ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21
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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913–21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS.

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Witness

Seán Healy,
Station House,
Blackrock,
Dublin.

Identity.

Captain, A. Company, 1st Battalion, Cork I. Brigade.

Subject.

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STATEMENT OF MR. SEÁN HEALY

Station House, Blackrock, Dublin

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A general request having been issued by the Bureau of Military History, Dublin, to all Volunteers to write the story of their activities during the Fight for Irish Freedom, I have decided to place on record a true account of my own personal experiences in that historic period.

Thirty four years have now elapsed since the signing the "Truce" agreement on July 9, 1921. Formal recognition by the British was extended to the Irish forces, as belligerents, which marked the end of the Anglo-Irish War on "Truce Day", 11th July 1921. It was the first time in 230 years of struggle that the army of the Irish people met the British army on equal terms since the Siege of Limerick in 1691; hence this achievement must be recognised as the most important event in the centuries that have since passed.

Cathal Brugha was the first President of Dáil Éireann, having been elected when the Irish Republic was ratified on January 19, 1919. On that memorable occasion he pointed out that the Irish Volunteers was now the army of the Irish Republic and we were legally and morally entitled to slay the officials and agents of any foreign invader who made war on our Government. In the course of this narrative I will tell of the first occasion on which I had the privilege of meeting this gallant officer and I regard this meeting as the most important event of my career. It took place in the last week of October 1920, and I will deal with it in

the order of the sequence of events.

I have a vivid recollection of most of the happenings of importance, but I have forgotten the actual dates of the occurrences in some cases. I was born on August 19, 1896, in a country village called Shanballymore, situated in the parish of Doneraile in the County of Cork. Both my father and mother were National School teachers. My father, who was born and educated in Mallow, was a personal friend of the Rev. Canon P. Sheehan, and also William O'Brien,M.P. for Cork, and he was a great Nationalist in his own way. Rev. Canon Sheehan happened to be his School Manager. The three of them were classmates. Tim Healy, K.C., was also a friend of our family and a distant relation. My father frequently spoke of the '67 Rising and the part played by the O'Brien family in the attack on Ballynockin Police Barracks. He instilled a great national spirit into the members of his family and his pupils. I had close associations with Terence McSwiney, the martyr Lord Mayor of Cork, in my schooldays. He was a teacher under the Technical Instruction Board, and held a Commercial Class in Doneraile C.B. schools, a couple of days each week, at which I attended. This was about the year 1911. He taught shorthand and typewriting, book-keeping and other subjects. He always stressed the importance of the Irish language and Irish culture. I was impregnated with his resurgent spirit at an early age and longed for the day that I would be able to help to win back our freedom.

After the murder of Tomas McCurtain in March 1920, when Terence McSwiney took over command of Cork No. 1 Brigade, he received information that an attempt was to be made on his life by the British Murder Gang. When it was decided to place an armed guard on his house in Belgrave Place, Cork, I had

the honour to be selected as a member of that armed guard. We guarded the house for a couple of nights, but instead of coming for him during night hours, he was subsequently arrested in the Cork City Hall on August 12, 1920.

Another veteran of the Irish Revival Movement was Micheál Ó Gráda of Castletownroche. He was known as the Gaelic League organiser and taught Irish language and Irish dancing classes in the neighbouring towns and villages, devoting all his time and energy to this noble work, travelling on a push bicycle all over the county. He was one of the pioneers of the Irish Ireland Movement from which sprang the Easter Week Rising. He was the first man to teach me our native language. and he formed branches of the Gaelic League in most of the local districts.

In May 1912, I sat for an open competitive examination for a position as clerk in the employment of the old G.S. & W. Railway Company and, a language being required as an additional subject, I selected Irish. I passed this examination and I was appointed as a railway clerk at Millstreet, Co. Cork, on July 12, 1912. I was transferred to Tralee Station in the following year, where I met Austin Stack, who afterwards became T.D. for Kerry. We were staying at the same boarding house in Rock St., Tralee. This was shortly after the big strike in Dublin and the great lockout. About 20,000 men were thrown out of employment and left to starve. They were batoned, beaten and several were imprisoned by the British police who were then in control in Ireland. Women were kicked and trampled on when they went to the assistance of their men, who were simply demanding a living wage.

Austin Stack and I became very friendly and often spoke

of the desperate plight of the Irish people at that time, who were being exploited to the advantage of the foreigners, and it was always agreed that the only remedy was to meet force with force and try and drive the invaders out of Ireland

I was transferred to Cork in June 1914, and I immediately joined the newly formed Irish Volunteers, and, as I write these memoirs, I have before me my first Irish Volunteer Membership Card. My number is 2866, Company H, Section 3, and bears an endorsement "CANCELLED 2'/8/14, signed S.McC". This date may be known as "D" day in the fight for Irish freedom, as far as Cork is concerned. This cancellation of my Card was brought about by the "Split" in the Irish Volunteers, when the Redmondites broke away from the Irish Volunteers who were pledged to fight for the cause of Ireland ONLY. Out of about 4,000 men who comprised the Cork County Brigade, of which there were over 1,000 in the City of Cork, only about 50 city men remained loyal to Ireland and had their cards cancelled, new ones being then issued. Terence McSwiney was elected Battalion O/C. Paddy Cotter was captain and Bob Langford was my Lieutenant.

The others were now pledged to fight for the British Empire and the King of England. These became known as the Redmond Volunteers, and our section was known as McNeill's Volunteers, later to become known as the Sinn Féiners, and, finally, the I.R.A.

Most of us who remained steadfast to the cause of Ireland joined the Sinn Féin movement which was the political wing of the resistance movement. As time went on, there was a big increase in the numbers of recruits who joined the Sinn Féin Volunteers and, by the Spring of 1916, the organisation was in a very healthy state which necessitated a complete

reorganisation of brigades, companies, etc. Our political arm, Sinn Féin, also grew in strength and attained a high state of perfection despite the unwelcome attentions which were paid to it by the British Police Force.

I was attached to the North East Ward Branch, my membership number being 1545, as shown on my Card, which I have still in my possession. Our Club was raided and wrecked by the police on several occasions and our members beaten up; but this only made us all the more determined to continue our fight.

An amount of adverse criticism and unfavourable comments were frequently thrown at us for not having taken our stand during the Easter Week Rising in Dublin, but subsequent events proved that the Corkmen were not afraid to fight. This failure was due to the orders and counter-orders which were received from Headquarters in Dublin, and the Cork brigades were completely exonerated at the inquiries which followed.

When the brigades and companies were reformed, I was attached to C/Company, 1st Battalion, and later to A/Company, Cork No. 1 Brigade. New Membership Cards were given to each man, who had to subscribe to the following declaration:

> "I, the undersigned, desire to be enrolled for service in Ireland as a member of the Irish Volunteer Force. I subscribe to the Constitution of the Irish Volunteer Force and pledge my willing obedience to every article of it. I declare that in joining the Irish Volunteer Force, I set before myself the stated objects of the Irish Volunteers and no others".

A voluntary contribution of sixpence per week was expected from each member, of which twopence was allocated

to a fund for the purchase of equipment. As the funds were completely inadequate to purchase rifles and revolvers, etc., it was subsequently decided to resort to other means to secure the necessary guns and ammunition, and orders were accordingly issued by Brigade Headquarters to take them from the British forces on every possible occasion without shedding blood, if possible.

After the Easter Week Rising there was a big falling off in the number of Irishmen who volunteered for war service in the English army and the British authorities now resorted to economic pressure in every possible direction using the vilest propaganda to try and lure young men into their army. Employers were directed to guarantee re-employment to any of their employees who volunteered for active service, on being discharged, and, in some cases, half pay was allowed by the firms to Volunteers, and those who did not join the British forces were in several cases threatened with dire consequences after the war was over. "Rolls of Honour" were drawn up by some of the larger concerns such as railway companies and banks giving details of those who had gone to serve His Majesty, the King of England.

Shortly before the U.S.A. entered the World War in 1917, the British had their backs to the wall and very strong appeals were made for help, being followed by a Conscription Act. Our city streets were plastered with recruiting posters with such headsings as : "YOUR KING AND COUNTRY NEED YOU" "HELP POOR LITTLE BELGIUM". "JOIN THE BRITISH ARMY AND FIGHT FOR THE FREEDOM OF SMALL NATIONS". The Germans were depicted as terrible monsters, murdering women and children. Pictures of German soldiers were exhibited with babies stuck on the end of their bayonets.

We now devoted a good deal of our time to the removal of these posters, apart from attending drill parades and learning the art of war generally. Our parades had to be held a few miles outside the city. The parade ground for A/Company was situated in Ballyvolane and the selected field was a good distance from the public road as these parades and manoeuvres had to be held in secret. Scouts were first of all placed in outlying positions with instructions to raise an alarm if any British raiding parties were observed advancing. Bob Langford was company captain about this time and Sean Ivers, whose name is signed on my Volunteer Membership Card for the year 1917, was section commander.

The securing of arms and ammunition was now uppermost in our minds. Following the unconditional surrender of our Easter Week leaders in Dublin in 1916, the whole country was placed under Martial Law and proclamations were sent out demanding the handing over of all arms and ammunition which were held by the Irish Volunteers to the nearest police or military barracks. An agreement was made between the Cork Brigade officers and the British military that our rifles and ammunition were to be lodged in Lord Mayor Butterfield's premises, South Mall, Cork, which agreement was carried out in part. The guns which were lodged were quickly seized by the British forces, and arrests of prominent officers followed. Having been partly disarmed in this manner in the April of 1916, it became necessary to tackle the problem of re-arming at once.

MY FIRST RAID FOR ARMS

We received information that a number of British army rifles were stored at the Grammar School, Wellington Road, Cork which were being used for the training of some of these men of Redmond's Volunteers who volunteered for service in the

King's army, and who had started an Officers' Training Corps. It was decided by our Brigade O/C., Tomas McCurtain, that we should seize these guns. A successful raid was made on this building with Bob Langford, who now held the rank of captin, in charge. We captured 20 service rifles which were removed to safe custody. This was the first active engagement in which I took part. It took place during the month of September 1917, and was the first of its kind in Ireland after the surrender of Easter Week 1916. These same rifles were used with deadly effect against their former owners at a later date and the men who used them were mostly those who formed part of the company of 50 who were the first to break away from the National Volunteers after the 'split' in 1914.

The next raid in which I took part was the seizure of about 100 bicycles from the British military. A bicycle being a very necessary part of a Volunteer's equipment, orders were issued to capture a quantity of bicycles which had been stored at Woodward's Auction Yard at Copley Street, Cork. About 100 men were mobilised for this operation. After forcing open the gates leading to the yard, each man got orders to select a machine and take it to the place which had been previously selected. I selected what appeared to be a good bicycle and rode away towards the Company H.Q., but when I was passing over Brian Boru Bridge, the wheel got stuck in a railway track with the result that I was thrown off the bicycle and, on recovering my feet, I examined the machine to find that the crank was badly bent, rendering the bicycle of no further use for immediate transport. The police, having now been alerted, I decided to give the bicycle a watery grave sooner than let it be recaptured, so I dumped it into the bed of the river. I will never forget the clink-clank of those machines, as some of them were in poor condition. We passed

several R.I.C. men on our way through the city, but they made no effort to interfere with us, being evidently of the opinion that we were all armed, whereas only a few of the officers carried guns.

I must mention that Cork City was the Headquarters of the British Southern Command in Ireland and there were no less than 12 military posts in the city and county, with 139 R.I.C. Barracks, and the strength of the British garrison was about 30,000 men all told; therefore, we realised that we were fighting against tremendous odds which necessitated very careful planning of all operations.

In the year 1918 the World War was at its height when the British passed a conscription Act to compel Irishmen to join the British army.. This Act was the means of greatly strengthening our ranks, as large numbers of young men then joined the Irish Volunteers in preference to the British forces, but the majority of what we termed 'conscripts' left the organisation again when the danger passed over. However, a good number remained faithful to the end. After the great victory of the General Election of 1918, when the Irish Republic was lawfully and legally established, the Irish Volunteers became the army of the Irish Republic and became known as the I.R.A., when our fight for freedom entered a new phase.

The notorious District Inspector, Swanzy, was in charge of the police in A/Company area, and his cruel deeds will never be forgotten by the Cork people. Himself and his men were constantly on the prowl to try and locate our weapons, but with all their resources they failed to capture any of our guns. The murder of our Brigade Commandant, Tomas McCurtain, was carried out by the men under his command.

After this diabolical murder, his death warrant was signed by the new Brigade Commandant. I remember one occasion on which we tried to 'get' him. Having received information that he was visiting a certain house in the vicinity of the South Main St. on a certain night, Battalion Officer Tom Crofts and myself lay in wait for him, expecting he would emerge by the halldoor, but he never appeared. We then assumed that he must have taken his departure by the rear exit.

Shortly after the murder, he was granted leave by his authorities, and went to Douglas, Isle of Man, for a holiday. We intercepted a letter from him in one of the raids on mails, which we carried out at Glanmire Station. It was addressed to his sister in Cork. The letter stated that his 'friends' the enemy had trailed him to the Isle of Man, but they had been quickly 'taken care of' by the Manx Police. He also stated that he was not returning to Cork, but was being secretly transferred to Lisburn. A couple of men from the 1st Battalion were then sent to Lisburn where he was shot dead on the street.

General Strickland, who was in command of the military forces, was more fortunate than the officer in charge of the police. An attack was made on him by some of our brigade staff officers in A/Company area, from which he narrowly escaped. This attack took place at the junction of St. Patrick's Hill and King St. (now McCurtain St.). Commandant Dan Donovan (Sandow), who was originally promoted from Captain of A/Company to the Brigade Staff, was in charge of the operation.

These actions led to regular patrols and unceasing vigilence at all times by the military and police, rendering A/Company operations extremely dangerous and most difficult.

Our men had to work and live in close proximity to the British Command strongholds, but they struck at the Crown forces whenever a suitable opportunity arose. Taking all circumstances into consideration, it was truly remarkable how most of our men managed to evade being captured during the four years of warfare. The very few casualties that were suffered was a great tribute to the loyalty and intelligence displayed by the men generally. I am mentioning these matters in order to show the great disadvantages with which A/Company men had to contend ~~with~~, as compared with the Volunteers in other areas.

A/Company, 1st Battalion, Cork No. 1 Brigade, covered the most hostile area in the whole county. In our area were situated the hostile H.Q. (Victoria Military Barracks), King St. Police Barracks, St. Luke's R.I.C. Barracks, Lower Road Barracks and Empress Place Barracks, with others close by. A large percentage of the people in the area had connections with the British forces and police; vested interests had been established over the years; shopkeepers were handling big military contracts, the soldiers and police had intermarried with the citizens; in fact, 90% of the residents in our area could be regarded as being definitely pro-British and hostile to the I.R.A. Only about one house in every hundred could be regarded as pro-I.R.A. The garrison at the Victoria Barracks usually ran into a few thousands soldiers and a company of British Auxiliaries. The latter was a picked body of ex-British army officers who saw active service during the World War and were of the commando type and very good fighters in most cases. These factors made our activities very difficult and dangerous. in fact, they could be regarded as 'behind the line

operations'. The area was also infested with British spies and informers and only for taking drastic action against these people we could never have survived. A list of the spies was compiled by our Brigade Intelligence Officer, Sean Culhane, and instructions were issued to 'liquidate' these people on every possible occasion. They were employed in all walks of life and mixed with the people generally until the finger of suspicion pointed towards them. One of these men was employed as a Post Office clerk where he was in a position to obtain valuable information for the enemy. Sean Culhane, J.J. O'Connell and I got instructions to put a stop to his activities. When he was picked up, walking along King St. one evening, we arrested him and conveyed him to 'an unknown destination'/(in Knockraha) from which he never returned. Several others were dealt with similarly. Other spies had to be 'liquidated' in the public streets. I do not wish to mention the names of those men as it would not be fair to their relatives and friends who are still living, even though spies and informers are about the most loathsome persons that ever existed and deserve to be exterminated in the same manner as rats or snakes.

Most of those spies and informers were armed with loaded revolvers which were supplied by their British paymasters for their self-protection. They frequently travelled in the lorrie with the King's troops at night, during curfew hours, when out on raiding expeditions, their duties being to point out the homes of any I.R.A. men they knew, when arrests were effected and, in some cases, I.R.A. men shot in their beds.

Early in 1920, an unfortunate incident occurred in connection with the shooting of one of these spies. Sean Crowley, who was captain of A/Company at that time, got orders

to shoot a spy at Pope's Quay, Cork. He selected a couple of his men to accompany him on the operation. Shots were fired at the spy and, in the course of the shooting, one of his men, Volunteer Jerry O'Mahoney, a railway worker, was shot through the back, the bullet emerging through his chest. Medical assistance had to be obtained at once for the wounded Volunteer who was removed to a place of safety. Following this affair, the police and military scoured the neighbourhood in search of the I.R.A. men. Volunteer O'Mahoney managed to get to London later where he stayed with some friends until he recovered from his wound. It was considered that he would be safer in London than in Cork.

The accidental shooting of his friend, Jerry O'Mahoney, had a nerve-wrecking effect on Captain Sean Crowley, with the result that he had to be put on the sick list and was unable to resume active duty for a long period. I was appointed to the rank of company captain in October of the same year, when 2nd Lieutenant Dan Duggan was promoted 1st Lieutenant, with Charlie O'Brien as 2nd Lieutenant. William O'Mahoney was section commander (No. 3).

As the war progressed, appeals were sent out for subscriptions to our fighting fund and in most cases only the 'faithful few' responded. It was then decided to place levies on those who could afford to pay, and threats of drastic action had frequently to be used to secure payments of those levies. In some cases we commandeered goods. I received orders on one occasion, through Battalion Commandant Dan Donovan, that a supply of air-cushions was required by the brigade flying column, and also some watches.

Accompanied by Volunteer Liam Ivers, I called at Elvery & Co., Patrick Street, and collected one dozen air cushions at the point of the gun as the salesman refused to hand them over without getting cash down for them. In another instance I was accompanied by a battalion officer, Sean O'Donoghue, when we commandeered one dozen watches from Messrs. Hilser's, South Main St. for the use of the column. Of course, official receipts were issued in both cases, payments to be made on the termination of hostilities. We were informed in both cases that matters would have to be reported to the British police. We told the salesmen that we would take a very poor view of such action, and it would be very unwise to carry out the threats.

The securing of arms and ammunition being our greatest problem, every effort had to be concentrated towards that end. Having received a letter from a friend of mine in London, during the winter of 1919, I crossed over and returned with four revolvers and a supply of ammunition for same. I crossed over again in May 1920, accompanied by my brother, Francis, who was a section commander in the Carrigtwohill Company, and also a railway employee, expecting to get a good supply of guns, but we could only secure two as the British authorities were now keeping a tight check on all such weapons. Our London contacts were Irish girls who were members of the London Cumann na mBan - May Healy and Maire Manning. Both of these girls were then under suspicion, having been arrested and convicted for political activities. The former became my wife on the termination of hostilities. On the occasion of my visit in May 1920, I took the opportunity of visiting my old comrade, Jerry Mahoney, who was wounded at Pope's Quay, to find that he had greatly improved and I am glad to say that Section Commander Jeremiah O'Mahoney is still alive and well.

On my return journey, when travelling between Dublin and Cork, I learned from the ticket checker, Tom Quigley, that my lodgings in Cork had been raided by the police, and, as it would not be safe to complete the journey, my brother and I alighted at Mallow and stayed overnight at The Royal Hotel, taking our departure at an early hour next morning. We were scarcely left this hotel when it was also raided for us, but 'the birds had flown'.

RAILWAYMEN'S PART IN THE WAR FOR INDEPENDENCE.

Glanmire Station, Cork, was the scene of many a brilliant raid for arms and was an amazing source of supply. Pistols, revolvers, ammunition, field glasses, other military stores, including complete officers' outfits were frequently seized. Buses having not yet been introduced into this country, and very few motor cars or lorries being in use, rail travel was the predominant means of transport, and deliveries from train were effected by means of horse-drawn vehicles. Nearly all trains entering and leaving Glanmire station were packed to capacity.

Hundreds of British troops and police passed through Glanmire station daily, accompanied by military stores and equipment for war purposes. I saw Tom Kent of Fermoy and others pass through the station as military prisoners surrounded by heavily armed escorts on their way to execution. In those days nearly all members of the British police force carried loaded rifles. Railwaymen were generally subjected to rough treatment by the British armed forces. On one occasion a ticket checker, who was a member of the Volunteers, named Sean Ivers (whose name I have already mentioned) was checking tickets at the ticket barrier in the usual course of his duties. When he asked two members of the British

police to produce their tickets for inspection, he received a blow on the chest from the butt end of a rifle, qualified by a remark that they would not show their tickets to any b.....y Sinn Feiner. (All Volunteers were known as Sinn Feiners at this time, 1919). In passing, I must mention that these two policemen were afterwards shot to death when boarding a tramcar outside their police barracks situated on the Lower Road, Cork. Their names were Sergeant Garvey and Constable Harrington. These two Irishmen played very prominent parts in trying to uphold alien rule in their native land. A soldier of the garrison at the railway station, who was particularly obnoxious towards railway officials, met with a similar fate.

About 600 men were employed at Glanmire railway station and about 100 of these employees were members of the I.R.A. being attached to different companies throughout the city, but the station being situated in A/Company area, most of them were attached to A/Company. They were men of all grades, clerks, engine-drivers, firemen, ticket checkers, fitters, porters, office messengers, etc., all being imbued with the same ideals and welded together for the one purpose - to secure the freedom of their country and drive out the invaders.

Mostly all the Directors and Chief Officers of the G.S. & W. Railway Company, in those days, were Unionists and helped the army of occupation in every possible way. Our local District Superintendent in Cork, Mr. W.H. Thompson, received the 'ORDER OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE' for special services rendered in this respect. The main qualification for employment as a railway policeman was a good discharge from the Royal Irish Constabulary. Twelve ex-R.I.C. men were employed at Cork Station, but in fairness to these men, I must

say that they were not all hostile to the I.R.A. In fact, quite a number of ex-R.I.C. men were sympathetic towards the movement for freedom from British rule. Discharged ex-British soldiers got preference of employment on the G.S. & W.R. Some of these men later distinguished themselves in the ranks of the I.R.A. while others acted as spies and informers. The names of railwaymen who got killed in action, fighting in the ranks of the British army during the 1914-18 War, were emblazoned in a Roll of Honour conspicuously exhibited at the principal stations, on orders from the Directors.

I am mentioning these matters to show the terrible odds that the patriotic railwaymen had to contend with, but the cause of Irish freedom was their primary consideration. Hundreds of them lost their employment, and even suffered death without flinching, at the hands of the King's troops. The Irish Nation can never thank these men sufficiently for their glorious stand, and were it not for their gallant action, it is doubtful if the freedom which we now enjoy would ever have been achieved. A special meed of thanks should also be extended to the Irish Transport and General Workers Union, the A.S. & L.E., and the N.U.R. who stood by their members in their hour of need. It was decided by these courageous men that they would not assist the occupying forces to oppress their people; therefore a plan was arranged that whenever armed British troops entered a train, the engine-driver, fireman or guard would dismount and abandon the train. This was done in many parts of the country during the years 1920 and 1921, and it was not an unusual thing to see a train full of passengers and British troops lying for hours at stations. Eventually the troops would withdraw and the train proceed on its way. The men were invariably taken to the nearest

police station or military barracks and severely punished, and, worse still, they lost their employment with the Railway Company.

Long periods of unemployment then followed. They were even denied the out-of-work benefit. A small allowance was usually provided by a fund called the White Cross Fund to keep them from starvation. Railway transport being denied to the Crown forces, they were then forced to travel by road, when they were exposed to frequent attacks by the I.R.A. columns. Most of the railwaymen were animated by the desire to serve their country and faced their ordeals with great courage and determination. There were a few instances where some weaklings refused to obey the call of the 'Munition Strike' and they were severely dealt with. In one instance a crew of a passenger train, running between Waterford and Cork, left the train at Fermoy after a party of soldiers boarded it. After the train had been delayed for some time, a fresh crew of trainmen volunteered to take the places of the men who downed tools. This 'blackleg' crew worked the train to its destination. The matter was duly reported to our Brigade H.Q., when I got orders to arrest the 'blacklegs'. Assisted by Dan Duggan and a few other men, we arrested the defaulters and kept them as prisoners for one night, when they were released on signing a document that they would not repeat such conduct. This had the desired effect on others who may have been tempted to try and break the Strike Order.

CAPTURE OF A RIFLE AND MACHINE GUN AT STATION.

The capture of a rifle at Cork Station from a British soldier was another event which made matters hot for railwaymen. I observed a soldier armed with his rifle entering the toilet in the lavatory, thus presenting an easy prey. I

mentioned the matter to Lieut. Charlie O'Brien, who was employed in the Parcels Office, and also a man named Michael O'Leary. We decided to try and take this rifle from the soldier. Armed with revolvers, we entered the lavatory, opened the door of the toilet, held up the soldier and seized his gun and then kept him a prisoner until the weapon was removed to a place of hiding. An exhaustive search of the premises followed - by police and military - but the gun was never found.

I am now going to relate an extraordinary incident which took place in the Parcels Office. A machine gun, packed in a tea chest, was dispatched from London by the G.W. Railway, Fishguard Route, intended for the Cork Brigade, and, only for the tactful and daring way the matter was handled by the Cork railwaymen, it would have been captured by the enemy. I.R.A. officers and British police officers, both fully armed, were in the Parcels Office at the same moment seeking the same precious prize. The penalty for possession of such weapons at the time was death. This gun should have been forwarded direct to Cork by the Fishguard Steamer, but it was diverted to the Rosslare Route, due to some mistake of the railway people at Fishguard Harbour, with the result that it arrived at the railway station instead of arriving at the C.C.S.P.Company's Stores, as consigned.

In order to alleviate any suspicion, it bore an ordinary printed label which was procured by the senders, from one of the big stores in London, named Bartrum, Harvey & Co. Ltd., and it was addressed to "The Cork Iron Co.", North Main St. Cork (no such firm being in existence). Advice of dispatch was duly received by Brigade H.Q. and arrangements made to collect it on arrival of the steamer at Penrose Quay, Cork.

Inquiries were promptly made after the ship arrived, but no trace could be found of the chest. The Shipping Co, was requested to try and trace the missing consignment, but as the contents of the chest could not be revealed, inquiries were very much hampered and, of course, no claim could be lodged for the missing article. All inquiries having failed, it was assumed by the Brigade staff that the gun must have been seized en route.

When the chest arrived at Cork Station, it was presumed to be an ordinary commercial transaction, dispatched by a wellknown London firm, and as there was a firm named The Cork Timber and Iron Co., whose premises were situated at the North Main Street, Cork, it was thought that there may have been a slight mistake in the address. The chest was then sent out for delivery in the usual way, but it was brought back again to the station, as the Cork Timber and Iron Co.'s receiving clerk informed the carter that they were expecting no goods from Bartrum Harvey & Co. of London. As part of my duties I wrote direct to Bartrum Harvey & Co. London, informing them of the position. The receiver of my letter immediately became suspicious of the matter and wrote to the British Home Office, stating that they were of opinion that this chest contained illicit goods, as no such consignment was dispatched by them. A few days later, Detective Sergeant Nicholas Barry from Empress Station police barracks arrived at the station, accompanied by two other detectives, to collect the mysterious consignment. On that same morning, our chief clerk and myself opened the chest to examine its contents when we discovered, to our amazement, that it contained a complete machine gun. I had word sent to Brigade H.Q., at Miss Wallace's shop in St. Augustine Street, Cork, and this

good lady immediately contacted Battalion Commandant Dan Donovan, who actually arrived at the station along with two other I.R.A. officers, at the same time as the British police. Clerks A. Jacques and D.J. Kelly kept the detectives in conversation while the I.R.A. officers were removing the chest to a waiting vehicle. A few minutes after they had departed the police entered the Inwards Parcels Office for the purpose of examining and seizing the consignment, to find to their great chagrin that the mysterious article had disappeared.

After inspecting the delivery book and examining the fictitious signature which was given by Dan Donovan, a severe interrogation followed. Questions were asked: Who took away the chest? Did you know the man who signed for it? Why was he allowed to take it without an order from the firm, etc.? All inquiries failed to obtain the required information and the police then withdrew, greatly perplexed about the whole affair.

A PAN OF MACHINE GUN AMMUNITION TAKEN FROM THE ENEMY.

The supply of machine gun ammunition was now a very difficult problem, but here again the railwaymen came to the rescue. A pan full of ammunition was produced as if by magic, and the magician was Volunteer Michael Fitzgerald of the Parcels Office staff. This Volunteer was assisting to load military stores into a wagon which had been placed in the loading bank, under the supervision of the British armed forces when he managed surreptitiously to hide a pan of ammunition in an adjoining wagon. This valuable capture was quickly passed on to the brigade column, and no doubt it returned to its owners under different circumstances.

ATTEMPTED RAID ON BRITISH TROOP TRAIN.

An attempted raid on a British troop train took place at Cork station during the winter months of 1919 and proved abortive, due to a stroke of ill-luck. A party of about 20 picked men from A/Company under Battalion Commandant Dan Donovan, all armed with revolvers, scaled the boundary wall at Water Street and entered the railway yard where a military special train was in readiness to convey troops and stores to another barracks. Having been informed by the clerk-in-charge of troop train movements at the station that this special was scheduled to leave at 10 p.m. on a certain night, a watch was kept on it during the afternoon of that day while loading operations were in progress. After the loading was completed, it was noted that only four soldiers were left on sentry duty, when it was estimated that it would be a fairly easy matter to overpower them and capture the stores which consisted of guns and ammunition in addition to the usual military baggage.

Under cover of darkness, we stealthily moved along through the railway yard, but when nearing our objective we saw, to our dismay, that instead of only four soldiers being on guard, a few hundred armed men were about to entrain. It was not expected that the entrainment would take place until shortly before the time fixed for departure of the train. This early arrival frustrated our plans, leaving us no alternative but to beat a hasty retreat by the same way as we had entered the railway yard. An attack under the circumstances would have been fatal. All our men got away safely, but special precautions on the part of the British military could be noticed, regarding future troop movements. Therefore it would appear as if some information of the proposed attack had subsequently reached their ears.

A special watch was now being kept on all military stores arriving and passing through Cork Station; therefore other methods had to be adopted to try and disarm the Crown forces and re-arm the I.R.A. Military stores intended for the various posts served by the Cork, Bandon and South Coast Railway were conveyed across Cork City by the Link Line trains.

HOLD-UP OF CORK CITY RAILWAY TRAIN.

It came under our notice that a quantity of supplies, which included arms and ammunition, was due to be dispatched by the 8.15 a.m. Cork City Railway train on a certain morning when it was decided that we should make an attempt to seize them. I mobilised about eight men for the job, all armed with revolvers, and gave the necessary instructions concerning each man's duties. The hold-up was planned to take place in Alfred Street, Cork, after the train had emerged from the railway yard, and everything worked out according to plan. The train was travelling about 5 miles per hour across the city when it was held up by means of a red flag being waved in front of it. The driver, fireman and guard were taken down and ordered to stand with their faces to a wall, then our men entered the Stores Van, unloaded the booty on to a horse-drawn vehicle which was standing by. We secured a good quantity of supplies which included two officers' kitbags complete with swords and revolvers. Lieut. Dan Duggan, Volunteer Keniry and another man boarded the vehicle and drove away through the city streets to the appointed rendezvous, where they carefully stored away the captured goods. After warning the trainmen that the matter was not to be reported to the police until we were well out of sight, Lieut. Charlie O'Brien and I proceeded to the railway station to take up our ordinary day's work, being due in the office at 9 a.m.

Although this train hold-up took place in broad daylight, on a public street, within a few hundred yards of Empress Place Police Barracks where about 50 R.I.C. men and Black and Tans were stationed, not a shot was fired, and no report reached the police until everything was all over. The alarm was not raised until about 9 a.m. Then a house-to-house search of the district followed. The District Inspector of Empress Place Barracks took personal charge of the investigations. He arrived at the railway Parcels Office, accompanied by Detective Sergeant Nicholas Barry and a few other men and took written statements from all members of the staff who dealt with the Stores. He was infuriated by the thought that such a hold-up took place almost within sight of the barracks. Being naturally of opinion that it was an 'inside' job, he issued drastic threats to all and sundry, trying to obtain information as to who took part in the affair. He banged his revolver on the office desk and threatened to take every member of the staff to the police station for interrogation. Mr. A. Jacques, who was in charge of the office, and Mr. D.J. Kelly, second in charge, were subjected to a very rough cross-examination, but by some extraordinary stroke of good luck, no suspicion fell on me at that particular time, although I was present while the investigations were being carried on. Messrs. Jacques and Kelly were even questioned about the political opinions of the staff, but no information was divulged, and no help given to the police, which would enable them recover the missing goods. The District Inspector left the office with the remark that "this place seems to be a nest of Sinn Feiners, and he would take steps to clear them out".

The horse and car which were used for the removal of the stores was lent by a Corporation worker, and Dan Duggan reported an amusing incident which took place on their way

through the city. The horse came to a sudden standstill outside a certain publichouse at which his master was a daily visitor. Every effort to urge the animal forward failed until the publican emerged from the house, and, after making inquiries about the absence of his morning visitor, etc., a general conversation took place. Then the publican told the new occupants of the car that this was a regular stopping place for the horse and he would not move until he had a short rest. After a short interval the horse moved forward again at a sharp pace and all reached their destination in safety. I still have in my possession an officer's dress sword which was part of the booty we captured, and hope to return it to its original owner when our complete freedom is achieved.

A splendid pair of military field glasses was also captured in this raid, which was afterwards used by Brigadier Seah Moylan of Cork No. 2 Brigade. The lady typist in the District Superintendent's office at the station, who was a member of Cumann na mBan - Miss Josephine Day - approached me and asked me, if at all possible, to let her have the field glasses which were very badly needed by Sean Moylan. Realising that these instruments were much more needed for country fighting than street fighting, I duly handed them over to her and she had them safely transferred to Sean Moylan. I asked that three revolvers should be given to our company in exchange, but, owing to a scarcity of these weapons, the exchange could not be arranged.

I.R.A. DISPATCHES FORWARDED BY RAIL.

A very strict censorship of letters and parcels was imposed by the British authorities during the years 1920 and 1921 with the result that none could be sent by post. Therefore, other means of communication had to be found. Here, again, the railwaymen came to the rescue; the answer was found

on the railways. A big organising drive was launched in this respect. Special agents were appointed at all the big railway stations who would handle these dispatches. I can truthfully say that 70% of the Cork railwaymen could be trusted with this difficult and most dangerous task. Being the senior I.R.A. officer employed at Cork Passenger Station, I was entrusted with the task of organising dispatch carriers. Nearly every man employed in Booking Office, Parcels Office and Cloak Room could be trusted. Lieut. D. Duggan, Lieut. C. O'Brien, Section Commander Sean Ivers, Volunteers Dan Houlihan, Fred Geaney, Pat Hession, the brothers Crowe, and Dan Kelleher rendered invaluable service. D.J. Kelly, who was the brains behind the organisation of arranging for the secret dispatching, deserves special mention, although not openly connected with the movement. He is at present Station Master at Cork (Glanmire) Station.

Intelligence communications, being vital to the successful prosecution of the war, it was of the utmost importance that keymen be retained at railway stations, no matter what risks were involved, and, even if they were called upon to pay the supreme penalty, this service had to carry on. The fighting men were in a better position, as they had arms to defend themselves with, while the men in the railway intelligence corps had to work in the dark, alone and unarmed. Hence, I was not allowed to leave the railway service.

DEAD BRITISH SOLDIERS CARRY I.R.A. DISPATCHES.

The holding up and searching of all trains, at various railway stations, by police and military, had become almost a daily feature from July 1920 to July 1921. They were searching for wanted I.R.A. men, and intelligence communications. Drivers, firemen, guards and ticket checkers were subjected

to thorough searches. Every article of their clothing was carefully examined. Therefore, other means had to be devised for outwitting the searchers. Coffins containing bodies of British soldiers who were killed in action were usually sent home to their relatives in Great Britain for burial. It was the practice to forward the corpses via the Rosslare and Fishguard route, from Cork, loaded in mortuary vans. A ticket checker from Waterford named Peter Millea informed me that, on one occasion, an urgent and important dispatch was being sent from Cork to Fermoy, by the Rosslare Train, and the party to whom the dispatch was entrusted, being afraid that it would fall into enemy hands, hit on a novel, though gruesome, idea. He placed it in a coffin which contained the body of a dead soldier. The train was held up and the train crew put through the usual humiliating search, but of course they never opened the coffin of their dead comrade, never dreaming that one of their dead would help the I.R.A. This dispatch reached its destination in safety and was duly delivered to the rightful quarter.

We had a daily collection and dispatch service arranged covering most parts of the country. The dispatches were put into a covering envelope which was simply addressed, George Osbourne, Esq., Mallow, Fermoy, Tralee or Kingsbridge, as the case may be. All our contacts were previously informed that the name of George Osbourne was an indication that the envelope contained I.R.A. dispatches; but one of these letters happened to fall into the hands of the British Secret Service, with the result that they combed the country looking for a man of this name. Other arrangements had then to be made to camouflage the dispatches. An ordinary earthenware flower pot was then procured by D.J. Kelly, which contained growing shrubs. The shrubs and clay were first of all removed, then

the war communications were placed in the pot and the clay and shrubs replaced. This ruse worked admirably for a long time. Empty egg cases, boxes, jars and similar containers were frequently brought into use. The empty containers would make several trips to and from the various stations. Tom Quigley, who had the rank of captain, attached to Kingsbridge Station, Dublin, and John Ambrose, who were conductors on the mail trains running between Cork and Dublin, rendered very valuable services as regards the handling of these dispatches, and Sean Ivers of Cork was responsible for making most of the country contacts, but, unfortunately, he was out of commission for over twelve months. He suffered over a year's imprisonment in Cork and Ballykinlar Camp which was brought about as the result of one of these dispatches falling into enemy hands.

NIGHT MAIL TRAIN HELD UP. LOCOMOTIVE COMMANDEERED.

In order to obtain information regarding the activities of spies and informers, and enemy movements generally, drastic action had to be adopted. Local postmen were periodically held up and relieved of their sacks of mails. All sections of the company were mobilised for this duty. The raids took place on a certain day at an appointed time, which was usually when the first delivery of letters was about to take place. Gus O'Leary was section commander of No. 1 Section which comprised the St. Luke's area; Jerry Guest was section commander of No. 2 - Mayfield - area; Bill O'Mahony of No. 3 - Lower Road - area, and Jerry Twohig of No. 4 - Richmond Hill- area. The seized mail bags were taken to our company headquarters where they were carefully censored under the supervision of the 1st and 2nd Lieutenants and myself, particular attention being paid to those bearing an ON HIS MAJESTY'S SERVICE. By this means a lot of useful information was obtaine

Our next move was to seize correspondence and dispatches intended for Dublin Castle and the various Government Head Offices in Dublin and London. This presented a much more difficult and dangerous problem. The mails were guarded by detectives from the time they left the G.P.O. until they reached the railway station, where other detectives were usually posted. We could expect very little assistance from the post office employees who were civil servants in the pay of the British Crown, but quite a number of these men were Volunteers. Here again, we had to fall back on the railwaymen. Knowing that Mr. J. Smith, stationmaster at Blarney, and his son, Jack, who was also employed at Blarney Station, were supporters of our movement, we decided that Blarney Station, which is situated about five miles from Cork, would be the best place to operate. The 10.6 p.m. night mail train, which conveyed the bulk of the mails, was hauled by two locomotives from Cork to Blarney, one being the train engine and the other a pilot engine. The pilot was provided to assist in pulling this heavy train through Cork tunnel, and it was usually detached from the train at Blarney station and returned light to Cork.

Having gone into all the details for the success of this enterprise, I selected four men to take part in the raid - 1st Lieutenant Duggan, who was a locomotive employee, was included, being able to drive the engine if necessary. Fully armed, we joined the night mail at Cork and travelled as ordinary passengers on a certain night. It was during the summer months of 1920. When the train arrived at Blarney station we alighted and entered the Post Office Mail Van, held up the Post Office officials at the point of our guns, placed two men on guard, then examined the mails and seized two sacks of letters. This work was carried out while the

pilot engine was being detached, and the operation had to be carried out very speedily in order not to attract the attention of any passengers on the train. An alarm of any sort could have very serious results for us. The ticket checker on the train was also a Sinn Feiner, and I learned from him, en route, that a good number of soldiers and police were on board, travelling as ordinary passengers. Some were going to Dublin and others were travelling to connect with the Holyhead steamer for England.

Before leaving the Mail Van, we warned the Post Office officials that if any of them alighted we would have to shoot The mail train then proceeded on its way, minus two sacks of HIS MAJESTY KING GEORGE OF ENGLAND'S MAILS. Our next problem was how to get safely away, as we knew that the affair would be reported to the police at the next stopping station, but all arrangements were well planned in advance. The four of us mounted the pilot engine, bringing the sacks of mail with us, before it left the siding, and the signalman, who was a party to the raid, 'made over the road', thus allowing the engine to return to the main line. We informed the driver and fireman that we were commandeering the locomotive in the name of the I.R.A. and they were now to act under our orders. After receiving the 'green light' from the signalman, the driver got the engine in motion and speedily travelled to an arranged stopping place, which was about one mile from Blarney Station, where we alighted. After warning the driver and fireman that no report whatsoever was to be made of the occurrence, we released them from the services of the I.R.A. and conveyed the captured mails to a pre-arranged 'dump' to be censored at our leisure. We spent most of the following day in censoring the seized mails.

This raid was regarded as a great success, and A/Company men of the I.R.A. had the unique distinction of commandeering a railway locomotive with its driver and fireman to transport valuable documents captured from the enemy. This hold-up of a mail train by I.R.A. men, and the capture of HIS MAJESTY'S MAILS, was a big blow to the British police, and it had a deterrent effect on would-be informers, as they never knew when or how their written communications would fall into I.R.A. hands.

A BLACK AND TAN INSPECTOR EXECUTED.

The cruel death of our beloved Lord Mayor, Terence McSwiney, in Brixton Prison; the diabolical hanging of Kevin Barry, a boy of 18 years of age, in Mountjoy Jail, along with all the other cold-blooded murders of defenceless men and women, which were being perpetrated by the Crown Forces about this time, created such a bitter hatred in our hearts, we now decided to avenge their deaths by every means at our disposal. No mercy was to be shown to the enemy.

In November 1920, a Black and Tan Inspector named Walsh, who was one of those Irishmen in the British forces, was removed from a train at Blarney and given the reward he deserved. A member of the Parcels Office staff at Cork Railway station, named M. Kelly, reported that an armed Black and Tan officer in mufti had entered the Parcels Office and carefully examined the place, at the same time scrutinising all members of the staff. He appeared to be looking for some particular individual as he demanded the names of those present. He spoke of all railwaymen as being Sinn Feiners and referred to them in derogatory terms. I at once reported the matter to our Brigade H.Q. and received peremptory instructions that immediate action should be taken to put this officer permanently out of commission. Inquiries revealed

that he intended travelling to Dublin by the night mail train on a special mission. I contacted Lieutenant D. Duggan and Volunteer Val Ivers, two members of our Active Service Unit The three of us then decided to travel on the same train and alight at Blarney and deal with this man, as instructed.

When we alighted at Blarney station, we entered the compartment in which the Black and Tan was travelling. We told him we were I.R.A. men and disarmed him and removed him from the train, at the same time informing him that he was to be brought before a courtmartial and that if he attempted to escape he would be shot. The night was very dark and a thick fog covered the countryside. As we were proceeding along the road with our prisoner, he suddenly tripped one of the escort, broke away and jumped over a fence into a wood. We immediately opened fire with our revolvers but could not see where we were firing, due to the heavy fog which prevailed. In order to recapture him, a search of the countryside would have to be carried out. Therefore, we decided to call on the captain of the local Volunteer force as a large number of men would be required for this operation. We proceeded with all haste to the captain's house, which was about a mile away, and arrived about 11 p.m. Fortunately, Captain Frank Busteed was at home and we informed him of our predicament. He immediately decided on a general mobilisation of his company and the man-hunt began about 1 a.m.

The district was then combed - woods, fields and farms being searched. The Black and Tan was eventually retaken about 4 a.m. He was found by some of the Blarney men hiding in a cowshed. A Drumhead Courtmartial took place. He was found guilty of being a traitor to his country and he paid the supreme penalty. Great credit is due to Captain

Busteed and his men for the efficient way they handled the situation.

All Crown forces in Cork and District were quickly alerted and the whole force was called upon to take part in a countrywide search which continued over a long period. Beyond the information that their officer joined a train at Cork, no clue could be obtained regarding his mysterious disappearance.

VENGEANCE AGAINST RAILWAYMEN.

The climax of vengeance against Cork railwaymen took place during Curfew hours on the morning of 1st March 1921. A horde of Black and Tan savages descended on the poor, defenceless nightworkers and terrified them beyond description First of all, they fired rifle and revolver shots at random all over the station, smashing doors and windows. They rounded up all they could catch and, after searching them and almost stripping some naked, they beat and bullied them. All the offices were ransacked, boxes and trunks opened and even floor boards rooted up in places.

After they took their departure, a young parcels porter named Charlie Daly was found dead, having been murdered in cold blood. He was badly bruised and beaten and had a bullet wound in the head. He was taken from the office to the mouth of the tunnel, apparently for the purpose of trying to extract information from him. This young railwayman was another martyr for Ireland.

All threats and terror tactics failed to terrorise the gallant railwaymen and only made them more resolute in their efforts to try and drive out the invaders.

INCOME TAX OFFICE AND R.I.C. POLICE BARRACKS DESTROYED

The days of drilling and forming fours in halls were now over and every Volunteer was now regarded as being on active service with guerilla warfare in full swing in Cork City and County. We had no mountains or glens in Cork City to fall back on for safety, and no hideouts or dugouts to which we could retreat. Our meetings had to be held in private houses or publichouses. An arms depot had to be found where we could safely store our guns and ammunition and hold councils of war. We were now well equipped and the war had become very intensive on both sides. The British had now an organised murder gang in existence. It was not uncommon for the members of this gang to enter the houses of known Volunteers and murder them in their beds; so we had to meet force with force. Under a Martial Law Regulation, the names of all persons staying in each house had to be posted up on the door.

Our arms depot was located in a workshop on the banks of the Lee and was situated at the rere of a house owned by a Mr. J. Cantwell, The Fisheries, Lower Road, Cork, adjacent to Cork Harbour Commissioners' Yard. The only means of access to this workshop was from Harbour Commissioners' Yard, or by passing through Mr. Cantwell's house and going through a window in his kitchen. This latter way was less noticeable.

I take this opportunity of placing on record our indebtedness to this worthy gentleman for the great assistance rendered. His son, Jim, looked after the armoury and he also placed his rowing boat at our disposal whenever it was required. Despite the most rigorous searches by the police and military, this dump was never discovered and it survived to the end of the campaign.

War councils and meetings were also held at the house of Mr. Burns, Lower Road, whose three sons, Tom, Denis and Michael, were very active Volunteers attached to our company. The latter was an ex-British soldier who saw service on the fields of Flanders during the World War. The experience gained by him was now turned to advantage in the service of Ireland.

About April 1921, I took part in the destruction of an Income Tax office in Cook Street and we burned down the Lower Road R.I.C. Barracks some days later. Being well known to the local residents, it was necessary for some of us to wear disguises. The latter operation was carried out about 9 a.m. on a Sunday morning when large numbers of people were on the street. First of all, we had to clear out the occupants who consisted of the R.I.C. sergeant's family and some others. The police were after evacuating the building a short time previously. I remember that my disguise was made up of heavy goggles and a small moustache. When I was about to enter the barracks, a youth remarked to his companion: "Charlie Chaplin is going into the barracks". Laden with a few cans of petrol we entered the front door, quickly sprinkled all floors with the liquid, then set them on fire. The whole place was rapidly enveloped in flames, and the efforts of the Cork Fire Brigade, which was summoned to the scene by the former occupants, were of no avail. The action of Volunteer Michael Fitzgerald, in cutting the fire hoses, was very commendable, as the firemen strongly resisted this measure. The destruction of these barracks very much helped to clear our area of people who were supplying information to the British forces concerning our movements.

HAIR-BREADTH ESCAPES.

Hair-breadth escapes were very frequent occurrences with the small I.R.A. columns fighting in the midst of the huge enemy concentrations, armed with every modern device, which included tanks and bloodhounds. I will relate a few instances of what should be considered as almost miraculous escapes from the jaws of death. On a certain Saturday afternoon, orders were issued to all companies operating in Cork city to carry out simultaneous attacks on the British troops, each company column to operate in its own area. The time fixed for the attacks was 4 p.m. sharp. Everything having been perfectly arranged, a column of eight men was detailed to attack a party of military police which were usually stationed at the foot of St. Patrick's Hill. Volunteers O'Mahoney, Teegan, Cantwell and Garrett manned the rowing boat and rowed from the Fisheries to St. Patrick's Bridge, bringing along the guns and ammunition, and were timed to arrive at 3.45 p.m. They were to contact myself and three other men and then proceed to a laneway leading off the Hill. Everything worked out according to plan, so far; but, just as the guns and ammunition had been distributed, bomb explosions and heavy gunfire were heard in the vicinity followed by the roar of Crossley engines. Suddenly a large convoy of soldiers, Black and Tans and Auxiliaries, numbering about 500 men, appeared on the scene. They had come from the military barracks which were only about a few hundred yards away, and also from King St. Police Barracks which was at the other end of the street. The bomb explosions and gunfire, which we had already heard, took place in the Blackpool district close by, the Blackpool Company having prematurely attacked some troops in their area, causing this sudden swoop of the Crown forces. Of course, it is also possible that information of the proposed attacks could have leaked out and

reached the British Intelligence Corps who had spies stationed in almost every street in the City.

When the convoys approached, we were in a lane off Patrick's Hill, just waiting for Shandon clock to strike the zero hour. We now felt as if we were caught in a deadly trap, and my position as captain of the column can be better imagined than described. How were we to break through this ring of steel? Fate came to our assistance just in time. A jarvey car, on which there were two passengers, the driver and some pieces of luggage, came from the direction of Richmond Hill. I emerged from the laneway and halted the car, explained matters to the driver and passengers who all happened to be sympathetic towards the freedom movement. They informed me they were on their way to Glanmire Station to catch a train and, as they had some time to spare, they would travel on foot. They all dismounted but left the luggage on the car, also two copies of the "Evening Echo" which came in handy.

Volunteer Gus Mullins mounted the jarvey's box seat, while Dan Duggan and myself took the places of the passengers. After collecting the guns and ammunition from the other members of the column, I deposited them in the well of the sidecar, dismissed the column and instructed them to separate, each man to work out his own means of escape. The three of us on the sidecar had our revolvers ready for action and prepared to fight to death if held up when passing through the cordon of troops which lay in front of us. Gus Mullins whipped up the horse and when we reached the troops who were lined along St. Patrick's Bridge and blocking all the quays, we dashed against the line and we were more than amazed to find that a passage way was opened for us to get through. They were

apparently under the impression that we were ordinary civilians rushing to catch a train, having observed the luggage which was laden on the vehicle, and both Duggan and I intently engaged, to all outward signs, reading the evening paper. After getting safely through the cordon, the tension of almost certain death was released and we safely reached the railway station. After disposing of our weapons, we left the horse and sidecar at the station, as promised to the jarvey and his passengers. This remarkable escape must be attributed to the wonderful luck which favoured us during the whole campaign.

A somewhat similar example of luck favoured us during early morning curfew hours, about the same period. Orders had been received to shoot Chief Intelligence Agent Kelly of the British forces, whose movements had been watched over a period. We got information that he would be passing through a place called Mahoney's Avenue between 4 and 5 a.m. on a certain morning. Battalion Commandant Sean O'Donoghue, John George McCarthy, myself and another man (whose name I do not now remember) lay in wait at the corner of the avenue expecting this man to appear at any minute. It was during curfew hours, when the troops had full control of the city. A dance was held at the Victoria Barracks this night, and it was the usual practice for Kelly to accompany a friend along this avenue after the dance was over, finishing time being around 4 a.m. While we were waiting, we heard heavy footsteps approaching and, on looking in the direction of the barracks, we saw a large body of fully armed soldiers walking down the avenue in our direction, bent on some morning raiding expeditions. We entered a passage way leading to Hackett's Terrace from which there was no way of escape, and decided

to give battle if the soldiers followed us. The result of such a battle, if it took place, would be death for the four of us. We were caught in a trap. There was no way out. By an extraordinary stroke of luck the military never entered the passage-way. They made a short halt just in front of the passage which was only a couple of yards from where we lay. They then moved off and continued to search the locality. This search lasted for over an hour while we had to lie motionless. We could not disperse until the district was again clear of troops. Fate had decreed that Captain Kelly was not to die that morning and we were spared to carry on our fight for Ireland.

ATTACK ON BLARNEY BARRACKS.

Although the men of A/Company were not actually called upon to do battle on the night of the attack on Blarney Barracks, their task was no less onerous than that of the men who carried out the actual assault. Our duties consisted of blockading the roads at Kilcully, felling trees, etc. The selected position was about halfway between Cork and Blarney. The military barracks was only about three miles from this point. About 400 men all told were employed on protective duty on that night. Our orders were to take all necessary measures to prevent reinforcements from going to the aid of the beleagured garrison of police, to intercept pedestrians and all vehicular traffic, and not to withdraw until the 'all clear was sounded. About 20 men from A/Company were employed at Kilcully. Captain Sean Crowley was in charge and I was second in command. All our men acquitted themselves in a worthy manner which greatly contributed to the success of the enterprise. Huge forces of British troops and police from the nearby barracks spread out in all directions, immediately the S.O.S. was sent out from Blarney Barracks by means of Verey light

signals. Although our men were practically encircled, we all managed to escape by making detours of the countryside and taking devious routes to our homes. A general sweep was made on the houses of known Volunteers shortly afterwards and several men were arrested. Particular attention was being paid to our Brigade H.Q. at Miss Wallace's shop in St. Augustine Street, and it was found necessary to guard the entrance to this street. Lieut. C. O'Brien and myself were selected to act as guard on a couple of occasions.

RAID ON SHANBALLYMORE.

St. Stephen's Day, 1920, witnessed a very narrow shave for my brother and myself. We had spent Christmas Day with the family circle at our old home in Shanballymore and throughly enjoyed the break, which was always a happy re-union of the members of our family. An unofficial truce seemed to have prevailed generally, on both sides, during this Holy Day, but hostilities were resumed with a vengeance next day.

The Shanballymore Company of the Irish Volunteers was a most active one. Two houses were destroyed in the little village as 'official reprisals' for some ambushes which took place in the locality. Some Volunteers were taken prisoners, while others were 'on the run' as being wanted men. Four large military barracks were situated within a radius of twelve miles from the village - Fermoy, Mallow, Kilworth and Buttevant, while a strong military post existed at Castletownroche, which was only three miles away.

It would appear as if information had been given to the British military in Castletownroche.regarding my brother and myself, as two lorries of soldiers arrived in Shanballymore about 11 a.m. on St. Stephen's Day. They halted in front of

our house, when the soldiers dismounted and rushed into the house. My sister Ina, who was a member of the local Cumann na mBan Company, observed the lorries approaching when they were within 100 yards of the house and apprised us of the fact. Without wasting a minute, we dashed out at the back door, scaled a wall, ran a cross the adjoining school-yard and hid in a recess at the back of the Church, where we remained until they withdrew. Being armed with an automatic pistol, I would have sold my life dearly if trapped. My father, mother and the other female members of the family were subjected to a severe cross-examination about the activities of the Sinn Feiners in the village apart from my brother and me. Ignorance was pleaded about everything in the nature of the political activities and the soldiers departed, stating that they would call again.

CORK RAILWAY TUNNEL.

We frequently used the railway tunnel which links Glanmire station with Dublin Hill, Blackpool, which was a very safe means of travelling from town to country when on I.R.A. expeditions, for those who understood railway working. It was also very useful as a hideout. It is 1,340 yards in length and I knew every yard of it. Since the time it was completed, in August 1854, millions of people must have been carried blindly through it in safety and comfort. It was built through hard rock, right through, with four shafts whose respective depths, starting from the north end were 118, 164, 207 and 156 feet. The British military barracks stood directly over it and it also ran under Empress Place Police Headquarters. The latter barracks were only about 60 yards from its mouth.

Dan Duggan, Val Ivers and I walked from end to end of it several times. We were usually protected with our trench coats heavy boots and leggings and also carried pocket torches.

We had to contend with thick smoke, grime, dirt and mud of all descriptions and parts of it always very wet, caused by water dripping from the roof, as well as the condensation of steam and smoke from the numerous locomotives which passed through daily. The gong which signalled the approach of trains was our 'take cover' order, and the light signals therein had to be carefully observed in order to avoid being run down by trains.

Having slept at Dan Duggan's home in Dublin Pike on the night of the Dillon's Cross ambush, I returned to the city on the following say, by means of this tunnel. I was armed with my Smith & Wesson .45 calibre revolver and a hand grenade which I had left over after the ambush. I safely deposited these weapons in a niche in the tunnel before emerging at the railway station.

Commandant Dan Donovan and some members of the brigade staff contemplated the possibility of boring a hole through the reef underneath Empress Place Police barracks with a view to blowing them up with a land mine. Dan Donovan informed me that it was under consideration to build a land mine inside a porter barrel to be used for the purpose, but the project never materialised. By encasing the mine in an ordinary porter barrel, suspicion would be allayed when conveying it from the place of manufacture to the tunnel. Sean O'Keeffe, who belonged to the Engineer's section of our company, and who was employed in the Railway Engineer's workshop, which was situated close to the mouth of the tunnel, made a special study of the topography of the tunnel. Having been built through solid rock, the boring of a hole therein for the placing of the land mine would have been a very difficult job.

Some time previously we carried out a raid on one of the tunnel stores, which was occasionally used as an arms depot by the British military. It had been observed on the previous evening that the Crown Forces had stored a quantity of arms and ammunition in this storeroom. About 12 men were employed in the raid, under the command of Commandant Dan Donovan. We forced open the door and entered the ~~the~~ store hoping to be rewarded with a good haul of guns, etc., but we were sadly disappointed to find that the place was empty. A British sentry was placed on guard near the tunnel for some time afterwards. It was at the mouth of this tunnel that Volunteer Charlie Daly, of the Parcels Office staff, was turtured and murdered by Black and Tans on the morning of March 1st 1921.

AUXILIARY POLICE OFFICERS DISARMED.

Dan Duggan, Jerry O'Mahoney, another Volunteer whose name I do not now remember, and myself happened to be in King Street (now McCurtain St.) about 8.30 p.m. one night when we saw two Auxiliary police officers coming out of the Windsor Hotel. They were in full uniform and carried revolvers openly in their hands. They were both in a most truculent mood and seemed to be fairly well inebriated. They approached a passer-by and gave the order 'Hands up'. After searching and questioning him, they took some letters out of his pocket, which they examined and then threw the letters on the ground and left him pass on. About half a dozen other men were treated in the same fashion. Those hold-ups and searches continued for about half an hour, when they then proceeded towards Parnell Place. The four of us held a council of war and discussed plans of disarming these highway-men. As we were unarmed, we had to move carefully. We decided to work in pairs. Duggan and I arranged to tackle one police officer,

and O'Mahoney and his mate to attack the other officer. We stealthily followed them until we reached a quiet spot at the corner of Parnell Place (where the C.I.E. Bus Depot now stands). I seized the arms of one of the officers from behind and Duggan worked a few Ju-Jitsu tricks, which brought him to the ground. The other Volunteers acted similarly. Duggan whipped the revolver from this man. Leaving him prostrate on the ground, we then ran across Parnell Place passed the Queen's Hotel and headed towards Maylor Street. Loud shouts of 'Help! Help! Robbers! Robbers!' from the fallen Auxiliaries brought a crowd rushing to the scene, amongst them a couple of armed police detectives, who opened fire on us.

When we were running along the pavement in front of the Queen's Hote, I slipped on an orange peel and fell heavily to the ground, when my head struck the kerb, which broke the spectacles I was wearing and inflicted a cut over one eye. I pulled myself together very quickly, got up at once and continued running until I reached the side street. (Duggan assisted me to regain my feet). As we were not followed into the side street, we got safely away after having accomplished the disarming of the Auxiliaries.

The usual police machinery was set in motion immediately concerning this 'outrageous' attack on two of His Majesty's officers in a public street in Cork City. Descriptions of the 'assailants'=were issued to all police stations, but no arrests followed. A report of the affair appeared in the "Cork Daily Examiner" newspaper next morning, with a glaring headline: "AUXILIARY POLICE OFFICERS ATTACKED IN PARNELL PLACE". In the report it was stated that fire was opened on the attackers by the Auxiliary police, one of whom was wounded and seen to fall on the street, when he was picked up by his comrades and taken away.

At this period, the I.R.A. men in the city mainly followed their ordinary occupations during the daytime and, when finished their day's work in the offices and shops, etc., availed of every opportunity to try and break British rule. The highlight of this incident took place at the Glanmire railway station next day. I was in the Booking Office, carrying out my normal day's work, issuing tickets for the 3.30 p.m. Mail train from Cork. About 3.15 p.m., the same two Auxiliary police officers approached the Booking Office window and handed me a railway warrant for two first-class single tickets from Cork to Kilkenny, available for travel by the Mail train. I naturally got a start when I recognised the men we had encountered the previous night, as recognition on their part would have serious consequences for me. I tried to keep out of their view as much as possible, having a piece of sticking plaster over one eye. With their special police training, it should have been an easy matter for them to recognise me, but it apparently never dawned on them that this innocent looking booking clerk was one of the men they were looking for. I issued the tickets with a certain amount of nervousness, and they proceeded to the train.

The information on back of the Railway Warrant revealed that they both had come from Kilkenny to Cork a few days previously for the purpose of attending a Law case. One officer held the rank of a Major and the other a Lieutenant of the British army and were serving as Auxiliary policemen.

PLOT TO SHOOT LLOYD GEORGE AND HIS CABINET MINISTERS.

Lloyd George, British Prime Minister, was responsible for the death of our beloved Lord Mayors, Terence McSwiney and Tomas McCurtain, and the introduction of Martial Law. Wilson,

Commander-in-Chief of the British army, was responsible for the terrible atrocities carried out by the British army. They now turned their attentions to arresting and imprisoning large numbers of Irishmen who were resident in England. The police raided an Irish Hall at Manchester and shot dead an I.R.A. man. Barricades were erected across Downing St., the Houses of Parliament, and the Cabinet Ministers were carefully guarded. Rory O'Connor was sent to Liverpool to accelerate the war effort. Amongst the operations carried out was the destruction of several large warehouses.

Cathal Brugha, Minister for Defence, and Michael Collins now formulated plans for an all out war in England. Foreign Service flying columns were now being organised for the purpose of waging war on the heads of the British Government. Specially trained men were being selected for those columns. Word was sent to country brigades to call for volunteers to go to England, and Cork No. 1 Brigade, amongst others, was asked to provide men. I now held the rank of company captain, Dan Duggan was appointed 1st Lieutenant, Charlie O'Brien was 2nd Lieutenant, Sean McCarthy, adjutant, and Liam Irwin, Quartermaster. When an officer fell sick or went out of commission, the next senior officer was verbally appointed by the battalion commandant to take his place. No written appointments were made, as it was impossible to keep proper written records at this time. All promotions were 'field' promotions.

Dan Donovan, our battalion commandant, approached me and informed me of the formation of Foreign Service flying columns and I immediately volunteered to join same and he informed the Brigade Staff accordingly. Each man who volunteered to join this unit had to pass a strict examination by the Brigade

Commandant. Brigade Commandant of Cork No. 1 was Sean Hegarty, who was a man of fearless and dynamic personality, and a shrewd judge of human character. The interviews took place at our brigade headquarters at St. Augustine Street, Cork. Three volunteers had been recommended and I was the first to be interviewed. After Sean Hegarty pointed out the hardships that may have to be endured, he asked me if I had my mind fully made up regarding this expedition; when I assured him that I had given the matter careful consideration, and being pledged to fight for the freedom of Ireland and, if necessary, to die in the fight, I was prepared for any eventuality that might arise. He stressed that any leakage of information, under any circumstances, would have disastrous results, and no information concerning the proposed operations was to be given to anybody, not even to members of my own company. He then informed me that plans were under consideration to carry out an attack on the British House of Commons, and to try and shoot Lloyd George and the Cabinet Ministers. He again asked me if I was fully prepared to take all the risks involved and, if not, I could withdraw from the flying column there and then, without any reflection whatsoever being held against me. The odds against us would be about 1000 to 1. Being fully satisfied about everything, I was then dismissed from his presence and was told to wait outside his office while he interviewed the other men. Each man was called before him separately, when he was put through the same test. The other two men were Lieutenants Stephen Foley (alias McAllister) and Martin Donovan of the Blarney St. Company. We were recalled together and informed that our next move would be to report to the Minister for Defence, Cathal Brugha, in Dublin, at Vaughan's Hotel, on the following Sunday, from whom we would receive final instructions, setting out all details of the plans.

In case I would not see my parents and the other members of my family again, and in order to put some private affairs in order, I managed to pay a short visit to my home in Shanballymore. The only information I gave to my people was that I was booked for a rather dangerous mission and to pray for its success. On the appointed Sunday, which was during the month of October 1920, the three of us reported again at Brigade H.Q. where Brigade Transport Officer, Jim Grey, was waiting for us in his motor car. He drove us to Blarney station, as it was not safe to entrain at Cork station - detectives and intelligence officers being regularly on duty at the latter station. After a firm shake hands from Jim Grey, and a Baile Dhia Oraibh, we boarded the 12.10 p.m. train in which we secured a compartment to ourselves. Although we three were members of the Cork No. 1 Brigade, strange as it may seem, we had not met each other prior to the setting up of this foreign legion. Three of us had actually taken part in the attack on Blarney R.I.C. Barracks, but, in view of the fact that there were actually over 400 men engaged in this operation, it is easy to understand how we were not previously acquainted. Only a small number actually took part in the attack, while about 400 men were employed on protection duty.

Having been brought together under such thrilling circumstances, a fast and endurable friendship was at once formed between us. We placed full confidence and trust in each other and were prepared to die for each other if necessary We seemed to be of the same dare-devil character and were tuned up to meet any emergency that might arise. We were very light-hearted and all single men, with no cares or worries. On leaving the little village of Blarney behind, with its exciting memories, we could not help singing a very popular song which was very general at the time: "Where the Blarney Roses grow"

and its parody: "Can anybody tell me where did General Lucas go". General Lucas had been captured by Sean Moylan's brigade during the previous summer.

We exchanged stories of our adventures in the fight, to pass the time away in the long train journey. I told of my escapes in Blarney and elsewhere. Stephen Foley, then known as McAllister, a name he adopted after being transferred from the Dublin Brigade to the Cork Brigade a couple of years previously, recounted his exploits on the night of the destruction of the Blarney R.I.C. Barracks. He told us of the dreadful predicament he was in when he fell through an opening he had made in the roof of what appeared to him as the R.I.C. Barracks. He explained how the powerful explosive which was used for the purpose of breaking down the dividing wall between Smith's Hotel and the barracks was ineffective. inasmuch as it failed to break an opening sufficiently wide to admit the attacking party. The attack was made from Smith's Hotel. He then climbed on top of the hotel roof to try and force an opening in the barrack roof and pour petrol into the building. After mounting the hotel roof with his can of petrol, he was moving along on top when, suddenly, a portion collapsed and he fell into a room. He was immediately pounced upon by two men and roughly handled. Visibility was almost nil, due to clouds of smoke and dust all over the room, caused by the explosion. He was covered with grime from the fallen slates. It was only after he shouted during the struggle that his attackers recognised his voice. Not knowing whether he fell into the police barrack or the hotel, he was of opinion that the men who held him were R.I.C. men, and they, in turn, thought they had captured an R.I.C. man. When they all recognised each other, they had the heartiest laugh of their lives.

Martin Donovan told us that the most thrilling experience

of his life was on the occasion of the release of Donnchadh MacNeilus from Cork Gaol on 11th November 1918. He was one of a party of six men who entered His Britannic Majesty's Male Prison in Cork and played a big part in this historic release. Himself and another Volunteer named Joe Murphy knocked a prison warder unconscious with blows of sandbags. He said no words could d escribe his feelings when they found themselves locked in the Prison Waiting Room and again when they met a party of armed soldiers entering the prison just at the time they were emerging with the released prisoner. Fortune favoured the brave again in this case and everything worked out according to plan. The rescuers brought away the keys of the prison and he said that the most valuable souvenir he possessed was one of these keys, which he had securely cemented into a wall at the back of his home in Blarney Street, Cork. It was carefully wrapped in oilcloth and secured between two bricks. We also talked about the tortures some of our men were subjected to when taken prisoner by the Crown forces, for the purpose of trying to extract information from them.

A party of Black and Tans captured six of our men at The Kerry Pike, Cork. They cut out one Volunteer's tongue because he would not talk; cut off another boy's nose; battered the skull of another; cut out the heart of the fourth lad, and the remaining two were tortured unto death. Brigadier Tom Hales of Bandon had his finger nails crushed by a pincers, one by one, in an effort to make him talk,while his friend, Volunteer Harte, was tortured to such an extent that he was driven insane and committed to a lunatic asylum. Another torture device was to put a prisoner against a wall with a loaded revolver to his forehead, slowly count ten and ask him at each interval would he now divulge the names of his superior

officers, etc. Pricking with bayonets, beating, twisting arms, etc. were regular features of their investigations. Hundreds of our men had suffered the unpleasant experiences of these tortures.

When thinking and talking of these things, we were wondering if we would have the courage to stand up to such treatment. We read in the Sunday paper that Lloyd George was billed to address a public meeting in Cardiff about this time and, being aware that there were a good number of Irish sympathisers in that city, we were of opinion that it would be a fairly easy job to pick him off by means of rifles, and we were hoping that this would be our first venture.

After an uneventful journey of over five hours, we reached the capital and proceeded to Vaughans Hotel, Parnell Square, as instructed. That historic hotel played a very big part in our freedom movement. Everything appeared to be normal in the hotel, people coming and going in the usual way. After entering the hotel, we sat in the smoke-room and quickly got in touch with the person to whom we were directed, and whose name I do not now remember. We were then ushered into a private room at the back, where we were supplied with refreshments. We arrived about 7.30 p.m. and, about 9 p.m., the Minister for Finance, Michael Collins, entered, accompanied by a couple of officers. Addressing the three of us, he said: "You are the men from Cork, I was expecting ye". Shortly afterwards, Cathal Brugha, Minister for Defence, arrived. Both of them gave us a very cordial greeting, and Michael Collins treated us to a bottle of Guinness. After asking some questions about the situation in the south, making particular reference to our brigadier, he remarked that once we passed the test by Sean Hegarty we were fit for anything.

He then passed a joke "that our guns must be well notched".

In contrast to Michael Collins, the Minister for Defence, Cathal Brugha, spoke in an austere manner and emphasised the dangers and trials with which we might have to contend. He held that men who issued the orders were the men who were responsible.

The plot to kill the Prime Minister of England, if brought to fruition, might have world-wide repercussions, he said, but it had now become a "war to the knife" by both sides. We were greatly impressed by the frankness and sincerity of Cathal Brugha and assured him that he could fully depend upon us to use every endeavour to carry out any task that might be allotted to us. We would have to undergo a special course of training for three or four days in Dublin before going to England. We would have to learn all about codes and the system of communications, as well as names and addresses of contacts, etc. After landing on English soil we would be known by numbers, not names, and would carry no papers or documents of any description; therefore, everything would have to be memorised. Cathal Brugha was to make all military arrangements, and Michael Collins would look after financial matters.

During the next few days we devoted all our thoughts and energies to the tasks that lay ahead of us. We saw Austin Stack, Dick McKee, J.J. Walsh and our own adjutant, Florrie O'Donoghue of Cork No. 1 Brigade, at the hotel.

On the following Thursday night, Michael Collins again interviewed us and, to our great disappointment, we were informed that the proposed trip to England was postponed indefinitely, due to a new set of circumstances which had arisen, and if and when it was decided to go ahead with the

plans, we would again be notified through the Cork Brigade Council. We were not then informed of the r eason for the change in plans, but subsequently learned that it was due to an offer of a truce from Lloyd George. An unexpected visit from the Most Rev. Dr. Clune of Australia took place, with an offer of a truce from Mr. Lloyd George. Having now been informed that the British Government was anxious to enter into peace negotiations, special meetings at top level had to be called to deal with the matter. A second meeting between Archbishop Clune and Lloyd George took place on 9th December 1920, but, owing to the breakdown of the negotiations, the war was renewed and intensified. But, seeing that Lloyd George was now anxious to try and bring about a truce, a personal attack on him was completely ruled out.

I returned to Cork on the Friday night of that week and reported back to Brigade H.Q. Martin Donovan returned next day. Stephen Foley, whose home address was at Deansgrange, Blackrock, was asked to remain over in Dublin for a few days as he might be wanted for some "special" jobs in Belfast. He took the opportunity of visiting his home, having been granted a few days' leave. I did not meet Stephen Foley again until after the termination of hostilities. Martin Donovan was subsequently sent to New York to deal with a Cork Volunteer who had turned informer and got away to the U.S.A. After duly carrying out his orders he returned to Cork.

THE AUXILIARIES.

It became clear that after the breakdown of Peace negotiations that Lloyd George made an all-out effort to smash the I.R.A. Finding that his army, R.I.C. and Black and Tans were unable to cope with the situation, he set up a new force called "Auxiliary Police". They were a fine smart

body of men, of splendid physique and appearance. They wore army officers' khaki tunics with Glengarry bonnets worn at an angle. They were equipped with revolvers, strapped on the knee cowboy fashion. Each man also carried a rifle and they were the best paid men in the services. They were provided with Crossley tenders, one of the latest type machine guns being carried in each tender. These men were all ex-British army officers fresh from the battlefields of World War I, and specially picked to fight the I.R.A. They were most unscrupulous and had no regard for life or property.

"K" Company of the Auxiliaries had been stationed in Cork Military Barracks since October 1920, and their foul deeds of murder, rapine and arson will never be forgotten by the citizens of Cork. These fiends violated all international laws of warfare. They had no respect for women or children, and not even the sanctity of the Red Cross was respected. They used their prisoners as hostages, some of whom they murdered and tortured. They set fire to two large warehouses in Cork about this time, The Modern and the Blackthorn House. They burst down a wine and spirit store in Pine St. The only 'crime' committed by the owner was that his name was in Gaelic letters on the facia board. I happened to be staying at that historic house of Mr. D. Kelleher in Leitrim Street on the night that the Pine St. premises (Coghlain's) was burnt. Kelleher's was the house where Donnchadh MacNeilus made his epic fight. It is almost directly opposite Coghlain's. Jerry Twohig, section commander of No. 4 section, was also staying at Mr. Kelleher's house. We saw a Red Cross ambulance draw up in front of the shop door after curfew hour. Then a squad of about six Auxiliaries alighted from this Red Cross van and broke down the door by means of crowbars. They then

entered the shop and brought out large quantities of foodstuffs tobacco and spirits and loaded same in the van. They broke open a paraffin oil container, sprinkled the oil around the shop and set fire to the place. After their departure, we telephoned to the Fire Brigade and the firemen quickly responded to the call, but as the flames had already spread over most of the building, little could be done to save the premises.

DILLON'S CROSS AMBUSH

The brigade had now issued orders to all Volunteer companies in the city to strike at this new force on every possible occasion and to show no mercy to the "Auxiliaries". A/Company was the first company to ambush these troops. Firstly we carried out a careful survey of our area in order to find out a suitable position from which to launch an attack. After various positions were examined, we decided that Brian Dillon's Cross would be the most favourable. This is a four-road Cross only a few hundred yards from the Victoria Barracks, now Collins Barracks. Having observed the movements of the Auxiliaries, it was noted that two lorries of these men usually left the barracks about 8 p.m. every night on marauding expeditions. It was the usual practice for the lorries to travel to the centre of the city and commence their operations by holding up and searching the citizens, frequently robbing people of their possessions. They travelled via the Old Youghal Road and Ballyhooley Road, which meant taking a V-shaped turn at Brian Dillon's Cross. In order to negotiate this sharp turn in safety, it was necessary to slow down to about five miles per hour, which would be to our advantage. We selected this point for the attack, even though it was actually outside the door of their stronghold.

On Wednesday, 8th December 1920, about 15 well-armed men under the command of Sean O'Donoghue, battalion officer, were picked to take part in the proposed ambush. Bob Langford was second in command. Positions were taken up in a field adjoining Dillon's Cross at 8 p.m. A scout was placed on the roadway whose instructions were to signal the approach of the enemy by blowing a whistle, one blast for each lorry. We heard numerous lorries of military passing to and fro, but the Auxiliaries made no appearance on that night. They probably went in the opposite direction, as the city could also be reached by another route. After what appeared to be an interminable hour of waiting and watching, we had to disperse, in order to reach home before curfew hour, which was 10 p.m. At least 1000 troops would pour out of the Victoria Barracks at this hour and would take over complete control of the city. All our men got safely away, but it would appear as if the military got some information of the abortive attempt that had been made, for, several nights afterwards, they kept a special watch at Dillon's Cross. Houses were searched and civilians standing or loitering around the Cross were held up. This district was a stronghold of the Crown forces. In one terrace alone, Frankfield View, about eight families of R.I.C. men resided. These people were the eyes and ears of the Crown forces.

In view of these developments, it was considered unwise to employ the original number of men to take part in the second attempt. Therefore, it was decided at the next meeting of the Brigade Staff to reduce the number from 15 to 6 men. The date was fixed for Saturday, 11th December, and the hour 7.30 p.m. The night was bright with a heavy frost falling. Six picked men assembled as arranged, armed with Mills bombs,

revolvers and a good supply of ammunition. Sean O'Donoghue, who was battalion commandant at the time, was in charge of the party, and I was second in command as captain of A/Company. Volunteer Michael Kenny took up his position on the roadway to act as scout. The other Volunteers who took part in the ambush were: Mick Baylor, Jim O'Mahoney and Gus O'Leary. We took up our positions in the same field as we were the first night. Just at 8 p.m. we heard two blasts of a whistle from our scout, which indicated that two lorries of Auxiliaries had left the nearby barracks. This was the signal to 'get ready'. As the lorries slowed down on nearing Dillon's Cross, Sean O'Donoghue gave the order "Ready - Fire". We hurled our 'eggs' into the lorries and quickly followed up the attack by a rapid discharge of revolver shots. The two lorries swerved and ditched. Wounded and screaming Auxiliaries could be seen on the roadway. We learned afterwards that at least one was killed and twelve seriously injured. Those of the party, numbering about 20, who were not wounded opened fire against us with their rifles. The din of battle quickly reached the ears of the nearby garrison who rushed to the aid of their men. Ambulances were supplied to remove the dead and wounded. It was now a fight of six I.R.A. men against hundreds of well-armed British troops; therefore, we had no alternative but to beat a hasty retreat. Powerful searchlights were at once brought into play which illuminated the whole district. The field from which the attack was launched was almost electrified with shots from rifles and machine guns. The British were evidently of the opinion that a large number of I.R.A. men were engaged in the attack.

It was now a case of every man for himself to try and make a safe getaway. Under cover of darkness, and hugging

the walls, we ran towards Goulding's Glen and reached it in safety. A large stream ran through the Glen. This was swollen by the winter rains. We crossed the bridge over the stream and got away into the open country near Blackpool. I stayed at the house of Lieut. D. Duggan's father on that eventful night. A thorough search of the whole locality followed. Bloodhounds were used in the search, but all their efforts to trace us failed.

Hell,was then let loose on Cork city. The vendetta commenced about 10 p.m. Numerous public buildings, shops, offices and private homes were burned down. Innocent people were taken prisoner and tortured. Two men were murdered in their beds. The whole force of Auxiliaries, accompanied by Black and Tans and soldiers, were let loose on the city. Drink was looted from premises before setting fire to them. Some extent of the burnings could be judged from the fact that the Civic authorities found it necessary to summon assistance from the Dublin Fire Brigade. This Brigade heroically responded to the call and arrived in the southern capital on the following day by a special train when there was still hours of strenuous work awaiting them. The damage to Cork on that night was estimated at £3,000,000.

A few days later, tanks were brought into action in the name of 'official reprisal'. Houses of prominent I.R.A. men and sympathisers living in the area were demolished, and the walls around Dillon's Cross levelled to the ground. Following this ambush, we received a bewildering blow from our Church authorities to the great joy of the King's troops. Rev. Dr. Cohalan pronounced sentence of ex-communication on those of us who had carried out this attack. This action made matters very difficult for us, but there was no turning

back now. Surrender to the British forces would simply mean death and dishonour. The fight had to continue and the devastation of our lovely city only made us more bitter and more determined to carry on until these English monsters were driven from our land. Looking at the terrible scene of destruction on the following day, I asked myself: "Was our war for freedom worth the price we were asked to pay, and what about the Bishop's ex-communication decree". After carefully considering the matter, I satisfied my conscience that we were right. The Bishop referred to secret societies and the I.R.A. did not come under this heading. I thought of our Lord Mayor who died in Brixton Prison after 73 days hunger strike, and his noble words: "It is not those who can inflict most, but those who can suffer most, will emerge victorious". The thought of being deprived of Christian burial, in fact being buried like a dog, for serving our country in her hour of need, had a depressing effect on some of our men and, to make matters worse, the traitorous Irishmen who were fighting to uphold foreign rule in our native country were to be regarded as decent Christians in the eyes of our Bishop, as he did not include these men in his Decree. As far as the Decree was concerned, our Brigade Chaplain, Father Dominick, put our minds at rest by a suitable explanation of the matter.

REPRISALS AND COUNTER-REPRISALS.

Reprisals and counter-reprisals were now the order of the day. For every I.R.A. man's home that was destroyed by the British forces, two loyalists' houses were sent up in flames by the I.R.A. An order was issued by our brigade to destroy two large mansions in our area, and they were duly consigned to the flames. The British forces seized motor cars, motor cycles and even push bicycles from anybody professing the

Sinn Fein doctrine, or any known sympathisers. Permits had now to be obtained from the British police to use any motor vehicle, and they were only granted to the loyalists in the martial law area. The I.R.A. retaliated by commandeering motor cars and motor cycles held by these loyalists. A/Company seized three motor cars. Volunteer Jack Teegan was appointed company transport officer and rendered wonderful service in our transport section.

On the morning of 26th February 1921, six I.R.A. prisoners of war were executed in Cork by the Crown forces and twelve British soldiers paid the death penalty on the streets of the city that same night as an I.R.A. reprisal. Orders were issued by our Brigade O/C. that a general attack was to be made by all companies in the city on British soldiers on the night of 8th February. Each company was to operate in its own area. Our little column swung into action at once. We proceeded from our headquarters in the Lower Road in the direction of the Victoria Military Barracks. Martial law was then in operation; therefore, all troops were on active service. When we reached a place called Hayes's Lane, not far from the British H.Q., we encountered some soldiers. Taking the enemy by surprise, we opened fire and, after leaving two dead on the ground, we withdrew without suffering any loss. Amongst the men who took part in this action were Lieutenants Duggan and Charlie O'Brien, Volunteers Michael Fitzgerald, T. Cantwell and Christie Crowe. Ten other British soldiers were shot down in our city by other companies. Further British reprisals followed this action which were again returned with interest. Thus the war carried on to the bitter end.

A PRISONER AT LAST.

A certain British spy, named Stephens, was observed travelling around the city in British military lorries during curfew hours, for the purpose of guiding the Crown forces to the houses of any Volunteers that he knew. He was attending the Cork University as a student, through which means he was able to collect valuable information for the enemy. I received orders from the Brigade O/C. that this man was to be put permanently out of commission. Lieut. Charlie O'Brien and another Volunteer, whose name I cannot now remember, accompanied me to a position in the proximity of the University close to the entrance gate. His movements had been previously observed and we were aware that it was his usual practice to pass this particular point. Stephens duly alighted from a tramcar and proceeded to the University, which building was practically adjoining Cork Male Prison. Just as we were about to take him into custody, a couple of lorries of soldiers and police appeared on the scene, evidently on their way into the gaol. The lorries came to a halt and Stephens managed to get away. We then quickly retreated to a back street, having been pursued by the police, but we evaded capture. This incident happened at 9 a.m. Of course, the matter was fully reported to police and military headquarters and my movements were carefully watched. From that time onwards I was a marked man and my only chance of escape was to leave the city and join a country flying column, which I had in contemplation, but I was taken prisoner before I could do so.

CAPTURED.

June 14th, 1921. It was a glorious day in mid-summer. I felt very elated at the prospect of bringing off a sustained coup for A/Company. Most of our previous exploits had been mainly of the lightning type. We had plans completed for a

big ambush on a patrol of Tans whose daily beat brought them through a place called Silverspring Lane, Tivoli. We considered this lane as an ideal place for such a venture. The hills on both sides were heavily wooded, which would provide ample cover for our men. About 30 fully armed Tans passed through it every evening. We were only awaiting sanction from our Brigade O/C. Fate had decreed otherwise, however.

At 11 o'clock on that lovely morning, I was in the Parcels Office at the Glanmire Station when two British Intelligence officers, in mufti, entered. I knew I was caught in a trap. I had no way of escape, being taken unawares. The railway station had been surrounded by military and police. I was placed under arrest and marched from the station to the nearby Tan Barracks at Empress Place, under a heavy escort. When climbing the long flight of stone steps leading from the Lower Road to Empress Place, I felt that my race was run. I thought of the Manchester Martyrs climbing up another rugged stair. I looked back towards the station to see some of my colleagues and fellow Volunteers at the station waving farewell.and good luck to me. I now had to fight a lone battle unarmed. It was obvious that I was in for a rough time.

Heavy fighting was taking place in most parts of the country at that time. The enemy was being attacked on all sides. The Dublin Custom House was burnt down a short time previously. The temper of the Crown forces was very high. When I was taken into the police barracks I was handed over to the Tans by the military, as a temporary arrangement, the British Intelligence Officer - Lieut. Dove - remarking that he would call back for me later. I was roughly pushed into an office. A sergeant was sitting at a desk and when he left his

chair and approached me, demanding my name and address in a very threatening attitude. I gave him the required information which he wrote in his record book. He then ordered two of his men to search me. They removed my coat, vest and shoes. We had strict orders from G.H.Q. to remain silent during interrogations and to refuse to recognise the enemy Courts. Next questions were: "Are you a member of the I.R.A.? Another one of the Murder Gang? Where were you born? How old are you? What occupation do you hold? Where does your father reside?

Knowing that the military officers were calling back for me again, I played for time and informed the interrogators that I would not answer any questions until my solicitor was present. I then asked them to telephone to Mr. Maurice Healy's office on the South Mall, and inform Mr. Tim Healy that I required his assistance, knowing that they had reason to fear this able counsellor, Mr. Tim Healy, K.C. The mention of his name seemed to have a calming effect on them and, instead of telephoning to the solicitor, the sergeant communicated with his Superintendent. While the conversation was taking place Lieut. Dove re-entered the office. I was then handcuffed and removed to a military lorry which was waiting outside, in which I was conveyed to Victoria Military Barracks. This was a great relief to me, because the military treated their prisoners in a much more humane fashion than the Tans or Auxiliaries. Of course, some very brutal cases came to light, but these were the exceptions. Before leaving Empress Place, the military took possession of my belongings which had been taken from me by the police.

The lorry halted outside the main gates of the military barracks which were then opened by a sentry and our party

admitted. All alighted from the lorry and an orderly wrote down the usual particulars. I was then un-handcuffed and escorted to the Intelligence Office where I was again searched and subjected to a brutal interrogation by three Intelligence officers. Your name? Your address? Your occupation? Are you a Sinn Feiner? Did you take part in any of the attacks against our forces? What do you know about Sinn Fein dispatches being sent on railway trains? What business had you and three other Sinn Feiners outside the Cork University at 9 a.m. on a certain morning? etc., etc.

They had information that I was prominent in the movement and that I held the rank of an officer. It now became quite clear to me that spy Stevens had given information against me and that I was in for serious trouble. Apart from giving my name and address, I again claimed privilege not to answer any questions until my solicitor was present. I again asked to be allowed to communicate with Mr. Healy, solicitor, South Mall, and referred to Mr. Tim Healy, K.C. as my uncle (which was not the case - this was only a ruse on my part) and it apparently worked and probably saved me from being sent to the torture chambers. The fear of this clever counsellor being called to defend me in Court and also the publicity of the matter must have frightened Stevens from making an appearance.

I was abruptly told that this was a military inquiry and under Martial Law they had a means of making me talk. The interrogation lasted about half an hour, during which time I kept pressing to have my 'uncle' called on the case. The Intelligence officers also seemed to be anxious to have some witness brought on the scene and, although his name was not mentioned at the time, I had a feeling that they were

going to produce Stevens. I was then dismissed from their presence and informed that I would be dealt with later.

After leaving the Intelligence Office Inwas taken to a prison cell where I was kept in solitary confinement for three days and nights. The weather was exceptionally warm so that bed clothes did not bother me. The only ventilation in the cell was a small window which was about ten feet from the groun and strongly protected with iron bars. The only furniture in the cell was the plank bed on which there was one army blanket. In order to 'cheer' up the occupants who passed through this cell, a notice was crudely hand-printed on the wall over the door - "ALL WHO ENTER HERE ARE DOOMED MEN". This was evidently done for a joke by some of the soldiers who were guarding the prison. I slept very little on those nights as I was expecting visits from the Intelligence officers, who frequently took out their prisoners during the late hours for further interrogations, but for some inexplicable reason they did not interfere with me at night. The thought of the ordeals that confronted me did not help to induce sleep. Realising that if any of the various charges which could be brought against me were proved, torture, the firing squad, then the release by death, would be my end, I prayed that I would be strong enough to stand up to them all.

At the end of the third day I was removed from the cell and taken before the Official Photographer. I was compelled to pose for a photograph in different positions, and this was followed by the taking of my fingerprints. When these operations were over, I was removed to a place called THE CAGE. This place consisted of three large military huts surrounded by several rows of barbed wire entanglements with armed sentries patrolling around it day and night. After being three days in

solitary confinement and enduring the stuffiness of the filthy cell, I felt as if I had entered paradise. There were about 150 prisoners in the Cage - roughly 50 in each hut. It was situated in the barrack square. Several familiar faces greeted me. I renewed acquaintance with men I had not seen for years, among them being my old friend Michael O'Grada from Castletownroche, who taught me my native language in my young days. Being an Irish teacher, he was a marked man and suffered very much at the hands of the enemy. Marty O'Sullivan and his brother Peter, Charlie Brown, Mick Leahy and several other old friends of mine were prisoners in this camp.

This camp was erected as an emergency measure and was more or less a clearing station. Most of the men were arrested on suspicion and their records were subsequently investigated. If evidence could be produced that any of them took part in actions against the Crown forces they were then courtmartialled and sentenced by the Military Courts. In most cases they were sent to internment camps without any trial. Spike Island was the destination of large numbers who passed through. The camp was built to accommodate about 40 prisoners in each of the three huts and as their stay was usually of short duration, no beds were provided. During the three weeks that I was detained there about 1000 prisoners passed through its gates.

We slept on low trestles on which were placed three or four boards. The number of boards depended on the number of prisoners that had to be catered for. Large numbers of curfew-breakers, tramps, down-and-outs and adventurers were brought in nightly, during curfew hours, and simply bundled into the huts. This made matters very unpleasant for the regular occupants as they had to get up out of their so-called beds and

share their beds with the newcomers. I was attached to No. "I" dormitory. I remember a couple of lines of a poem that was composed by one of our wits who was a sleeping partner, which was indeed very appropriate. It dealt with one of these nocturnal invasions: an order from the sergeant

> "Now open that blinkin' door and in pours ten lodgers for Hut No. One".

The newcomers were all screened next morning in the hope of finding some wanted I.R.A. man, and the tramps, down-and-outs and unwanted men were released. Amongst those brought in at night was an occasional spy, but we usually had not much trouble in spotting the spotters, and they got rather rough treatment, which hastened their release. Military matters were never discussed with strangers and I.R.A. prisoners generally were very guarded in their conversations as the smallest leakage would lead to trouble. The spies were specially planted for the purpose of seeking information regarding ambushes, etc. On the whole, life in these huts was not bad.

The food which was supplied was fairly good and we were allowed to receive parcels from outside friends. I must place on record the kindness of my former landlady, Miss Mary Farrell of Lower Road, with whom I was staying at the time of my arrest. This lady walked up the steep hill to the barracks with food and cigarettes almost daily. She was one of those fine types of Irishwomen who bravely faced the perils of the time. No visitors were allowed near the camp and all letters were strictly censored.

The most unpleasant feature of this camp life was the verminous condition of some of the blankets which, no doubt, was due to the dirty condition of some of the down-and-outs, tramps, etc. who were brought in at night. Some of these

blankets were actually walking with vermin and had to be frequently 'deloused'. Reveille was sounded at 7 a.m. and lights out at 10 p.m. We had some very enjoyable sing-songs and dances, and Micheal O'Grada held Irish classes. These activities brightened camp life considerably for us. I remember one lad we called "The man from the Daily Mail", as this was his favourite song; another was "Bold Phelim Brady". As some of our men supplied wrong names and addresses when arrested, we had to be very careful about calling a man by his surname. In common with most men in our unhappy position, we were always plotting and planning some means of escape, but nobody was left there sufficiently long to bring the plans to fruition. Detention in this camp seldom exceeded a couple of weeks.

The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass was offered up in one of our huts every Sunday morning by the Military Chaplain. "Solitaries" were brought up from their cells to attend Mass. Commandant Mick Murphy was amongst those unfortunate men. I saw him being marched up the centre of the Mass hut with a soldier on each side of him and nobody was allowed to go near him. He seemed to have been singled out for very severe punishment, apart from solitary confinement. No newspapers were allowed into the camp, but the fresh prisoners who arrived almost daily, to replace those who had been sent to Spike Island, Ballykinlar, etc., kept us supplied with up-to-date war news.

Taking all circumstances into consideration, everything went along fairly smoothly for me for the first couple of weeks, but one always had the feeling that his turn was not far off. There was always a feeling of anxiety as to what was in store for us. The daily parting with sincere friends had, naturally, a depressing effect on us. The usual procedure was for a

sergeant to enter the Cage, call out the names of some wanted men who were removed there and then, no information being given of the business for which they were required or of their destinations. I remember Mick Leahy being released about 1 p.m. on a certain Friday, and the very next night the murder gang called at the hotel where he was staying - (Wren's Hotel, Winthrop Street) - They asked to see Mr. Michael Leahy and when he appeared they immediately opened fire on him with revolvers. Thinking that he was shot dead, they took their departure. This man was very badly wounded, but regained his health after a long illness.

I.R.A. PRISONERS AS HOSTAGES.

The war was now being conducted with the utmost ferocity on both sides. An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth seemed to be the motto. To combat the I.R.A. attacks, the British now resorted to a very despicable practice. I.R.A. prisoners were taken out of the camps and carried in the lorries as 'hostages'. In several cases these 'hostages' never returned. Their dead bodies were found on the road-sides, riddled with bullets. The explanation given in every case by the soldiers was 'shot when trying to escape'.

In order to tighten up matters in this respect, orders were issued that all hostages should be chained to the lorries so that they could not attempt an escape. It was now a case of the poor hostage being between the devil and the deep sea. If the lorry returned safely, everything was in order; but if it was ambushed by the I.R.A. the poor hostage had no chance of escape. Hostages were mainly used when the lorries were being sent out on some important business. I had THE unpleasant experience of being used as a hostage three times. On each occasion I was handcuffed and then chained to a Hotchkiss machine gun.

I was in the custody of soldiers of the Hampshire Regiment on two occasions, and, in fairness to these men, I must say they showed me no hostility; they even shared cigarettes with me. The third time I was sent out with men of the Cameron Regiment, when the treatment meted out to me was the very opposite. In fact, I was lucky to come back alive. This incident must be attributed to a rather indiscreet act on the part of a Volunteer from my own company, and this Volunteer also endangered his own life.

The lorry in which I was a hostage was passing through Patrick Street when Volunteer Nicholas Power observed me and paid me the honour of a military salute. The officer in charge observed the salute, when he shouted to his driver to slow down. The soldiers were all very jittery at this time. They never knew when a bomb would be hurtled against them. The Scottish officer in charge seemed to be very bitter against the I.R.A. He was evidently of opinion that they were about to run into an ambush. He addressed me, saying: "I suppose that bastard would have thrown a bomb at us if you were not here". "Did you ever throw bombs into our lorries? How many of our men did you shoot? We will wipe out every bloody Sinn Feiner before this business is all over! What rank do you hold in the I.R.A.? " Several other questions followed. I decided that the wisest policy for me to adopt was to remain silent. When he could elicit no reply from me he then flew into a rage and pressed his revolver against my ribs, saying that he would make me talk. The soldiers in the lorry simply looked on complacently. They numbered about 15. We were on our way to Ballincollig military barracks on some important business. When I found the revolver being pushed against my ribs, I finally spoke up and told him to fire away, after I had said

a few prayers. I was thinking that it was just as easy to die that way as to face a firing squad which could have been my ultimate end. To my great surprise, he suddenly changed his tactics and adopted a more friendly turn. We were nearing Ballincollig at the time. He withdrew his revolver, stating that I was a plucky 'blighter'. He then offered me a cigarette which I accepted with a certain amount of relief. He then became more friendly and spoke again about the I.R.A. On our return journey he informed me that he had no animosity towards the Irish, but he had to do his duty and he wished this business was all over. His only regret was that the I.R.A. would not come out into the open and fight them face to face.

IDENTIFIED BY A SPY.

Captain Kelly, Lieutenant Dove and other Intelligence officers frequently visited the Cage looking for victims. It was a glorious morning about the end of June 1921 when these officers again came into the camp. This time they were accompanied by spy Stevens. The sergeant read out a list of names of 12 men, my name being included. The twelve of us were then lined up for an identification parade. I knew very well that this was only a matter of form and that I was the person that was wanted. There was no way out of this predicament, so we had to line up as directed. I simply had to make a brave stand. Having had plenty of time to consider the matter, and having been well toughened by the war, I was now prepared for the worst. The spy was ordered to pick out his 'bird of prey'. As a matter of routine, he walked up and down the line without scarcely looking at anybody. He was under the gaze of all the prisoners in the camp and, no doubt, he realised his position as a traitor

to Ireland. He did not look at any of us straight in the face. On returning down the line, he halted in front of me and pointed at me saying: "That's the man". Captain Kelly told him to put his hand on my shoulder and asked him for my name, to which he promptly replied: "Sean Healy". I stepped back a pace in order not to let him touch me, saying at the same time: "Don't touch me, Stevens".

On the following Monday morning, July 4th, 1921, I was taken from the camp to the Intelligence Office and from that to the Courtroom. I was charged with being a member of an illegal organisation and carrying arms at the Western Road, Cork, at a place convenient to Cork Gaol on a certain date in June, 1921. The President of the Court called out my name and that of Stevens as being the required witness to prove the case. When the latter name was called out, an officer said Stevens was not present and apologised for his absence. The case was immediately adjourned and I was taken back to the Cage. This adjournment probably saved my life, because if I was convicted of carrying arms, the penalty was death, and Stevens was in a position to swear that he saw me carrying a gun.

All subsequent inquiries by me failed to reveal the reason why Stevens did not attend the Court as Crown witness. In my opinion, he must have funked it at the last minute. My trial was not proceeded with afterwards. This was apparently due to the Truce which was signed a few days later and came into operation at 12 noon on Monday, 11th July 1921.

FREEDOM ONCE MORE.

The signing of a Truce between Ireland and Great Britain on Saturday, July 9th, 1921, under which the British and Irish met on equal terms, was regarded as a tremendous victory for

the Irish Republican army. It was especially a great relief to prisoners of war, some of whom were under sentence of death. Most of the British soldiers also welcomed the Truce. It did not actually come into operation until 12 noon on the following Monday, 11th July 1921. From the date of the signing there was a noticeable change in the attitude of the camp officials towards the prisoners. Sergeant Grant, of the Hampshire Regiment, who was in charge of the camp, became very friendly, in the knowledge that it would be only a short time before all the prisoners would be released and the camp closed down. I was more than surprised and delighted when I heard my name being called out for the last time by the sergeant on that memorable day. A small batch of prisoners was released that same evening. The majority did not get their freedom until some time after the Truce came into operation.

After saying farewell to my companions who were left behind, I shook hands with Sergeant Grant to show there was no ill-feeling between us as soldiers, and walked out of the Victoria Barracks (now Collins Barracks) into a free world. It was a glorious sunny evening. The feeling of emotion which came over me when I left the Cage behind was one that I shall never forget. I felt as if I was walking into a new world and fervently thanked God for bringing me safely through the perils and trials which I had endured. I was a free man once more.

Signed: Seán Healy

Date: 10th August, 1956

Witness: Seán Brennan Lieut-Col.

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