

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS.

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Witness

Michael O'Connell,  
Glentane,  
Lombardstown,  
Co. Cork.

Identity.

Quartermaster, Cork IV. Brigade, 1st Southern  
Division, I.R.A.

Subject.

Activities of Lombardstown Company, Mallow  
Battalion, Cork IV Brigade,  
1st Southern Division, I.R.A.,  
1914-1921.

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Nil.

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ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21  
BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21  
No. W.S. 1,428

STATEMENT BY MICHAEL O'CONNELL,

Glantane, Lombardstown. Co. Cork.

I was born at Lackendarra, Glantane, on September 15th 1897. My parents were farmers. I was educated at Brittas National School until I reached the age of 15 years, when I went to work in Lombardstown Co-operative Stores, where I am now employed as Accountant.

My father was Patrick O'Connell and my mother's maiden name was Margaret O'Brien of Kilcummer, Castletownroche. My father was a member of the Parnellite Party and, later, of the Redmondite Party. He was a member of Mallow Rural District Council for a number of years. My grand-uncle, John O'Connell, was Head Centre of the Fenians in Glantane area after the 1867 Rising. He went 'on the run' for a period after the abortive outbreak, but escaped to America via Queenstown (now Cobh). He was accompanied to Cobh by his brother, Rev. Timothy O'Connell, C.C., Kildorrery, and in this way he escaped detection. I would like to mention that this was the Fr. O'Connell who anointed Peter O'Neill Crowley in Kilclooney Wood in March, 1867. It was said that he was closely watched while administering to O'Neill Crowley, but later arranged to have a woman with a hooded cloak visit O'Neill Crowley to take away any papers he may have wished to dispose of.

My first connection with the freedom movement was about 1914, when I joined the Irish Volunteers on their formation in Lombardstown. The strength of the unit at this time was about 60. As far as I can recollect, the officer in charge was Michael O'Neill, an ex British Navy man, who was drill instructor.

Our training consisted of close order foot-drill and route marches. I was carried out under and continued until the outbreak of the 1914-18 war, when it ceased.

When the Irish Volunteers were reorganised in the summer of 1917 I joined the Lombardstown Company. The strength of the unit was in the neighbourhood of forty. The first officers of the company were:

O/C - Ned Murphy  
 1st Lt. - Phil Singleton  
 Adjt. - Jack O'Connell (brother)  
 Q/M - Con Buckley.

Routine training continued until the spring of 1918, when, due to the threat of the British to enforce conscription, there was a big influx of new recruits. At this period all available arms in the area - mainly shotguns - were collected. These guns were held by farmers and were surrendered voluntarily in nearly all cases. Intensified training was now carried on throughout the summer of 1918. Seán Breen of Brittas, now Comdt. Seán Breen, A.M.S., who was then a student at University College Cork, where he had been trained with the college unit, came to us with his experience. Night exercises were developed and continued until after the conscription scare had passed. With it passed out a great number of the conscription recruits.

I should have mentioned that Lombardstown Company was a unit of Mallow Battalion, Cork Brigade. Other units in this battalion were: Analeentha, Burnfort, Dromahane, Two-pot-house, Ballyclough. The officers of the Mallow Battalion at this time were:

O/C - Liam Jones  
 Vice O/C - Jerh. Buckley  
 Adj. - Paddy McCarthy  
 Q/M - Mick Nagle.

There was little activity following the failure of the British to enforce conscription, and the Volunteers were mainly engaged in political and cultural activities - organising Sinn Féin, Aeriochts, feiseanna. These were the main activities and through them the national and cultural aspect was kept before the public.

There was no great activity in the area in connection with the general election in December, 1918, as the Sinn Féin candidate, - Mr. Paudeen O'Keefe, was returned unopposed.

Cork Brigade was divided into three brigades in January, 1919. Mallow Battalion, to which my company (Lombardstown) was attached, now became a unit of Cork 11 Brigade. The other battalions in the brigade were: Fermoy, Castletownroche, Charleville, Kanturk, Newmarket, Millstreet. The first officers of the new brigade were:

O/C - Liam Lynch  
 Vice O/C - Dan Hegarty  
 Adj. - Tom Barry  
 Q/M - George Power.

When Intelligence services were being organised in the area in 1919, Andy Sullivan, B. Agr. Sc.I., Mallow, was one of the key men in the district. In his position he was able to move freely about the area and to move in circles where Volunteers would not normally be received. without creating suspicion. In this way he was able to collect important information on enemy activities. He was responsible for the collection of information from his agents in the post office and elsewhere and for its

When the party with General Lucas had ascertained how things stood, Liam Lynch, Bde. O/C, ordered the immediate removal of the prisoner Slattery to another place of detention. As a matter of fact, he stated that the prisoner (Slattery) should not have been taken over from the Mallow Company. General Lucas was now placed in the room vacated by Slattery and a strong guard was mounted. Great secrecy had necessarily to be maintained, and trustworthy men had to be selected for guard duty. Amongst the men engaged on this work were, as far as I can recollect, Dan O'Callaghan, Con Buckley, Con Breen, Dan McCarthy, Phil Singleton, Michael McCarthy and John O'Connell. I well remember that General Lucas was the first person I saw playing "Patience". While being held prisoner he asked for some alcoholic refreshments and gave me some money, with which I bought a bottle of whiskey for him. The prisoner was detained in my home until the night of Monday, June 28th 1920, when he was removed to the house of Myles McCarthy at Cregane. This man's son, Michael, had earlier that evening been sent to Fermoy with a dispatch from Liam Lynch for the military there. The message was to inform the British in Fermoy that, if there were any reprisals for the capture of General Lucas, it was open to him (Lynch) to take any action he considered necessary.

When General Lucas was being moved to McCarthy's, the route followed was through the townlands of Gurrane and Greeves, to Laharn Cross, thence through Droumpeach on to the Gortroe-Nadd road at Cregane, where we entered McCarthy's house. The distance across country was about

four miles. Lucas was accompanied by Liam Lynch, while, with Ned Murphy, I acted as advance guard. When the prisoner had been fixed up at McCarthy's, I was posted as guard with Michael O'Sullivan (known as Mick Jeff). He was an agricultural labourer employed by Myles McCarthy. I was placed on guard by Jerry O'Hanlon, R.I.P., who handed me a grenade and showed me how to use it. It was my first experience of this type of weapon. Although we were extremely anxious during the night, anticipating large-scale raids by the enemy in view of the importance of our prisoner, the night passed all too quickly, helped on by my fellow guard's (Mick Jeff) stories on a variety of subjects. The situation of McCarthy's house where Lucas was detained, was ideal from our (the guards') point of view as it overlooked the valley of the Blackwater, extending to Kanturk in the west and to a point eight miles beyond Mallow in the east. These were the points from which enemy raiders in search of Lucas might be expected to come.

Liam Lynch had made arrangements to transfer General Lucas to West Limerick Brigade area on June 29th 1920. The car in which Seán Moylan and Paddy Clancy were travelling to collect the prisoner went on fire, and a car the property of the local Medical Officer of Health (Dr. Ryan) was taken to remove the prisoner. The car which went on fire was then pushed a distance of about two miles by Liam Lynch, Ned Murphy, Denis O'Shea, Michael McCarthy and myself. It was removed from the district next day. In the meantime, Liam Lynch had returned to McCarthy's, Creggane, where Lucas had been held prisoner, and remained there until the following night (June 30th 1920), when he left for Burnfort area. He was accompanied by Michael

and myself, who were acting as scouts. In connection with this incident, I have a distinct recollection that the officers of Lombardstown Company and some of the men engaged on guard duty were later questioned by the Battalion I/O about their activities, but they never gave the slightest hint about the importance of the prisoners they had been hiding.

About mid-August, 1920, the Brigade O/C (Liam Lynch) was arrested with a number of officers from Cork 1 Brigade, including the Brigade O/C (Terry MacSwiney), in the City Hall, Cork. While he was detained, Paddy Clancy (Bde. Vice O/C) and Jack O'Connell were shot by enemy forces at Derrygallon in Kanturk Battalion area. I was sent by the Company O/C (Ned Murphy) to ascertain the funeral arrangements. Our company (Lombardstown), about sixty strong, paraded at the funerals, where I again saw Liam Lynch in uniform. He had been released after hunger-strike.

The company was mobilised at Barrett's Cross, Glantane, at about 10 a.m. on Sunday, September 26th 1920 - the Sunday prior to the capture of Mallow barracks. It had been mobilised in connection with a projected ambush at Mourne Abbey. This operation was not undertaken, as information which suggested that Mallow Military Barracks could be captured had been received by the Brigade O/C (Liam Lynch).

The change in plans led to the mobilisation of the company at 6 a.m. on the morning of Tuesday, September 28th 1920. The members of the company on parade were detailed to various duties by the Company O/C (Ned Murphy). With Phil Singleton (1st Lt.) I was detailed to proceed to Ballyclough, where we were to mobilise that company and

proceed with them to Two-pot-house to block the main Buttevant-Mallow road by felling a tree there. This would impede the approach of any British troops from Buttevant and Ballyvonaire. When we arrived at Ballyclough we met the Company O/C (O'Callaghan), who did not come with us. He, however, arrived on the scene later. We then proceeded to the farm of E. McLysaght, where a number of men, including some Volunteers, were working on the construction of a house. Here we collected a party, including the carpenters and masons employed on the job, who immediately set about felling the only tree on the Buttevant-Mallow road in the area. It was now about 9 a.m. With Phil Singleton, I then cycled back to Lombardstown, where we went to work at our jobs in the Co-operative Creamery. We had only arrived there when we heard the good news, that Mallow Military Barracks had been captured by the men of the Brigade Column in co-operation with the men of the Mallow Battalion.

On the evening of September 28th 1920 I was instructed to proceed to Burnfort to scout the Brigade Column back to Lombardstown area. We arrived back in Lombardstown about midnight, and the members of the column who had taken the barracks were then billeted in the area. They were billeted at Myles McCarthy's and Pat O'Connell's (my house). At this stage, Jim Brislane (O/C Charleville Battalion) was ordered to return to his home area. On his way he had a narrow escape from capture at Ardaprior, where he ran into a party of Black and Tans who were raiding the house of a farmer named Noonan. The Tans fired at the farmer's son, Seán, and wounded him. It was thought at the time that they mistook him for Seán Noonan, Creamery Manager, Freemount, who later became O/C Cork IV Brigade. However, Jim Brislane escaped.



After the capture of Mallow Barracks, three dumps were constructed in the area. Two were in Lackendarra. They were made by Dan O'Callaghan, Alexander O'Riordan, Con Buckley, John O'Connell and Tim Murphy.

I should have mentioned that on the night of September 29th 1920 a section of the column, together with several members of Lombardstown Company, who were armed with shotguns, were in position in the vicinity of Lombardstown Creamery in anticipation of reprisals by enemy forces. There was no appearance by the enemy. During this period, all members of the Lombardstown Company were practically on continuous duty, providing guards, maintenance men and dispatch riders, while the Brigade O/C (Liam Lynch) and the members of the column were in the area.

The Brigade Column moved from Lombardstown to Ardglass in Charleville Battalion area on the night of 30th September, 1920. Transport (ponies and traps) and scouts for this journey were provided by Lombardstown. This operation, as well as all others in connection with Mallow Barracks raid, was carried out without a hitch.

About this time Lombardstown was recognised as Brigade H.Q. in the field. A communication system was established both by rail and road. The station-master at Lombardstown (Patrick Crowe) was very helpful. With one of the porters, David Cronin, a Volunteer, he always co-operated, and more than once took dispatches from loco-workers at grave risk. The receiving depot was Lombardstown Creamery, where a large number of I.R.A. men were employed as well as two members of Cumann na mBan - Ellen McCarthy and Mary Looney. The names and addresses of the latter were used as covering addresses for all correspondence sent

by rail. Phil Singleton (1st Lt. Lombardstown Company) also worked in the creamery and was responsible for providing dispatch riders to deliver all correspondence to Brigade H.Q. whenever it happened to be situated in the area. All available members of the company were on practically continuous service at this time, dealing with communications, guarding Brigade and Battalion H.Q., as well as supplying guards and scouts for other officers' calling or being billeted in the area.

The Brigade Column ambushed a lorry of British military at Ballydrochane on the Kanturk-Newmarket road on the morning of October 11th 1920. The driver of the lorry was killed and a number of others were wounded. The column captured (I think) eight rifles in this engagement. Liam Lynch and Ernie O'Malley were in charge. The I.R.A. had no casualties.

Early in November the Brigade Column was divided into a number of smaller columns. The representatives on the column from each battalion were sent back to their own areas with instructions to organise and train a column in each battalion area. Towards the end of the month (November) arrangements were made to carry out an ambush at Gortmore by the local company assisted by the men back from the column. Positions were taken up at a point between Haines Hall and the road leading to the railway at Gortmore. After waiting for some time, the I.R.A. party withdrew, as one member accidentally discharged a shot from his Lee Enfield rifle, of which he had practically no experience.

Brigade H.Q. was now at Myles McCarthy's, Creggane. The enemy were raiding in the district in search of men connected with the capture of Mallow Barracks, but never touched the H.Q. I was awakened early one Monday morning

about this time to find a British officer in my bedroom. He told me to dress. I dressed, and was putting on my boots when the officer said, "Don't mind your bloody boots". I thought I was in for it, but they went off without making any arrest. They raided again a few days later but I was not at home. The raiding party questioned my father as to my whereabouts, and he said, "Why didn't ye hold him when ye had him the last night".

At this stage the Brigade Staff was being reorganised to meet the new conditions. I was appointed Assistant Brigade Q/M. After appointment, my first job was to get in touch with Paddy O'Brien (Q/M, Cork 11 Brigade). He was then a patient in Glenvera Hospital, Cork, having been wounded at the destruction of Milford evacuated R.I.C. barracks on or about November 22nd 1920. I cycled to Cork, where I saw Paddy O'Brien and got all available data regarding the Q/M's job from him. The Brigade Staff at this time was:

O/C - Liam Lynch  
 Vice O/C - George Power)  
 Adjut.- George Power)  
 Asst. " - Mossie Walsh  
 Q/M - Paddy O'Brien  
 " " - Mick O'Connell (witness).

With the Adjutant (George Power) and Assistant Adjutant (Mossie Walsh) I was now constantly engaged at Brigade H.Q. dealing with the preparations and distribution of general orders received from G.H.Q. Lines of communication were now placed on a definite basis. Dispatch houses and collection points were arranged on all routes from Brigade H.Q. to the various Battalion H.Q. Arrangements were made throughout the brigade for a regular supply of dispatch riders suitably equipped (cycles, horses, boats as required to be available at all times) to be on duty. Daily

reports from all companies to Battalion H.Q. were ordered. Similar reports were submitted to Brigade H.Q. from the battalions. These reports were to cover every aspect of I.R.A. activity and organisation in the area. Intelligence officers were instructed to pay particular attention to enemy troop movements as well as to possible counter spying in their areas. All reports from Intelligence officers were to be treated as urgent and had to be transmitted to Brigade H.Q. without loss of time. Brigade Council meetings were held monthly and were attended by the officers on the Brigade Staff, as well as by the various Battalion O/Cs or, should they not be available, their representatives. Other than the few raids made during November, there was little activity up to Christmas 1920.

In January, 1921, Seán Moylan (O/C Newmarket Battalion, Cork 11 Brigade) loaned some rifles to Kerry 11 Brigade. In the succeeding month or six weeks he made several efforts to secure the return of the rifles, but there was no response from Kerry. Seán's final effort was in the form of a dispatch to the Brigade O/C (Liam Lynch), whose H.Q. at the time was at Paddy McCarthy's, Nadd. The despatch from Moylan threatened "to invade Kerry with fire and sword if the Brigade O/C (Liam Lynch) did not arrange to secure the immediate return of the rifles". This was in early March, 1921.

On the third Tuesday in February, 1921, a meeting was held at Michael O'Keefe's, Ballybought, Beeing. It was attended by Liam Lynch, George Power, Paddy O'Brien (Cork 11), Seán Hegarty, Florrie O'Donoghue (Cork 1) and Liam Deasy (Cork 111). I cannot recollect if there were others present. I understood at the time that this meeting was called to consider a suggestion from G.H.Q. that men from the Cork

brigades should be selected to go across to the House of Commons in Westminster, London, to shoot up the leaders there. As far as I can understand, the meeting decided that the men in the Cork brigades had enough of work on hands. It was suggested that, if this operation was to be carried out, men should be made available from Dublin or some other area.

Some time after this I was ordered to take a dispatch to the C/C Cork 1 Brigade, Seán Hegarty. I also got verbal instructions to take the message to Miss Wallace, St. Augustine St., Cork. There I met Liam Deasy, Adjutant Cork 11 Brigade, Florrie O'Donoghue, Adjutant, Cork 1 Brigade, and a number of others whose names I cannot recollect. The dispatch was in reply to a suggestion for a combined organised attack on the British on a large scale. I understood from the discussion that it was not considered feasible, although Tom Barry, O/C Cork 111 Brigade Column, was in favour of the plan. On this occasion my cycle broke down on the return journey and I got a drive back to the Brigade H.Q. area from a honeymoon couple.

At the end of February or early March, 1921, I was present at an inquiry held by the Brigade O/C, Liam Lynch, into the happenings at Mourne Abbey on February 15th 1921, when the Mallow Battalion Column and members of the local companies were surrounded by enemy forces. Three men were killed -

One man, Mick Looney, died of wounds, and two men, Sonny Mulcahy and James Ronayne, who were captured, were tried for levying war by a drumhead courtmartial and executed.

Several men who took part in the engagement were questioned and all sources of information were sifted, but nothing definit

was established as to the source from which the enemy obviously obtained the information regarding the whereabouts of the column. It was, however, obvious to all that the enemy had been in possession of precise information when they acted on this occasion. Before the inquiry concluded, the Brigade O/C (Liam Lynch) made it very clear to the local men from Mourne Abbey area that he was of opinion that the leakage of information had occurred in their area. However, within a very short time - as a matter of fact on March 10th 1921, when his own H.Q. was surrounded at Nadd under somewhat similar circumstances - it became obvious to him that the leakage was elsewhere.

In the case of the enemy activity at Nadd on March 10th 1921, a message was sent to Brigade H.Q. by Miss Judy O'Riordan, who was employed as a typist at Buttevant Military Barracks, that the enemy forces there were preparing to carry out a big round-up. On receipt of this information I was instructed by the Brigade O/C (Liam Lynch) to contact the O/C Lombardstown Company and to arrange for the destruction of the Eel Weir Bridge on the main Mallow-Ballyclough-Buttevant road. I superintended the carrying out of this operation, which prevented the enemy forces from closing the ring about Brigade H.Q. at Nadd. The Brigade O/C, with his staff and members of the Mallow and Kanturk Battalion Columns, escaped through the gap left open due to the hold-up of the British encircling forces at Eel Weir Bridge. Enemy troops from Ballincollig, Fermoy, Buttevant, Kanturk, Ballyvonaire and Millstreet took part in this operation. It was later ascertained that amongst these troops was a man named Shiels - an ex British soldier - who up to the previous Monday had been a member of Kanturk Battalion Column. He had left the column ostensibly to visit his mother who was sick.

The presence of Shiels with the enemy forces at Nadd led to an investigation which revealed that he had been seen to enter the R.I.C. barracks at Kanturk on the evening of March 9th 1921. Information to this effect was sent in a despatch by the I.O. (Michael Moore) at Kanturk to Battalion H.Q., but it was never conveyed to Brigade H.Q. If this information had been conveyed to Brigade H.Q., the enemy raid would not have resulted as it did, in the death of three men (Michael Kiely, Ned Waters, Tom Herlihy) and the wounding of two others (Joe Morgan, Jack "Congo" Moloney). I should have mentioned that Shiels was identified as one of the enemy party by Tom Bride - a publican at Nadd - whose home was visited by the raiders.

The establishment of the fact that Shiels was in contact with the enemy led to a further investigation of the incidents at Mourne Abbey on February 15th, 1921. It then transpired that the O/C Kanturk Battalion Column (Denis Lyons) had informed Shiels, in company with the other members of his column, on Sunday evening, 13th February, 1921, that the operation planned for Mourne Abbey on February 15th was to take place. Having regard to the evidence of his association with the enemy forces at Nadd, it is naturally to be assumed that he was the individual who conveyed the information to the enemy.

The combined columns from Millstreet, Newmarket and Charleville Battalions, together with a column from Kerry 11 Brigade, ambushed a strong convoy of military at Clonbanin on the Mallow-Killarney road on March 6th 1921. The enemy had several casualties, including General Cummins who was killed. A meeting of the Brigade Council was to be held at Con Sheehan's, Gortmore, on that day. One of the Battalion O/Cs, Jim Brislane (Charleville Battalion),

did not attend. The Brigade O/C (Liam Lynch) was worried about his absence, so he asked me to go into Charleville Battalion area and contact the O/C (Brislane). I cycled to Greenhall - six miles - where I met James Neenan. I asked him to accompany me as he knew the country better than I did. We continued the journey and eventually found Brislane, about 12 midnight, in a small cabin owned by a Mrs. Murphy in the Red Bog near Dromina. Brislane was laid up with a wounded ankle and this explained his absence from the Brigade Council meeting. The Brigade O/C was very pleased when I reported the facts next morning, as Charleville Battalion area was a flat, low-lying country not suitable for guerilla fighting as movements of men could be too easily observed by the enemy.

About mid March, 1921, I was sent to Dublin by the Brigade O/C (Liam Lynch). I carried some despatches and also money for the Q.M.G. Before I left for Dublin, one of the local Volunteers - John Looney - went in to Mallow and obtained a draft for £250 on a Dublin bank. When leaving, I was instructed to go to a house in Heytesbury St., Dublin, but I went to O'Kelly's, South Circular Road. I had some difficulty in getting in touch with the right men in Dublin and spent  $1\frac{1}{2}$  days trying addresses which had been supplied to me by the Brigade O/C (Liam Lynch). I finally called to Brennan and Walshe in O'Connell St. Next day a courier arrived at my address. He took me along to a publichouse somewhere off O'Connell St., where I met Seán McMahon (Q.M.G.) There were at least three other Q.M.s up from the country at the same time. All were seeking munitions. I think the others were from Leitrim and Monaghan. We had about seventy-two rifles in Cork 11 Brigade at the time, but I know that the others had not near so many rifles.



After my conference with Q.M.G. (Seán McMahon), arrangements were made for me to meet the Chief of Staff (General R. Mulcahy) at University College, Dublin. My instructions were to enquire at the college for Miss Phyllis Ryan (now wife of The President, Seán T. O'Kelly). I duly met Miss Ryan, and after a few minutes the Chief of Staff (General Mulcahy) arrived with J.J. O'Connell (Ginger). The latter was then, I think, Director of Training. I was questioned closely regarding enemy activity in the brigade area, the effect of arrests on the organisation, the replacement of captured I.R.A. officers and the activities of the rank and file of the I.R.A. in the country. I explained in connection with the latter that men carrying on their normal duties all day - some with unsympatnetic employers - had to carry out the following duties: (a) act as guards and scouts for Flying Columns and in a similar capacity for brigade and battalion officers when in their areas, (b) work on cutting of enemy lines of communication by demolishing bridges, blocking roads, cutting trenches, (c) making dumps for the storage of munitions and supplies, and making dug-outs where found necessary in suitable districts. My questioners, especially J.J. O'Connell (Ginger) found it difficult to understand how men in the country evaded arrest or shooting by the enemy. It was a city man's mentality, as mine was that of a countryman, for I could not understand how the city men escaped in their own districts with such intense enemy activity as I observed during my stay.

When I had been about four days in Dublin, Con Moylan (R.I.P.), Newmarket, arrived in the city. By previous arrangement with Liam Lynch, I met him at the

Clarence Hotel. Although we had met on numerous occasions previously at dances, meetings and such functions, we were not known to one another by name. When we met in the Clarence we realised that we had known each other for a long time. Con Moylan's journey to Dublin was undertaken in order to procure a supply of material for an armoury which was being established at Glashakinleen in Newmarket Battalion area. It was proposed to manufacture bombs, mines and other warlike stores in the armoury, as well as to repair weapons of all kinds. However, Con had to be satisfied with a very small stock, as the supply at G.H.Q. was very limited and the armoury had to carry on with whatever material we could lay hands on locally. I may mention that this armoury was transferred to Buttevant Military Barracks when it was taken over in 1922. I cannot recall the names of the men who worked in the armoury at Glashakinleen, but one was Bob O'Connell, Charleville. He was, I think, a carpenter by trade. The only result of my visit to Dublin was that we received a Hotchkiss machine-gun, which was sent by rail to Lombardstown. With Con Moylan, I travelled back to Mallow by train on the Saturday. We arrived at Mallow Railway Station about 10.30 p.m., and as curfew was on at 10 p.m. we were worried as to how we would manage to get out of the town. However, we were met at the station by Denis Cronin - a Volunteer from Lombardstown - who drove us to Brigade H.Q. in a pony and trap the property of Joseph Sheehan, Brittas.

When the 1st Southern Division was formed in April, 1921, I was appointed Assistant Divisional Supply and Transport Officer. My new duties entailed the arrangement

of lines of communication throughout the new Division, which embraced the counties of Kerry, Cork, Limerick and Waterford. Horses were commandeered to enable dispatch riders to travel across country with the minimum delay. Men 'on the run' who were not actually members of the various columns were appointed Divisional and Brigade Dispatch Riders.

- O'Leary (Glenville Company) was dispatch rider for Fermoy area. He travelled on alternate days by saddle horse. Dispatches from Waterford Brigades were usually transmitted via Fermoy. Messages from Limerick generally came through Liscarrol and thence via Castlemagner to Lombardstown. Kerry Brigades relayed messages through Millstreet and Newmarket Battalions to Divisional H.Q. at Lombardstown. Two dispatch riders were in constant attendance at Divisional H.Q. - Denis O'Callaghan and Michael Finnegan (Lombardstown Company). These men rode on alternate days to Donoughmore area, where they collected Divisional messages from Cork I and III Brigades. In addition to dealing with Divisional dispatches, these men also dealt with brigade dispatches when circumstances demanded. In addition to the normal cross-country dispatch routes, communications were also sent by rail. The O/C Communications at Mallow (Jack Barrett) was responsible for operating this system. The staff of Great Southern and Western Railway were on the whole sympathetic and co-operated in every way. The appointment of a member of Lombardstown Company as a porter at the railway station there was a real stroke of luck, as it enabled communications coming by rail to reach the vicinity of Divisional and Brigade H.Q. with the minimum delay - one porter, David Cronin, being always at hand to collect and deliver. It was a credit to the local organisation in the area that not a single dispatch was ever captured by the enemy up to the truce.

Sometime in May, 1921, a member of the local company (Michael McCarthy, Creggane) brought along a dispatch to me from Liam Lynch. McCarthy was accompanied by another man, and when I read the dispatch I realised that he was Tom Malone, alias Seán Forde, who, with some others, had escaped from Spike Island. Malone was to be transferred immediately to East Limerick Brigade area. I arranged billets for Malone on the banks of the Blackwater that night, and next morning drove him in a horse and trap to Dromina - a distance of 19 miles. We travelled via Castlecor, Greenhall, Liscarrol and Aughrim. When passing Liscarrol, our scout, Denis Cronin, signalled that there were enemy forces on our right, but as it was low-lying land we decided to drive on. We passed through unmolested, although we were informed on our return journey that all vehicles which had passed previously had been searched. At Dromina I contacted the local national teacher (Mr. Hishon), who put me in touch with the local Company O/C (Eugene Brennan), to whom I handed over Tom Malone to be escorted into Limerick area. I recollect that Tom Malone arrived in Lombardstown area on the night on which Major Prettyman-Newman's house - Newberry Manor, Mallow - was destroyed by I.R.A. forces as a reprisal for the bombing of the home of the Brigade Vice O/C (Paddy O'Brien) at Knockardbane, Liscarrol, by British forces.

During the period from May, 1921, to July 11th 1921 I was engaged wholetime on organising and administrative work in connection with the establishment of lines of communication throughout the 1st Southern Division. As the H.Q. of Cork 11 Brigade and 1st Southern Division were situated in Mallow Battalion area for practically the whole period from the date on which Liam Lynch went 'on

the run' following the attack known as the Wesleyan Church raid in Fermoy on September 7th 1919 to the taking over of Mallow Barracks from the British in January, 1922, it will no doubt be realised that the establishment of an efficient communications system in the area was essential. The house at which Cork 11 Brigade H.Q. was first set up was at Tadhg Looney's, Burnfort, Mourne Abbey. It later moved to Mrs. Mullane's, Monaparson, in the same area. During the period 1920 to January, 1922, it was situated on numerous occasions in the undermentioned houses for short periods at a time: Myles McCarthy's, Creggane, Lombardstown; Jerh. Sheehan's, Mount Hilary, Lombardstown; Jerh. Roches, Gortmore, Lombardstown; Mick Hallinan's, Brittas, Lombardstown; Eugene Delworth's, Mohereen; Patrick McCarthy's, Nadd; Patk. O'Sullivan's, Mortonville, Lombardstown; Patk. Murphy's, Laharn, Lombardstown; Jas. Lenehan's, Pallas, Lombardstown; Jerh. Hallinan's, Kilcorney, Millstreet.

Before concluding this statement I would like to pay tribute to the generosity and hospitality of the people of the area in general and the above mentioned householders in particular. Never at any time during the period to July, 1921, did the people of the district fail to contribute their share to the fight. Food and shelter, as well as clothing, cigarettes, etc., were always available to the officers and men in the "Field". It was nothing unusual for householders and their families to leave their beds and take their turn as guards and scouts while the men of the column rested. They were ever ready to help by passing on information regarding enemy troop movements, and this co-operation was in a great measure responsible for the success achieved by the columns in the area.

The officers of Cork 11 Brigade from its formation on January 6th 1919 up to the Truce on July 11th 1921 were:

Jan. 1919 - Mar. 1919:

O/C - Liam Lynch, Fermoy.  
 V/C - Dan Hegarty, Mallow  
 Adjt.- Tom Barry (Glanworth, appointed O/C  
 Castletownroche Battn.Mar.1919)  
 Q/M - George Power.

Apl. 1919 - Sept.1919:

O/C - Liam Lynch  
 V/C - Dan Hegarty ('on the run' in England after  
 Wesleyan Raid on 7/9/1919).  
 Adjt.- George Power  
 Q/M - Jerh. Buckley.

Oct. 1919 - Aug. 1920:

O/C - Liam Lynch  
 V/C - George Power  
 Deputy V/C - Paddy Clancy - killed 15/8/'20.  
 Adjt.- Moss Twomey  
 Q/M - Jerh. Buckley  
 M/O - Dr. Michael Molan  
 Engr.- Patk. Coughlan  
 Pol.- Patk. Healy.

Aug. 1920 - Jan. 1921:

O/C - Liam Lynch  
 V/C - George Power  
 I/O & Adjt.- Moss Twomey - arrested Jan. 1921.  
 Q/M - Jerh, Buckley - arrested Jan. 1921.  
 M/O - Dr. Michael Molan  
 Engr.- Paddy Coughlan  
 Pol.- Paddy Healy.

Jan. 1921 - Apl. 1921:

O/C - Liam Lynch (appointed O/C 1st Southern  
 Division, April 28th, 1921)  
 V/C - George Power  
 Adjt.- do.  
 Q/M - Paddy O'Brien  
 M/O - Dr. Michael Molan  
 Engr.- Paddy Coughlan  
 Pol.- Paddy Healy.

May 1st - May 15th 1921:

O/C - Seán Moylan - arrested May 6th 1921.  
 V/C - George Power  
 Adjt.- Dan Shinnick  
 Q/M - Paddy O'Brien  
 M/O - Dr. Molan  
 Engr.- Paddy Coughlan  
 Pol.- Paddy Healy.

May 17th 1921 - July 10th 1921:

O/C - George Power  
 V/C - Paddy O'Brien  
 Adjt.- Dan Shinnick  
 Q/M - Ned Murphy  
 Asst.Q/M - Mick O'Connell  
 M/O - Dr. Molan  
 Engr.- Paddy Coughlan  
 Pol.- Paddy Healy.

From about the date of the formation of the 1st Southern Division - April 28th 1921, I think - Cork 11 Brigade had been operating more or less in two separate sections. The battalions at the western end (Mallow, Kanturk, Charleville, Newmarket and Millstreet) had been operating under the Bde. V. O/C (Paddy O'Brien), while Fermoy and Castletownroche Battalions had been operating under the Bde. O/C (George Power). Arising out of a re-organisation of West Waterford and Waterford City Brigades, the Lismore Battalion of West Waterford Brigade was transferred to Cork 11 Brigade and the remainder of Waterford area was formed into one brigade. Cork 11 Brigade was now divided and the Mallow, Kanturk, Charleville, Newmarket and Millstreet Battalions were formed into a new brigade - Cork 14. The new Cork 11 Brigade was made up of the following battalions - Fermoy, Lismore, Castletownroche, Glanworth. The officers of the re-organised Cork brigades were appointed at a Brigade Council meeting over which the Divisional O/C, Liam Lynch, presided. This meeting was held at Michael O'Keefe's, Laharn, Lombardstown, on Sunday, July 10th, 1921.

The officers appointed at this meeting were:

Cork II Brigade.

O/C - George Power  
 V.O/C - Wm. O'Regan  
 Adj. Dan Shinnick  
 Q/M - Tom Hunter.

Cork IV Brigade.

O/C - Paddy O'Brien  
 V.O/C - Ned Murphy  
 Adj. - Eugene McCarthy  
 Q/M - Michael O'Connell (witness)  
 I/O - Tadhg Byrne  
 Engr. - Charles O'Connor  
 Comm. - John Barrett  
 Train. - Seán Breen  
 Transp. Con Moylan  
 Pol. - Patk. Healy.

Signed: *Michael O'Connell*

Date: *June 6<sup>th</sup> 1956*

Witness:

*P O'Connell*

(Investigator)

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
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