all we made five of them, for use as follows:

- (1) For use as Brigade Headquarters. This dug-out was used principally as an office by the Brigade Staff. Sleeping accommodation was provided in it by folding beds. It was electrically lit from batteries. When it was completed we allocated 20 men from 'A' Company as a special unit attached to the brigade for dispatch and escort work.
- (2) For use as Headquarters of the Battalion.
- (3) 'A' Company dug-out where up to 60 men could parade.
- (4) One at Springfield which was used to hold prisoners.
- (5) One which was used as an arms dump.

These dug-outs were never discovered by the British forces, although during one round-up in the early hours of a morning troops walked over two of them whilst eleven men slept underneath.

The Battalion Intelligence Officer, John Delahunty, received daily reports from the companies of all enemy

activity in their area and he also had a contact in the post office in Fethard from whom he received duplicate copies of all telegrams going to or from the military or police there. These messages were always in code, but this presented no difficulty as Delahunty had the key to the code. Delahunty, in turn, sent a daily report to the Brigade Intelligence Officer. The procedure in the other battalions was similar. Despatch carriers were never permitted to go near Brigade Headquarters. They left and received the dispatches at the dispatch centre, of which the late Seán O'Meara was in charge.

An incident which occurred about this time (towards the end of 1920) illustrates how the intelligence system worked. A message was received from the Intelligence Officer of the 5th Battalion stating that two men in civilian attire were that day seen leaving Emmet St. R.I.C. Barracks, Clonmel. The message gave a description of both men and of how they were dressed, and added that they were suspected of being British Army officers. That message was circulated to all battalion and company officers. That night one of them was captured at Killusty by some local Volunteers and brought to Rosegreen. He gave his name as O'Neill with an address at Bridge St., Arklow. Beyond this he was reticent and silent and would give no further information. I could get nothing from him. He had in his possession a note book with a code, the key to which I was unable to discover. He also had two .303 ammunition clips, the panels of which were painted red and green and in the clips were what, to all appearances, looked like rifle ammunition but in reality were pieces of wood. He spoke with an English accent.

We held him a prisoner for about three weeks, during which time we were making inquiries about him. We learned that he had called to a few houses, where he produced the faked ammunition and inquired from the people of the houses if they could put him in touch with Dan Breen's column. We also learned through the brigades that an O'Neill of Bridge St., Arklow, had joined the British Army some years before but that his whereabouts was then unknown. He was tried by a courtmartial of brigade officers and sentenced to death for spying. When the time for his execution drew near he appealed to me to save his life. I promised to do what I could provided he told me who he was associated with, but this he refused to do. He was executed about midnight by a firing party and he was buried in a field near Rosegreen. By an extraordinary coincidence, at the time that O'Neill was executed, a party of British troops were silently stealing up on some members of 'A' Company who were reopening a trench on the main Cashel-Clonmel road near Rosegreen. Hearing the shots of the firing party, the soldiers, apparently thinking their presence had been detected, opened fire, at what I cannot say, and thus the Volunteers working at the trench received warning and made good their escape. I should also mention that we found out that the second man who left Emmet St. barracks crossed the bridge at Kilsheelan into the Waterford Brigade area. We notified the Waterford Brigade about him, but I cannot recall that I ever heard of his capture. While speaking about spies, I never agreed with the policy of labelling them after execution and leaving their bodies on the roadside. That policy embarrassed the people who lived in the houses near where the bodies lay and perhaps resulted in reprisals being carried

out on those people. I preferred to have the spy buried quietly and leave an air of mystery about his fate.

The people around Rosegreen were also very helpful to our intelligence. The womenfolk were particularly keen and reported every unusual occurrence or visit of a stranger to the district. The fact that no Volunteer officer was captured in the area during the years of the War of Independence is in itself a tribute to the loyalty and support of the people.

One night towards the end of January, 1921, I was at my sister's place (Looby's of Milltownmore) with Seumas Robinson when my brother-in-law arrived from Fethard and told us that a large number of British military had left Fethard and were moving out the Cloneen road. We knew that Denis Lacey's Flying Column had passed east of Fethard that night going to Killenaule. We assumed that the military were aware of the column's position and were moving out to surround or attack it. Seumas and I decided that the only thing which could be done was to get a few men together and to carry out a decoy attack on Lissronagh R.I.C. barracks in the hope of drawing the military in that direction. I got six Volunteers from 'A' Company and took them across country to Lissronagh, which was approximately three miles away. We were armed with rifles. We got into a position in a field at the front of the barracks and fired seven rounds (1 round each) at a light inside the barracks as it passed a porthole. Immediately fire was opened on us from two sides by parties of British troops who were in position on the roadside. It was dark at the time and the military concentrated their fire along the ditches or fences of the field. By keeping to the centre

of the fields and by lying flat on the ground every time a Verey light was sent up in the barracks, we got safely away and back to our own area without casualty. The military continued firing for over an hour. As a matter of fact, we could still hear their fire when we were back at Looby's of Milltownmore. I believe that the British forces in Fethard were aware that Dinny Lacey's column were in the vicinity that night and assumed that the column was going to attack Lisronagh R.I.C. barracks. After making their arrangements with Cahir, from where troops were also sent to Lisronagh, the military which my brother-in-law had seen going out the Cloneen road from Fethard made a detour to Lisronagh.

I cannot recall any incidents of note which happened in the battalion area between January and June, 1921. The main portion of our arms and equipment had been handed over for use by the two brigade columns and any action which we could undertake would only be of a minor nature, such as sniping enemy posts and raiding mails, and details of these incidents, which were numerous, are lost to my memory.

On Sunday, June 18th, 1921, as a result of an intelligence report that three strange men in civilian clothes had been seen in the vicinity of Moorestown Abbey, I detailed the Captain of "A" Company and a Volunteer to go there and watch for them if they came that way again. I then went to Waterford on some Volunteer business or other. On the following morning, whilst still in Waterford I was informed that three British officers had been executed during the night near Rosegreen, so I returned at once, travelling by pony and trap. At Darcy's Cross near Clerihan

I almost drove into a party of British troops. They had found the bodies of the officers and were now searching for the I.R.A. On that Sunday the three strangers, or, as they really were, Lieutenants Twogood, Betteridge and Glossop of the British garrison in Fethard, came again to the vicinity of Moorestown Abbey, where they were captured by 'A' Company Captain and his companion. I understand that before their capture they had asked a local boy if he could tell them where the dug-outs were. They were in civilian dress and were armed with revolvers. The Company Captain took them to the battalion dug-out and sent word to my house. Seán Fitzpatrick, then Brigade Adjutant, and Ernie O'Malley chanced to be there at the time. O'Malley, as senior officer, took complete charge. A courtmartial was arranged; all three were sentenced to death for spying and the executions were carried out that night at Woodroffe.

Raids and rounds-up by British forces followed this incident, but, as far as I can recall, the execution of the three officers was the last item of importance which took place in my battalion area prior to the Truce on the 11th July, 1921.

Signed:

Jerome Davin
(Jerome Davin)

Date:

14th February 1956

14th February, 1956

Witness:

J. Grace (J. Grace)
(Investigator).

