

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BURO STAIRÉ MILEATA 1913-21

No. W.S. 1416

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COSANTA.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS.

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 1416.

Witness

Cornelius Healy,
Minor Row,
Millstreet,
Co. Cork.

Identity.

Member of Millstreet Battalion Flying Column.
Battalion O/C, Signals, Millstreet Battalion,
Cork II Brigade.

Subject.

Activities of Millstreet Company, Millstreet
Battalion, Cork Brigade,
1914-1921, and
Brigade Flying Column, 1920-1921.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil.

File No S. 2735.

Form B.S.M. 2

ORIGINAL

W. S. 1,416

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21
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STATEMENT BY CORNELIUS HEALY,
Minor Row, Millstreet, Co. Cork.

I was born in Millstreet, Co. Cork, in December 1896. My father was a carpenter. I was educated at Millstreet national school until I reached the age of fourteen years when I left to serve my time as an apprentice carpenter with my father.

When the Gaelic League was formed in Millstreet in the summer of 1912, I became a member. There were about twenty members in the branch at this time. The teacher was Liam Buckley. There were Irish classes once a week, and usually after the class there was some Irish dancing. I'm afraid that, at the time, I was attracted more by the céilí than by the language class. Amongst the members of the Gaelic League at the time were Mick Riordan, Con Meaney, Jimmy Hickey and Jeremiah Twomey.

I joined the Irish Volunteers when they were first formed in Millstreet in the summer of 1914. The pioneers were Jerry Twomey, Con J. Meaney (Sonny), Jimmie Hickey, Con T. Meaney, Mick Riordan, Dan Hickey, and Con Callaghan. Jerry Twomey affiliated our company to the Irish Volunteer Executive, and we became a unit of Millstreet battalion, Cork brigade. I think that the number of our battalion was seventeen. Con J. Meaney was in charge of our company. I should have mentioned that all members of our unit were supporters of the All-For-Ireland (William O'Brien) Party. There was also another company composed of members of the Irish Parliamentary Party (John Redmond) supporters. Both companies were of about equal strength - eighty.

The only form of training carried on was ordinary close order foot-drill. The instructors of our unit were two reservists of the British army.

Late in the summer of 1914, Captain Talbot Crosbie - a member of the Irish Volunteer Executive - came to Millstreet to review a parade of the Volunteers. The two companies paraded at separate venues - the Irish Volunteers (O'Brienite section) at O'Leary's, and the Redmondite section at The Park, Millstreet. Our unit was the official unit affiliated to the Executive, but Captain Crosbie attended first at the Park to review the Redmondite section. As far as I can recollect, he addressed the parade and asked those present if they were prepared to co-operate with the Ulster Volunteers in defending the shores of Ireland. All who were prepared to do so were asked to take two paces forward, and the whole parade advanced. When Captain Talbot Crosbie arrived at our parade at O'Leary's, Con J. Meaney (O/C) dismissed the parade.

Within a few weeks, the Redmondite Volunteers disbanded, and our unit also lost a considerable number of members. We were, in fact, reduced to a strength of about ten, which included the pioneer members referred to previously. This small body continued to meet at irregular intervals throughout the remainder of 1914 and early 1915. During the latter year about six rifles (Martini Enfield, single shot) were purchased by the members. They were obtained, as far as I can remember, from Mr. Judge in Dublin. They were sent by rail to Millstreet in a roll of tarpaulin. The money to buy these guns was made available by Dan Lenihan - an O'Brienite member of Cork County Council - and by Jerry Twomey and Jimmie Hickey.

During 1915 the unit continued to parade at irregular intervals, but early in 1916 parades became more regular. Con J. Meaney (Sonny) was still in charge.

On Easter Sunday 1916, the members paraded at Priest's Cross - about three-quarters of a mile from the town on the Kanturk road - at about 2 p.m. Here we were joined by members of units from Kilcorney and Rathduane. The combined party then marched about two and a half miles in the direction of Macroom where we entered the fields and took part in some manoeuvres. We returned to Millstreet about 5 p.m., and the parade was dismissed. Before dismissing the parade, the O/C (Con J. Meaney) informed us that, if required later, we would be called upon. As I did not receive any further call, I had no further connection with the activities in the area at Easter 1916. Amongst those on parade on Easter Sunday were: Jimmie Hickey, Con T. Meaney, Mick Riordan, Dan Hickey, Con Callaghan, Cornelius Healy (witness), Con J. Meaney. There were also some others whose names I cannot remember.

I should have mentioned that, shortly before Easter 1916, the R.I.C. raided Jerry Twomey's and seized two of our rifles. The others (four) were now held by Jimmie Hickey, Con J. Meaney and another.

Early in May 1916, a number of Volunteers were arrested, including Jeremiah Riordan, Mick Riordan, Con Callaghan, Jerry Twomey and Jim Buckley. They were all deported to Frongoch and Wakefield. This concluded the activities in the area in connection with Easter Week 1916.

The Irish Volunteers were again organised in the district early in 1917. The pioneer members in the reorganised Volunteers were Con J. Meaney, Mick Riordan, Jimmie Hickey, Con T. Meaney, Con Callaghan, Patrick Healy, Tim Healy, William Kelleher (Kaiser), Con Healy (witness) and Tom Crowley. The strength of the company in the early stages was about fifty, but early in 1918 it rose to one hundred and fifty. The first officers of the company were:-

O/C - Mick Riordan.
1st Lieutenant - Jimmie Hickey.
2nd Lieutenant - Jack Regan.

Training was carried out under our own officers and consisted mainly of close order foot-drill. Occasionally we had some target practice with .22 rifle.

The Millstreet company was still a unit of Millstreet battalion (17th), Cork brigade. The companies in the battalion were -

Drishane	Rathduane
Kilcorney	Cullen
Rathcoole	Dooneen
Mushera.	Derrynagree.

The officers of the battalion were:-

O/C - Con J. Meaney.
Vice O/C - Denis O'Brien.
Adjutant - Jeremiah Crowley.
Quartermaster - Denis Galvin (I think).

At this time, I was Battalion despatch rider.

As the strength of the company increased in the spring of 1918 owing to the influx of a large number of new members due to the threat of the enforcement of conscription by the British, the Millstreet unit was

divided into two companies, Drishane and Millstreet. The strength of the latter company was now about eighty. There was no change in the officers. About this time, all arms not already held by Volunteers were collected. They were voluntarily surrendered in all cases, and were owned mainly by farmers in the vicinity of the town. A few shotguns were obtained in these visits, and the company also got two or three revolvers. The total armament of the company would be: two Martini Enfield rifles, six revolvers, two or three old pistols and a few shotguns. There was also a small supply of suitable ammunition for each type of weapon. When the conscription scare had passed, the strength of the unit fell to about twenty-five.

There was no activity in the area in connection with the general election in December 1918, as the Sinn Féin candidate - Dan Corkerry - was returned unopposed.

The success of Sinn Féin in the general election gave a boost to Volunteer activities, and the membership of the company began to increase steadily. I should mention that, at this stage, members were only invited to join, after they had been recommended by serving members to the officers of the company. The main activities, outside the routine training already referred to, now carried on were the organisation of concerts in order to raise funds and the collection of any arms or ammunition found to be available in the area. The training also became more advanced, as battalion manoeuvres were being held on Sundays and at week-ends. The main object of these activities was to enable the members to become more efficient in the use of cover and in retreating and advancing under same. These were the main activities in the area in 1919.

In November 1919, officials of the Munster and Leinster and National banks at Millstreet, who were travelling to Knocknagree fair with a considerable amount of money, were held up by armed men at Ballydaly Cross, and about £1,800 in cash was seized. The R.I.C., when investigating the hold-up, concentrated more or less on questioning men known to be members of the I.R.A. As a matter of fact, Denis Galvin of Derrynagree company was arrested in connection with the hold-up and detained for a short time. The activities of the R.I.C. were leading the public to believe that the I.R.A. were responsible for taking the cash, and, as far as I can recollect, the manager of the Munster and Leinster bank (Mr. Heffernan) was of the same opinion. Having regard to the reflection cast on the I.R.A., the Brigade O/C (Liam Lynch) ordered an investigation into the whole affair. Eventually, it was discovered by the I.R.A. that the robbery had been carried out by a number of individuals (non members of I.R.A.) from the Millstreet area. These were later arrested by the I.R.A. and tried by the brigade staff and deported from the country.

About this time, Patrick Healy replaced Denis O'Brien as Vice O/C, Millstreet battalion. Some little time later, Denis Galvin was replaced as quartermaster by John Lehane.

There was no activity in Millstreet company area in connection with the G.H.Q. order for the destruction of evacuated enemy posts at Easter 1920, as there was no such post in the area. The evacuated R.I.C. post at Rathcoole was destroyed by the members of the local company (Rathcoole).

On the evening of August 14th, 1920, a British army 'plane crashed in Clonbanin area, on the borders of Kanturk battalion. I received a verbal report of the incident from a member of the Derrynagree company. Within a matter of an hour or so, I reported the matter to the battalion O/C (Con J. Meaney) and he immediately arranged for a party to proceed to Clonbanin to attack the 'plane. This party, to the number of about twenty-five, proceeded to Derrynagree which was reached at about 1 a.m. As it was then discerned that the 'plane had already been attacked by members of the Derrynagree company who were assisted by some men from the neighbouring Kanturk battalion, we returned home.

Towards the end of August 1920 or early September, three representatives from the Millstreet battalion - Sean Healy, Paddy Healy and Con Murphy - were called up to serve on the newly formed brigade column. Con Murphy, as far as I can recollect, did not report until some time after the raid on Mallow barracks. Sean Healy and Patrick Healy were drivers of two of the cars which took away the stores captured in the raid on Mallow military barracks on September 28th 1920. Together with Con Murphy, they took part in all subsequent activities of the brigade column.

The brigade column was billeted in Millstreet area towards the end of November 1920. At this time, the Black and Tan garrison in the town were creating a lot of trouble. The column were in the area in search of a suitable ambush position. In this connection, Liam Lynch, with some of the local officers, visited Keam, about three miles from Millstreet on the Macroom road. It had been established that a convoy of Auxiliaries

travelled regularly on this road. While examining the position at Keam, two lorries of Auxiliaries made their appearance. They halted about six hundred yards from where the I.R.A. party were. The occupants dismounted from the lorries and began to move in extended order across the country towards the I.R.A. officers. Liam Lynch and his party had to move off, and it was only with great difficulty that they evaded the Auxiliary party. It was thought at the time that the Auxiliaries were aware of the presence of the I.R.A. officers, but it was later accepted that the enemy manoeuvre was just a chance happening. A couple of nights after this incident, the Black and Tan garrison in Millstreet attacked Mrs. Lenihan's shop in the Main Street, and smashed up the premises. This incident, which was immediately reported to the brigade column occurred, I think, on Saturday night (20th November 1920). George Power was in charge of the Column which was billeted close to the town. The column moved to the outskirts of the town and sent in scouts to examine and report on the position. I was one of the scouts selected for the job, and the others were all members of the Millstreet company. When we reported back to the column O/C, it was decided, after a discussion amongst the officers, that no effective action could be taken on that occasion. The column returned to their billets and, on the night of Sunday, November 21st 1921, again came to the outskirts of the town at Hegarty's farmyard. The local scouts were advised to reconnoitre and report. On their return, no action was decided on, as there were only two or three Black and Tans to be seen on the streets. The column again returned to

billets, and came back on the night of November 22nd 1921 (Monday).

In the interval, arrangements had been made and positions selected for a number of sections to attack the enemy if they made their appearance on the streets of the town. Each section of the column was accompanied by local scouts. Before positions were taken up, six members of the column were ordered to move into the Main Street and to attack any Black and Tans who were to be seen. These men were armed with revolvers, and amongst them were: Paddy McCarthy, Sean Kennedy, Denis Murphy, Tom Riordan, Jerome O'Connor (scouts) and two others whose names I cannot remember. This party moved into the Main Street through a laneway opposite Mill Lane. When they reached the street, they immediately opened fire on two Black and Tans who were going towards the R.I.C. barracks. The party then withdrew to where the remainder of the column and scouts were waiting at Hegarty's.

The column then moved into selected positions, as follows:-

- (a) In Market Yard, behind a stone wall, facing the length of the Main Street, and in position to enfilade same, were placed a Hotchkiss gun and crew, with five or six riflemen. Amongst this party were: Dick Willis, Sean Healy, Jackie Bolster, Paddy O'Keeffe, Joe Morgan, Con J. Meaney, Patrick Healy and George Power.
- (b) Behind a stone wall in front of the National bank, a party of four or five riflemen. This party were in a position to cover the

exit from the R.I.C. barracks and also the Main Street, and included Denis Gahan, Denis Murphy, Con Murphy and Con McCarthy.

(c) At Mill Lane, four riflemen and three revolvermen - Sean Kennedy, Tom Coughlan, Paddy McCarthy, Leo O'Callaghan, Jimmy Hickey, William O'Riordan, Cornelius Healy (witness), Jerome O'Connor.

(d) At the rear of Munster and Leinster bank, three riflemen. I do not remember who they were.

(e) At ditch of Fair field, back of Minor Row, about a dozen shotgunmen - Con. T. Meaney and a number from the surrounding district made up this party.

All parties were accompanied by local scouts. It was now about 10.30 p.m.

Shortly after the party at Mill Lane - (c) above - had taken up their position, two Black and Tans passed along Main Street, by the end of Mill Lane, on their way to their barracks. One rushed past the end of the laneway. The other stood in the centre of the opening, and fired one shot, then dashing away. Fire was returned by the I.R.A. party, but it was noticed that Paddy McCarthy had been struck by a bullet over the eye. He was dead when picked up. Tom Coughlan then took Paddy McCarthy's body, on his back, to the column headquarters behind the Market yard. The whole party withdrew from Mill Lane at the same time. Paddy McCarthy's body was then removed by motor car to Gortnavehy, and the column withdrew in

the same direction. All the local scouts, with the exception of Mick O'Riordan, William O'Riordan, Jimmy Hickey, Christy Kelleghan and Cornelius Healy (witness) then returned to their homes, but the five of us accompanied the column to their billets. Paddy McCarthy was waked at Owen Sullivan's, Gortnavehy, and was buried two nights later at Lismire.

Following the burial of Paddy McCarthy, the column moved into Millstreet on several nights, but there were no enemy forces to be seen. After about a week, the brigade column left the area, and the locals (witness, Jimmie Hickey, William and Mick O'Riordan, and Christy Kellaghan) who had been with the column since the Millstreet incident, joined with the battalion O/C (Con J. Meaney) to form the nucleus of a battalion column. Other original members of this column were Jeremiah Crowley (Column leader), John Lehane and Con T. Meaney. It was later reinforced by Jack O'Keefe, Dan Coakley, Jeremiah Philpott and Jeremiah Long. This column was armed with three Martini Enfield (single shot) rifles and shotguns. We underwent a course of training in the use of cover and the use of the arms we had. During the period up to early February 1921, we were moving round from company area to company area, endeavouring to make contact with suitable enemy patrols, but failed to do so. About Christmas 1920, the brigade column was disbanded, and the representatives from the various battalions returned to their home areas. As a result the rifles of Sean and Paddy Healy were now part of the armament of our column. They had been selected as representatives from Millstreet on the brigade column at its formation. In addition, as far as I can

remember, we got two other rifles from brigade headquarters. We now had four Lee Enfields, three Martini Enfields, and the remainder of the column were armed with shotguns.

Towards the end of January 1921, it was learned that the Drishane company under William Kelleher (Kaiser) were contemplating an attack on a party of military which travelled twice weekly on the evening train from Mallow to Killarney. The plan proposed was to attack the enemy party with revolvers when the train halted at Millstreet station. When the battalion O/C (Con J. Meaney) heard of the proposed attack, he immediately informed the O/C, Drishane company, that the battalion column were going to undertake the job. As a result, the plan of attack was changed. It was now arranged to halt the train at a railway cutting, about a mile on the Rathcoole side of Millstreet (east). The column were to be in position on high ground on both sides of the railway embankment at the site selected. Arrangements were also made to have the engine of the train boarded at Rathcoole station by two armed I.R.A. men, provided the military were travelling thereon. These men were to compel the engine crew to halt the train within the ambush position. They were also responsible for ensuring that the whistle of the train was blown at the railway arch - about a quarter of a mile on the Rathcoole side of the ambush position - to inform the ambush party that the military were on the train. Immediately the sound of the whistle was heard, a flashlamp was to be laid on to the railway line at the western end of the ambush site, to indicate the spot at which the engine was to be halted.

All sections took up their positions about 4 p.m. on February 4th, 1921, and remained in them until the Mallow train had passed some time before 8 p.m. There were no military on the train. This procedure was followed each evening for about a week, and on the night of February 11th, the signal was given by means of the train whistle at the railway arch, to tell us that the enemy were on the train. Everything went according to plan, and the train was halted within the ambush site. Fire was immediately opened on the carriages (two) occupied by the enemy troops. Lighted torches were thrown on to the railway line by one party in order to light up the area. After about ten minutes, the enemy surrendered. A number of members of our party (including Jimmie Hickey, William Kelleher, William O'Riordan, Tom Crowley and Jeremiah Crowley, Jeremiah Long, John Lehane, Mick Riordan and Cornelius Healy) then moved on to the railway line and collected the arms and equipment of the military. They also attended to the wounded. The enemy lost one killed and several wounded. The I.R.A. had no casualties. We captured fourteen rifles and about five hundred rounds of ammunition.

I was one of a party of twelve on the southern side of the railway embankment, directly over the spot where the train stopped. We were extended over a distance of about forty to fifty yards. The members of this section were: John Lehane, Mick O'Riordan, Denis Kelleher, John O'Riordan, Stephen Buckley, Mick O'Riordan, Denis Kelleher, John O'Riordan, Stephen Buckley, John J. O'Driscoll, Con T. Meaney, Jerome

Buckley, Jeremiah Long, Jeremiah Philpott, and Con J. Meaney. Three of this party were armed with rifles, and the remainder had shotguns.

The section on the northern side of the railway were, as far as I can recollect, Jimmie Hickey, William Kelleher (Kaiser), William O'Riordan, Tom Crowley, Jeremiah Crowley, Paddy Kelly, Jack Kelleher, Jack Kelly, Sean Buckley, and Miah Galvin. Four members of this party carried rifles and the remainder shotguns.

The men who boarded the train at Rathcoole and who halted it within the ambush position were Jack O'Keefe and Dan Coakley.

When the engagement was over, the members of the column, with a few locals to carry our spoils, withdrew to Kilcorney area where we billeted. The other members of the ambush party returned to their homes.

The column was now fairly well armed, and we began to look around for opportunities to attack the enemy. We lay in ambush on occasions, but failed to make contact. On one occasion, we moved into the Market yard in Millstreet on a Sunday morning, in the hope of getting a few shots at the Black and Tans who were said to be jeering at the people on their way from Mass. Although we remained in position for about three hours, we did not see a Tan.

About this time (late February) our column was joined in Kilcorney area by members of the Kanturk battalion column. One member of this column was an ex British soldier named Shiels. When the column had been with us for some days, during which we took up

abortive ambush positions on a couple of occasions, some members of our column got suspicious of Shiels as he was continually asking questions regarding the whereabouts of Liam Lynch. I also remember that on one occasion Shiels wanted to go into Millstreet on a fair day, but our column leader (Jeremiah Crowley) would not allow him to go. The suspicions regarding Shiels were discussed with Denis Lyons (O/C, Kanturk Battalion), but he assured our leader that Shiels was O.K. The Kanturk column returned to their home area in the early days of March 1921.

Our column (Millstreet) was billeted at Lackadota in Musherah area on the night of March 5th 1921, when word was received that we were to proceed to Clonbanin where we were to report next morning to Sean Moylan. We travelled by horse and car and on foot to Clonbanin where we arrived some time about 9 a.m. on March 6th 1921. Here we made contact with a column from Kerry 2. brigade, and with them we took up positions on the southern side of the Killarney-Mallow road, about half a mile on the Killarney side of Clonbanin cross. Our column was divided into two sections. One section of about five (Con T. Meaney, Jimmie Hickey, Wm. O'Riordan, Mick O'Riordan and Cornelius Healy (witness)) were in position behind a sod fence in Shaughnessy's haggard, about one hundred and fifty yards from the road. A machine gun crew from Newmarket battalion (Bill Moylan, Denis Galvin and Dave McAuliffe) were also in the haggard. The second section of Millstreet column (Jack O'Keefe, Dan Coakley, Jerh. Long, Jerh. Philpott, Sean Reid and Jerh. Crowley) were employed to cover off the possibility of an outflanking movement, and were in position behind the fence leading from Derrynagree to the main Mallow-Killarney

road. The Kerry brigade column under Tom McEllistrim and "Free" Murphy were under somewhat similar cover to our left (west). All parties were on rising ground, and the position, including outposts and flanking parties, must have extended over a distance of about three hundred yards.

The battalion columns from Newmarket and Charleville were in position on rising ground, north of the road, and at varying distances from same. They were extended in a number of sections over the same distance as the columns south of the road.

Before the arrival of our column (Millstreet) two mines had been laid in the road - one at each end of the ambush position.

All sections were only barely in position when a convoy of two lorries travelling from Mallow entered the ambush site. They were allowed to pass through. It was now about 10 a.m. Nothing happened until close on 3 p.m. when the approach of an enemy convoy from the west was signalled by our scouts. This convoy consisted of two lorries, a touring car, an armoured car and a lorry, in that order. Our section opened fire on the leading lorry when it was opposite our position. The lorry continued on for about twenty-five yards and then collided with the fence. The occupants of this lorry were not now visible to our section, and had the cover of the roadside fence. We then opened fire on the second lorry before it reached our position. At this stage, firing was general all round. The touring car had now been knocked out of commission and, in an effort to pass it, the armoured

car ran into the fence, and got ditched. The troops in all the lorries had now taken any available cover on the roadside, and the machine gunners in the armoured car were able to sweep our position with a withering fire. Fighting continued for some considerable time - I'd say one and a half to two hours - and as there was no chance of capturing the convoy, we were ordered to break off the engagement and withdraw. Our section then joined the Kerry column, and retreated with them towards Clara where we billeted. The remainder of our column withdrew to billets in Gneeves where we joined them two days later. The Kerry brigade column withdrew towards their home area. The I.R.A. had no casualties in this engagement. The British lost General Cummings and a number of others who were killed.

Some days following Clonbanin ambush - March 8th was, I think, the date - the mails were raided at Millstreet railway station by a party under Con T. Meaney which included Jack O'Keefe, Dan Coakley, Matt. Kelleher and witness (Cornelius Healy). No information of military value was obtained.

During March and April 1921, I was engaged as personal despatch rider to the brigade O/C (Liam Lynch). This work necessitated journeys - often across country and on foot - over a great portion of the brigade area. Cycles were used whenever possible. Brigade headquarters at this time was located mainly in the Lombardstown area at McCarthy's, Creggane, Roche's, Gortmore, Sheehan's, Mount Hilary, McCarthy's, Nadd, Murphy's, Laharn. When not engaged on this duty, I was engaged with the other members of the column on guard duty for members of the local companies working on the blocking of roads and the

cutting of enemy lines of communication.

Early in June 1921, I was appointed battalion O/C, signals, and during the first two weeks of the month I was engaged in organising a signal system throughout the battalion.

The Millstreet column were scattered amongst the companies in the area during May and June 1921. I was billeted in a cave at Gneeves with six others on the night of June ¹⁵ 1921, when we received instructions from the column leader (Jerh. Crowley) to report to Rathcoole wood before morning. The men in the billet with me were Jimmie Hickey, Wm. O'Riordan, Denis Hickey, Jerome O'Connor, Jack Regan, Mick O'Riordan. It was then about midnight. We immediately moved off for Rathcoole wood where we arrived about 3 a.m. At the wood, we met the columns from Kanturk, Mallow, Charleville and Newmarket battalions as well as the other members of our own column (Millstreet). A number of men from the local companies were also present. Paddy O'Brien, Vice O/C of the brigade was in charge of the combined force. The total number on parade was in the neighbourhood of one hundred and fifty. About eighty men were armed with rifles. The remainder had shotguns. When the officers had held a discussion with Paddy O'Brien, we were informed that it was proposed to attack a convoy of Auxiliaries which travelled between Millstreet and Kanturk on the Banteer road, which passed by Rathcoole wood where we were now assembled.

In the early morning of June 16th 1921, six mines were laid in the road, which ran below the wood, which was on rising ground south of the road. The mines were spaced at the estimated distance between lorries travelling in

convoy. The whole party were then divided into about eight or ten sections - riflemen and shotgunmen being interspersed in each section. The sections were then allocated to positions covering the mines which had been laid in the road over a distance of about one thousand, two hundred yards. When all plans had been completed and positions inspected, the whole force withdrew into the cover of the wood.

About 10 a.m., a convoy of four lorries passed through to Banteer. This convoy passed through our position on the return journey to Millstreet some time about noon. Between 2.30 and 3 p.m., a convoy again passed through to Banteer. When it had passed, the various sections moved into the pre-arranged positions. Each party was made up of about ten riflemen and five shotgunmen. I was with a section stationed south of the road, on ground slightly above road level, at the western end (Millstreet) of the position and covering the last mine to the West. Dan Browne was in charge of this section. In addition to these sections, there were scouts, flanking parties and road-blocking crews. About 5 p.m. the approach of the convoy on its return journey from the East was signalled. In our position, we next heard the explosion of a mine, and the fight started. We did not see any enemy lorry, as the leading lorry in the convoy did not reach our position. When fighting had been in progress for some short time, our section received instructions to close in towards the centre. We moved to the east under cover, and eventually reached a position from which we were able to bring effective fire to bear on the enemy. Shooting continued for about two hours but, as there was no possibility of capturing the enemy or

their stores, the engagement was called off. All units then retired to the rear of Rathcoole wood where they met, and then dispersed to their home areas.

In May 1921, Millstreet workhouse was burned by the members of the Dooneen company. A section of the battalion column was instructed to act as guard for the job but, when they arrived, the workhouse was already in flames..

The Auxiliaries' post at Mount Leader House, Millstreet, was sniped at regularly by individual members of the column between June 16th 1921 and the Truce. In addition, a number of men from the column were part of a composite force from the Cork 2. brigade which moved into West Limerick in the week before the Truce, to carry out an ambush in co-operation with the West Limerick brigade column. The combined forces took up positions at Templeglantine, but no action took place. I was not a member of this party as I did not receive word to travel in time.

Just prior to the Truce, Cork 2 brigade was divided into two parts. The western section of the brigade, comprising Millstreet, Mallow, Kanturk, Newmarket and Charleville battalions, became a new brigade - Cork 4. The eastern section continued to be known as Cork 2. brigade. It was made up of Fermoy and Castletownroche battalions, together with Lismore battalion of West Waterford brigade. The officers of our brigade - Cork 4. - at the Truce were:-

O/C	- Paddy O'Brien -	Charleville Batt.
Vice O/C	- Ned Murphy -	Mallow Batt.
Adjutant	- Eugene McCarthy -	Charleville Batt.
Quartermaster	- Mick O'Connell -	Mallow Batt.

Rank at the Truce - Battalion O/C, Signals,
Millstreet Battalion,
Cork II Brigade.

The strength of the battalion was about 550.

SIGNED: Cornelius Healy

DATE: 11th May 1956

WITNESS P. Donnell

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21
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No. W.S. 1, 416