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ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BURO STAIRÉ MILEATA 1913-21

No. **W.S. 1,453.**

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS.

DOCUMENT NO. **W.S.**.....1453.....

Witness

William McCarthy,
Ballyhoulihan,
Emly,
Co. Limerick.

Identity.

Company Captain, Doon.

Battalion O/C.

Subject.

Activities of Doon Company, 1st Battalion,
Irish Volunteers, East Limerick Brigade,
1914-1921, and of Brigade Flying Column,
1920-1921.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil.

File No**S.2778.**.....

Form B.S.M. 2

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No. W.S. 1453

STATEMENT BY WILLIAM McCARTHY,

Ballyhoulihan, Emly, Co. Limerick.

I was born in Southanboy, New Jersey, U.S.A., in the year 1894 and went to a convent school there for a short time. When I was ten years of age my mother returned to Ireland, bringing me and two other children - a brother and sister - with her. We came to live in Gurtavalla in the parish of Doon, where I went to the local national school until I was 15 years of age.

A company of Volunteers was formed in Doon in May, 1914, which unit I joined at its inception. The principal organiser was a man named Patrick Ryan. We numbered approximately one hundred, and drilled with wooden rifles at the time. We practised rifle shooting with a .22 rifle and carried shotguns occasionally. An ex British soldier named White was our drill instructor. Following John Redmond's offer of the Volunteers to fight for England, a big recruiting meeting was held in Doon. This recruiting meeting was the main cause of a split in the Volunteers at the time. The majority of the Volunteers - some of whom were members of the Ancient Order of Hibernians - remained loyal to Redmond. A few, however, did not agree with Redmond's policy. I was one of those few, so we ceased to be members of Redmond's Volunteers.

Those of us who disagreed formed a separate company. At least forty of the younger members of Redmond's Volunteers joined our company. Dan Allis became our Company Captain, and Seán O'Dea became Lieutenant. We continued to parade and drill. O'Dea held Irish classes at the same time. After the landing of the guns at Howth we managed to obtain a number of them, I would say about thirty in all, as well as a

number of shotguns. To the best of my knowledge, the guns were purchased out of our weekly subscriptions and from the proceeds of private subscriptions. We used the guns for drilling and parading. Our first big parade was in Limerick City on Whit Monday, 1915, where we met contingents of Volunteers from Dublin City, Cork City and County, County Clare, County Tipperary, as well as the Limerick City Volunteers and other County Limerick Volunteers. As the great parade of Volunteers marched through the city, we were stoned and attacked by what were then known as the "separation allowance" women and their friends. When the parade ended we had great difficulty in boarding our trains to return to our various destinations due to the continued attack by a howling mob of those women and their supporters. P.H. Pearse, John Daly, Tom Clarke, Liam Mellows and other leaders were present in Limerick on the occasion. We continued routine drilling and parading up to the end of the year and the early part of 1916.

Early in 1916 I was accepted into the I.R.B. in Doon. Patrick Ryan and Dan Allis were the chief officers of the local I.R.B. circle. In Holy Week I was in the town of Tipperary and received a message there from the Company Captain to report in Doon on Easter Sunday morning for a company mobilisation. When we mobilised after first Mass there, we were told to report in Castleconnell, a distance of ten or twelve miles away. Some got there on bicycles, others by side-car and others in a large horse brake. When we arrived there we met the local company and companies from Newport and other areas. In all, we numbered approximately 150 men. Those of us in the I.R.B. knew that some action was about to be taken against

the British garrison in Ireland. The senior officers that day in Castleconnell were Seán Keane and Seán Carroll. With our rifles and shotguns we carried out field exercises during the day, while our officers waited for instructions from Limerick City. Late in the evening a dispatch rider arrived and handed a dispatch to Seán Keane. After this we were dismissed and returned to Doon. On Easter Monday morning I went to see a friend of mine in Cappawhite and that evening returned to Tipperary. On my way to Tipperary I met Laurence Breen, brother of Dan Breen, who told me there was fighting in Dublin. I took this to be labour troubles, something similar to that which had taken place in 1913. On Tuesday morning I met Seán Treacy of Soloheadbeg on his way into Tipperary Town to contact the local Volunteers. As he was well known to the R.I.C. as a Volunteer, I suggested that he should write a dispatch which I volunteered to take into the town for him while he waited outside. He agreed and wrote a message, which he asked me to take to a Cumann na mBan girl named Alice Ryan. When Miss Ryan read the dispatch she sent for some of the local Volunteers, one of whom wrote a dispatch which I took back to Seán Treacy.

While Treacy and I were discussing the rumours which we had heard of the fighting in Dublin, a man named Jack Crowe joined us. Crowe was a Clan na Gael man who had recently returned from the U.S.A. After a while Ned Dwyer of Ballagh, Co. Tipperary, also joined us. During the discussion Seán Treacy suggested seizing a quantity of gelignite from a quarry at Soloheadbeg to blow up portion of Limerick Junction Railway Station. Ned Dwyer did not like the suggestion and pointed out that such action might not have the approval of our H.Q. After a

while it was agreed that I should go to Doon, Seán Treacy go to Galbally and Ned Dwyer return to Ballagh to find out if any instructions had been received at either of the three places from our H.Q. in Dublin.

I went to Doon, but no official information had been received there. For the remainder of the week, the Doon Company mobilised each night and kept in touch with one another during the day. When the end of the week came we heard of the surrender in Dublin. A few days later we received an order from one of the officers of Limerick City Regiment to surrender our arms at the local R.I.C. barracks. After this the majority of the men surrendered their arms. Some individual members, however, held on to their rifles. I held on to three service rifles - 2 Lee Enfields and 1 Lee Metford. In spite of pressure by some members of the company to surrender them, we held on to them. Pakey Ryan, Head Centre of the I.R.B. in the area, Jim Duggan, Peadar McDonald and other Volunteers had been arrested by this time. Some of the Volunteers accused me of being responsible for the detention of the prisoners because I would not hand up the rifles. As I held Pakey Ryan's rifle, I went to his father and told him I would hand it in if he wished; but he told me to keep it. After about a fortnight, however, all of the local prisoners were released. The company continued to meet and drill in secret up to the end of the year.

Early in 1917, Ernest Blythe, Seán Ó Murthuile, Pakey Ryan and other organisers were in the area. Dan Allis was still Company Captain. Routine drilling continued throughout the year, during which time we held a feis and a number of hurling matches. We still numbered

about forty men. A reorganisation of the Volunteers in the area took place at the end of the year. I was appointed Company Captain of Doon in place of Dan Allis who became O/C.

During the conscription scare of 1918 we got into the company another 100 men. All of them, or nearly all, had been members of the original company. During the period we collected a number of shotguns from the local farmers and made a number of pikes. We had a tree cut down from which handles were made for the pikes. When the scare was over, most of the new men left the company, but a little later we received several new recruits. They were young men who had been members of the Fianna. These brought our strength up to one hundred. Routine drilling continued to the end of the year. It was, I think, some time in 1919, after a big parade of Volunteers in Cappawhite, that Seán Treacy and Paddy Keogh were arrested for drilling the Volunteers on the occasion. I was also drilling the Doon Company on the same day. The R.I.C. came to arrest me, too, but I was not at home at the time, so I went 'on the run'. While Treacy was in jail we decided to arrest the Sergeant of the R.I.C. who had arrested him and to intern the Sergeant in Hollyford copper mines, where we prepared a place for him. We did not succeed in capturing the Sergeant. We continued our routine exercises until Seán Treacy was released after serving some months in jail.

Prior to an attack on Murroe R.I.C. Barracks by members of the Mid Limerick Brigade in January, 1920, the Doon Company and other companies in the Doon or 1st Battalion, East Limerick Brigade, blocked all roads in the area. The attack on the barracks was not a success

insofar as they did not succeed in capturing it. Around this time we had a visitor to the area who posed as an officer from G.H.Q., Dublin. He was brought to James Ryan's of Foilcleara and other places in the area and, in the meantime, was provided with a new suit of clothes. He was later brought to the West Limerick Brigade area. During his stay in the area we became very suspicious of him and warned the Brigade O/C, Seán Wall, that we thought he was a spy. This turned out to be the case. He was tracing Dan Breen, Seán Treacy and Seumas Robinson and others who had taken part in the rescue of Seán Hogan at Knocklong some time earlier. He was eventually placed under arrest by the West Limerick men and tried by courtmartial, after which he was executed as a spy.

It was around this period that Dan Allis was arrested by the R.I.C. I then replaced Dan Allis as Battalion O/C of the 1st Battalion. All companies in the battalion continued their weekly parades and drilling up to March, 1920. Early in this month I had a visit from Seán Wall, Brigade O/C, who discussed with me and other members of the Battalion Staff the possibility of an attack on Doon R.I.C. Barracks. After some planning, the attack, of which I was in charge, took place on the 7th March. It had been decided to use a quantity of gelignite to blow a hole in the gable end of the barracks in the first instance.

The barracks was a two storey building and stood in its own ground away from any other buildings at one end of the village on the left-hand side of the road as you leave the village for Cappamore and Pallas. Members of

Doon, Cappawhite, Upperchurch, Rarecross, Hollyford, Rossmore and Donohill Companies participated. The attacking party consisted of twenty riflemen, twenty shotgunmen and ten men with revolvers, while the garrison within numbered twelve men. Most of our rifles had been borrowed for the occasion. Ned Reilly, Tadhg Dwyer, Phil Fitzgerald and the others who had prepared the gelignite placed it in the first instance against the gable-end of the barracks and secured it in position with a number of railway sleepers. In the meantime, I placed one section of men - all riflemen - behind the bank of a stream on a hill twenty-five yards in front of the barracks. I placed another section - some of whom had rifles and the rest shotguns - at the back of the barracks. I did not place any men at the other end of the barracks, that is the end opposite to which we had placed the mine, because of the fact that the wife and family of the R.I.C. Sergeant in charge occupied that portion of the building. It had snowed heavily for some time before we took up positions and the ground was covered with three or four inches of snow. Our presence in the vicinity became known to the garrison in a short time.

When all was ready, Reilly, Dwyer, Fitzgerald and those helping them ignited four fuses which were attached to detonators inserted in the gelignite, and ran for cover. One of the fuses resting on the snow went out. As they ran for cover the R.I.C. within dropped out a number of hand grenades through concealed loop-holes in the gable end of the barracks. It appears that they had scooped out portion of the walls here and there in the barrack, to make loop-holes, but did not remove the outer plaster until the occasion to use them arose. It was surmised at

the time that they also had a system of electric wiring around the barracks which, when touched, would give the alarm within. However that may be, they knew they were about to be attacked. Some seconds after they had dropped out the hand grenades, the gelignite exploded but failed to breach the gable end of the barracks. This was thought to be due to the fact that the grenades had dislodged the railway sleepers, clamping the gelignite to the wall.

By this time the sections surrounding the building were in action and were concentrating their fire on the windows and doors. A number of hand grenades were hurled towards the roof and breached it in a number of places. The garrison within were now returning our fire. After about two hours I called off the attack and retreated from the vicinity to our respective company areas. If the police had followed us up next morning, they could easily have traced every man of the local company through his foot prints in the snow right to his own door. As in the case of the attack on Murroe Barracks, all roads in the area were blocked for the attack on Doon Barracks.

A short while after the attack on Doon Barracks I was instructed by the Brigade O/C to send all rifles in the battalion area, which numbered eight, to Herbertstown, as an attack was being planned for Ballylanders R.I.C. Barracks in that battalion area. With a few of the members of the 1st Battalion, I delivered the rifles in Herbertstown as instructed. The attack on Ballylanders took place on the 27th April, 1920. I did not take part in the actual attack, but I had all roads in my battalion area blocked prior to the attack. During this period we concentrated on

the mails, which we seized and censored and returned to the post office. In no case did we find any evidence of a leakage of information to the enemy.

In the latter end of May, with Dan Grace, Battalion Adjutant, Danny Ryan, known as Danny Simon, Brigade Engineer at a later date, Nicholas O'Dwyer, Brigade O/C of Engineers, Jerry Treacy, Company Captain of Pallas, Jim Carthy and Mick Carthy of Doon, Jim Gorman and Paddy Costello of Hollyford and others, I took part in an attack on Kilmallock R.I.C. Barracks which had been planned by the Brigade Staff and Battalion Staff of the area. We travelled to Kilmallock on bicycles, where we were met near the town by a local Volunteer who guided us to our positions after being supplied with a rifle each. We were allocated a position at the back, twenty yards from the barracks. I was in charge of this section. Jerry Treacy was taken from us and placed in a section in the front. Behind us was a haybarn. After some delay the attack opened and continued until morning, during which time the barrack was burned down while the garrison retreated to a building adjoining. During the burning a couple of the garrison were burned to death. The stench from the burning bodies in our position was almost unbearable. In the morning we came out on the street, where our guns were collected by members of the local battalion, after which we returned to Doon.

About a week later, on the 4th June, with the assistance of members of Hollyford, Doon, Cappawhite, Donohill, Cola, Rearcross and Upperchurch Companies I carried out an attack on Cappawhite R.I.C. Barracks. Dinny Lacey of Tipperary Town assisted in making the plans.

and participated in the attack. The building occupied by the garrison was a barracks and Courthouse combined, with a separate entrance to the Courthouse. With four men I occupied a house next-door to the barracks. This house was owned by a man named Bushel. Bushel's house was separated from the barracks by a narrow lane. Down this lane were a number of small houses which overlooked the back yards of the barracks and Courthouse. At the end of the lane, running parallel to the Main St., was another street in which stood a chapel. The chapel, which had a wall in front, stood directly behind Bushel's house. Across the street directly in front of the barracks was a row of houses. Paddy Ryan, known as Paddy Ryan Lacken, Seán Stapleton and Ned Ryan, known as Ned Ryan Smith, with others occupied the small houses in the lane. They were armed with bombs as well as rifles. Behind the chapel wall was a section whose job it was to fill petrol into bottles. In the houses in front of the barracks were two sections in charge of Paddy Kinnane of Upperchurch. These men were armed with rifles and shotguns. Behind a wall at the back of the barracks in charge of ten men armed with rifles and shotguns was Dinny Lacey. In Bushell's house we had a number of home-made bombs, some of which had been made from wheel boxes filled with gelignite with fuse attached; others had been made with gelignite and mud, the mud being made into a convenient ball with a stick of gelignite inserted. When thrown with force against the roof, the mud stuck as the gelignite exploded. My plan was to open the attack by throwing the bombs on to the roof of the barracks so as to break the roof, and then to throw in the bottles of petrol.

We got to work on Bushell's roof and soon had a hole made in it. When it was large enough, the bombs were handed up and directed one at a time on to the roof of the barracks. In the case of the bombs made from the wheel boxes, the fuse was lit. One or two of those rolled off the roof and exploded in the yard below. However, the others did break the roof, after which we directed on to it a number of bottles of petrol, followed by lighted waste. In the meantime, Paddy Ryan, Seán Stapleton and the others in the small houses also sent over some hand grenades and mud bombs, which they also followed up with bottles of petrol and lighted waste. At the same time, Paddy Kinnane with his men broke the windows of the houses they had occupied and, together with Dinny Lacey and his men, opened fire on the windows and doors, while the garrison within were replying to their fire. It was about an hour before the roof eventually took fire, and in a short time it was blazing well. The attack had been in progress for about four or five hours when I received a dispatch stating that reinforcements were on their way to the R.I.C. and that we were being surrounded. I at once gave the order to retreat. One man - Tadhg Hogan of Oola - had been wounded in the engagement. Another Oola man accidentally wounded himself on the way home. Members of Doon and Donohill Companies ran into enemy forces on their way home. In the case of the Donohill men, they encountered the Tans but managed to make good their escape, except for their scout, who was known as Dwyer Bawn, who was arrested. One member of Doon Company, Patrick O'Connell, was wounded by a party of military and arrested. They took him to hospital in Limerick, where he was rescued that night by members of Limerick City Battalion. In the

case of Cappawhite, as in the other attacks on R.I.C. barracks, all roads in the vicinity were blocked prior to the attack.

A short while after this attack we burned down an old R.I.C. barracks at Bilboa which had been evacuated for some time. We had been informed it was to be reoccupied by the R.I.C. Other incidents around this time included raids on mails in Pallas and Doon Company areas.

At the latter end of July or early August, Paddy Ryan (Lacken), Company Captain of Rearcross, wanted to attack Rearcross R.I.C. Barracks. Ernie O'Malley, who was in the battalion area at the time, was agreeable. He sent word to Dan Allis and myself to bring all arms in our area to Rearcross for the attack. We brought four rifles, some shotguns and a number of hand grenades which we had obtained for the attack on Doon, as well as some petrol and paraffin oil. Preparations and plans had been completed for the proposed attack on a Saturday night in the month of August, but the Brigade Staff would not approve. All roads had been blocked in our area, in South Tipperary and in East Limerick, but due to the last minute refusal of the Brigade Staff to approve of the attack the North Tipperary roads were not blocked. Seán Treacy and Dan Breen arrived in the area that Saturday evening. A discussion took place as to whether they would attack or not. O'Malley wanted to attack once he had Treacy and Breen in the area. Treacy agreed. By this time it was very late in the night, so they decided to postpone the attack until Sunday night. The attacking party were billeted in the mountains around for the night. Members of our battalion were asked to go to Cappawhite to collect some gelignite in the meantime, as it had been decided to

leave North Tipperary roads open for a distance of about a quarter mile from the barracks and to mine them in places, leaving an ambush party on the spot to watch for reinforcements on their way to the barracks. I was asked to take a party of four or five of our men back to Doon to snipe at the barracks there, to divert attention and lead the enemy to believe that our primary objective in blocking the roads in our area was for the purpose of an attack on Doon Barracks again. When I arrived in Doon it was Sunday morning and the people were on their way to first Mass. In the circumstances, I did not carry out the attack on Doon Barracks.

On Sunday evening we returned to Rearcross and met the attacking party, who had taken up positions. O'Malley, who was in charge, had left word for us to take up ambush position at a place known as Armshaws Cross. This was a crossroads leading from Kilcommon to Rearcross and Doon to Rearcross. At this crossroads a barricade of stones and horses' carts had been erected. As there was a cycle column of military in Pallas, the road from Pallas was covered with broken bottles at a distance of about six miles from Rearcross. Dan Breen was in charge of one of the ambush positions near the barracks. As I was not in the actual attack I cannot give the positions occupied by the attacking party.

The attack started about 11 p.m. and lasted until about 6 a.m. The barracks was burned down during the attack while the garrison took refuge in a house at the back but did not surrender. Preparatory to the attack, while some members of the attacking party were breaking the roof, a couple of the R.I.C. came outside to investigate

the noise being made. A Sergeant was shot dead in doing so before he could close the door. I waited after the attack for O'Malley, Treacy and others to join us. When they picked us up I discovered that O'Malley, Treacy, Gorman and Jack Ryan, known as The Master, were wounded. Their wounds were slight, except for Gorman who had been shot while on the roof. The others had been wounded by ~~knives~~^{bombs} splinters. With the help of other Volunteers, I brought Gorman to a Dr. McCormack, who dressed his wound. Next evening I brought him to St. John's Hospital, Limerick, where he was operated on and was fit again in about ten days.

I think it was around this time that Dan Allis was released. When arrested, he had been Battalion O/C. While he was in jail I acted as Battalion O/C in his place. When released after a few months he again became Battalion O/C and I became Vice O/C. Dan Grace was Battalion Adjutant at the same time. Seán Stapleton became O/C in charge of special services, such as engineering and signalling. Sometime in the month of October of this year, on instructions from H.Q., we raided the Income Tax offices in Old Pallas. These were situated in the private house of a man named Raleigh. We seized all documents and took them to a place known as the Dead River, where they were burned.

Shortly after this, Seán Stapleton and Dan Grace joined the Brigade Flying Column, which already included Donnchadha O'Hannigan, Ned Tobin, Danny Moloney, Davy Clancy, David Tobin and others. At the same time we were about to form a Battalion Flying Column in our own area and about eight of us met at Templebraden for the purpose. Ernie O'Malley, who was in the area, was to take charge.

A few days later, however, O'Malley had to go to Co. Cork, so the proposal fell through. Four or five weeks after our two battalion men had joined the Brigade Column, twelve of us met at Coolbawn, Doon, and proceeded to Glenbrohane, where we joined up with the Brigade Column. It was in the month of November, 1920. On our way to Glenbrohane one of our men, Patrick Ryan, a harness-maker, was accidentally wounded and had to be sent to hospital. The members of the Doon or 1st Battalion who joined the column then, included Paddy Ryan, Dan Allis, Mick Ryan (Minor), Danny Ryan (Simon), William Duggan, Brian Berkery, Con Burke, Tadhg Ryan, Jim McCarthy, Ned Duggan and myself, all of Doon Company. Ned Ryan (Smith) of Cappawhite, Dan Grace of Templebraden, Seán Stapleton of Cola, Mick Bourke of Pallas and Jer. Connors of Templebraden. In Glenbrohane we met Seán Ford, Ned and David Tobin and the rest of the Brigade Column. Shortly after meeting the Brigade Column that night, two prisoners who were thought to be spies were taken to the area by some member of the column. Two members of the column had been arrested some time earlier. They were Tadhg Crowley and Mick Scanlon. Donnchadha O'Hannigan and Seán Ford were making plans for their rescue but nothing came of it. After this we took up ambush positions on a couple of occasions, but the expected patrols did not turn up.

Shortly after joining up with the Brigade Column, the Column was divided into what became known as No. 1 and No. 2 Columns. Ned Ryan (Smith) became O/C No. 1. Tadhg Keane became Q/M of this column. Dan Allis became O/C of No. 2, while I became Q/M of No. 2. Hannigan remained in charge of both. Soon after the No. 2 Column were on their way to Cappawhite area of Co. Tipperary to carry out

an ambush there, when we received a dispatch to move to Glenacurrane on the Co. Cork border to take part with No. 1 Column in an ambush in that area. We marched all night and got to Glenbrohane in the morning, where we met No. 1 Column who had carried out the ambush at Glencurrane the day previous with the assistance of a Co. Cork Column. A week previous No. 1 Column had taken up ambush positions at a place known as the Red Gate near Garryspillane. When the military lorries they were expecting arrived in the ambush positions, the military, it appears, took them by surprise, so they had to retreat. One member of the column, Seán Riordan, was shot dead. A short while after the Glenacurrane ambush both columns were disbanded for the Christmas period, when most of the members returned to their own battalion areas. During the period, two members of the column, David Tobin and Tom Murphy, were surrounded at Tobin's house by a party of military and were shot dead while attempting to escape.

A couple of weeks after Christmas we all reassembled again and were located around the Coolbawn area. After a few weeks I got permission from Hannigan to attend an auction which was being held some days later. On the day of the auction No. 1 and No. 2 Columns, with members of Mid Limerick Column, took up ambush positions at Drumkeen about twelve miles from Limerick City. In the ambush which took place that day, the 3rd February, 1921, twelve R.I.C. men were killed. Some days after Drumkeen I received a dispatch from Jim Gorman, Company Captain of Hollyford, in the South Tipperary Brigade, asking me to bring some members of the Doon Battalion to Hollyford to assist the local company in an attack on an enemy patrol.

I brought along seven or eight members of the battalion and met some members of the local company in the area. We took up ambush positions on the road between Hollyford and Upperchurch. Our party numbered thirteen men armed with rifles. After being in positions for a short while we saw a number of enemy lorries approaching. They numbered twelve or thirteen, so we let them pass as they were too strong to attack. Gorman was very anxious to carry out an attack in his area, so he asked me to approach Hannigan with a view to having an attack carried out by the South Tipperary Column with the help of the East Limerick Column in the company area. Hannigan agreed and said that he would assist the South Tipperary Column if he were asked.

Within a few days, however, Hannigan received a dispatch from H.Q. ordering him to bring his two columns into West Limerick Brigade area and start some activity there so as to ease enemy pressure in Co. Cork and Co. Kerry. With the two columns, Hannigan left for West Limerick within a couple of days. He asked the Mid Limerick Column to move into the 1st Battalion area of East Limerick until he returned from West Limerick. We met the West Limerick Column in Athea area in Holy Week of 1921. On Easter Sunday, 1921, we all went to Confession and Holy Communion in Athea and paraded in the village after Mass. Our column was billeted in the village that night, while the No. 1 East Limerick and West Limerick Columns were divided around the country some distance away. A few days later we went to Ballyhahill village. Next morning some members of East Limerick and West Limerick Columns were surprised by a military raiding party as they were about to have their breakfast. In trying to

escape, Seán Finn, Brigade O/C West Limerick, was shot dead and a member of East Limerick Column named Ruane was wounded. Late that night the East and West Limerick men left the Ballyhahill area and proceeded towards Croom. We remained in this area and others for about a further two weeks. During the period we took up ambush positions on a couple of occasions but no engagements took place. While in West Limerick we had a narrow escape from a large scale military round-up. With the West Limerick men we eventually moved back into our own Brigade area and were located in Ballintubber for a time. While we were away the Mid Limerick Column had moved into Templebraden in the 1st Battalion, East Limerick Brigade area. They later joined us in Ballintubber, where we had to find billets for them also.

Around the latter end of April, No. 2 Column, with members of West Limerick Column, were located near Knockadea on the Anglesboro side, while the Mid Limerick Column were located in Knockadea itself. While they were there they received word that a cycle patrol had left Galbally to patrol the surrounding area. It appears that the Mid Limerick Column were moving into positions to intercept this patrol when they were surprised by a second patrol of military in lorries accompanied by an armoured car. In the skirmish which followed, three of the column were killed and a fourth captured. The captured man was executed next morning in Cork Military Barracks. The names of the four men were Horan, Casey, Hennessy and Starr. A number of other men had been wounded, but managed to escape. We moved towards the area of the fighting but the enemy had retreated by then. This scrap took place

on the 1st May, 1921.

The West Limerick Column had by this time been divided between our two columns. On the night of May 1st, No. 2 Column moved to Lackelly while No. 1 moved to Ballinavene. Tom Howard, who was attached to No. 1, had a sore leg and was unable to move with No. 1, so Hannigan asked me to take his place in No. 1. Next morning a Cumann na mBan girl named Mai Moloney was out early on the road on some business for the column when she saw a military search party approaching. She turned back and cycled towards the houses occupied by the members of No. 2 Column. The military followed her and opened fire on our men, who had been already warned and were at the back of a house. Four of them were shot dead. The remainder of the column then engaged the enemy. We moved from Ballinavene towards the shooting and engaged the enemy also. The fight lasted all day, during which Hannigan sent me in charge of about eleven men (who included James Collins and Amos Reidy of West Limerick Brigade) to intercept a party of Tans who, he thought, had taken refuge in a farmhouse. We remained behind a high bank for several hours covering the farmhouse before we got word to withdraw. By then the enemy had broken off the engagement and retreated. Our men had also left the area some time after them. It was now about 10 p.m. We retreated to Ballinavene and on the way picked up a number of column men who had been cut off. By the time we reached Ballinavene we numbered twenty-eight men. When the Tans and military retreated they abandoned a number of bicycles, which were later collected by the local company. The bodies of the four I.R.A. men killed in the action were carried to Lough Gur, where they were

buried. Later that night, with the twenty-eight men I went to Templebraden Company area.

On the following morning another large scale military and Tan round-up took place in this area. We escaped capture by taking shelter in a haggard and deep ditch behind a whitethorn fence while the raid lasted. One of our men, Mick Gallagher, was wounded and captured in a round-up next morning. That night we moved back into the West Limerick Brigade area with the West Limerick Column as far as Granagh. Some nights later, while members of the local I.R.A. were escorting a prisoner arrested as a spy they were surprised by a cycle party of military who fired on them, with the result that one of the I.R.A. was shot dead while their prisoner escaped. Soon after, Ned Ryan (Smith) and other leaders left us to escort the Brigade O/C, Seán Wall, to Annacarthy, Co. Tipperary, where a Divisional meeting was to be held. Led by Dan Allis, the rest of the East Limerick Column were soon on their way back to their own Brigade area. Nearing Croom we were surrounded in a large enemy round-up but managed to evade capture. After being in hiding while it lasted, we again started for our own area but lost our way. We marched all that day and night and eventually reached Glenbrohane in the 5th Battalion area.

Seán Wall, while on his way with Ned Ryan (Smith), Hannigan and others to Annacarthy, was surprised one morning by a military raiding party. In a skirmish which followed, Seán Wall was shot dead. After this the Brigade Column was broken up, so we all returned to our own battalion areas. Back in our own area, with others

I sniped at Doon Barracks several times. The Cappawhite Company borrowed our rifles around this time and attacked a Tan patrol in the village.

During the Truce a Divisional training camp was set up at Galtee Castle. Ernie O'Malley was in charge. A munitions factory was also started at Carrickmor, and a battalion training camp, of which I was in charge, was established at Cullen. The munition factory employed thirty men.

Signed: William P. Barry

Date: 6th July 1956

Witness: John J. Barry
(Investigator).

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