ORIGINAL

ROINN COSANTA.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS.

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 1511.

Witness

Gerald Doyle,
47, Redesdale Road,
Mount Merrion,
Co. Dublin.

Identity.

Volunteer, B. Company, 4th Battalion,
Irish Volunteers.

Subject.

G.A.A., Gaelic League, I.R.B., Irish Volunteers, I.R.A. activities, Dublin, and prison experiences in England, 1914-1917.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil.

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STATEMENT OF MR. GERALD DOYLE,

47, Redesdale Road, Mount Merrion, Co. Dublin.

The Volunteer Movement Prior to 1916.

In my young days I became associated with the Geraldine Football Club and through that association I became acquainted with Jack Shouldice, Frank Shouldice, Liam O'Flaherty, Martin O'Flaherty, Seamus O'Flaherty, Maurice Collins, Harry Boland and Joseph Parker, all of whom took part in the Rising.

Coming on to the outbreak of War, 1914, all of these men had joined the Volunteer Movement and they immediately started to enrol new members. As I lived on the South side of the City I went into it, with Liam O'Flaherty of "B" Company of the 4th Battalion. The Battalion at that time was commanded by Eamonn Ceannt; the O/C. of "B" Company was George Irvine, 1st. Lieutenant Liam Cosgrave and 2nd. Lieutenants Willie Corrigan and Phil. Cosgrave.

I did not take part in the Howth Gun Running, as on that day the Geraldines were playing a match against a Wexford Team at Kilkenny for the Leinster Championships and it was not until we returned to the city that we heard of the Howth Gun Running and the shooting at Bachelor's Walk.

Following the Volunteer split which followed as a result of Redmond's efforts to gain control of the Volunteers, a parade was held and men who were prepared to follow Redmond, stood down. At the time of the split "B" Company was fairly strong (it must have been in the neighbourhood of 100) but the split reduced it's ranks to less than half. Within a few weeks, however, men who had gone over with Redmond

again returned to our side. In any case, the Company was filled up with new members from other Football Clubs and the Cleaver Branch of the Gaelic League, Donore Avenue.

The year 1915 was devoted mainly to building up the armaments of the Company. The Volunteers subscribed voluntarily towards an armament fund and equipment. We in the Company purchased, individually, items of equipment such as haversacks, ammunition and belts which we got at Lawlors of Fownes Street. At the end of that year, Inter-Battalion Manoeuvres were staged between our Battalion under Eamonn Ceannt and the 3rd Battalion under Eamonn De Valera. We carried out these exercises in the open country around the first lock of the Grand Canal at Brickfields. One incident that I can recall to memory regarding that exercise was that it was a very wet night. We were out all night and yet this factor did not dampen the enthusiasm of the Volunteers. Looking back now, I cannot but feel impressed by the enthusiasm displayed at the time. When the Manoeuvres were over, the Companies marched back to their own districts singing - cheerful to the end.

On that Whit Week-end Dublin played Galway in Athenry. Liam Mellows travelled with the team thus evading the "G" men in Dublin. The match was in progress for about twenty minutes when a fight broke out at the entrance gate. It was a Sergeant of the R.I.C. and two Constables who tried to get into the field but were beaten off. Mellows was, by this time, well clear of the area. On that evening on the return home, the team and followers stood in one big crowd on the station singing "Twenty Men from Dublin Town".

I was working in Kilkenny when O'Donovan-Rossa was brought back from U.S.A. to be buried in Glasnevin but I travelled up from Kilkenny on that Saturday and took part in the funeral on the next day.

My continuity with the Volunteers was broken for a short time as I had to go to England to take up employment. I returned at Christmas 1915 and re-joined my old Company. We had drill and parades at least twice a week in Larkfield and coming up to 1916 we had a fair amount of arms in the Company made up of Martini and Howth Rifles, shotguns and a few long Lee Enfield rifles. We were trained in their use as we had a rifle range in Larkfield where we carried out miniature firing practices with, I think, .22 ammunition.

A big parade of all Volunteers in the Dublin Brigade took place through Dublin on St. Patrick's Day, 1916. We marched past Eoin McNeill where he took the salute at College Green. At the time of that parade we did not know that a Rising would take place within a short time. We had a feeling, however, that we were being prepared for an event of importance. About three or four weeks before the actual Rising the 4th Battalion on one of its parades at Larkfield was addressed by Eamonn Ceannt. He told us in his own words that we were being prepared, if necessary to fight, in order to assert the rights of Ireland. Undoubtedly, after that statement everyone felt that we were on the eve of a Rising, coupled with the tension that had arisen through the action of the Citizen Army in Liberty Hall when the Citizen Army took over Liberty Hall and held it like a Military Post until the actual Rising took place.

The Rising.

Some ten days before the Rising, a Volunteer friend of mine named Richard Whelan wanted to go home to Enniscorthy as his mother was dangerously ill. I suggested to him that it would be better to see Eamonn Ceannt and so, accompanied by Whelan and John Traynor, we went up to Ceannt's house and explained the position to him. He advised that Whelan should stay in the city and not go home unless his mother was really in danger of death. This definitely confirmed my feeling

that something would break out in a very short time.

On the Thursday before Easter Week I was instructed to be at Burke's Public House, James Street, on Easter Saturday. When I got there on Easter Saturday evening I met Willie Cosgrave, and Volunteers began to come in. Liam Cosgrave then said to me "You are to begin handing out iron rations for 48 hours". He then said "There is a big parade to take place on Easter Sunday morning", and without any further explanation we knew exactly what this parade was. We continued handing out these rations up to 9 o'clock when Willie Cosgrave asked us if we had been to Confession and we said "Not yet". He then told us to leave and go to Confession. We went to Arran Quay Church. That finished Saturday. Our instructions were that the parade would be held at Larkfield on Sunday morning at 9 o'clock.

When I was at early Mass on Sunday morning I bought the morning paper - 'The Sunday Independent' - and I saw Eoin McNeill's statement cancelling Volunteer parades for that day. After breakfast I got in touch with some of my comrades and tried to find out what was happening. The advice we received was - not to leave our district. A number of us had a discussion and we decided that we would go to the Phoenix Park and have a game of football but before doing so I left word at home of where we could be found, if required. In the Park we met Volunteers from the North side of the City and we had a general discussion regarding McNeill's orders. I seem to recall that Jack Shouldice said to us that in spite of McNeill's orders he believed a Rising would take place.

On Sunday night all the local Volunteers attended a ceilidhe at the Cleaver Hall, Donore Avenue. While this was in progress a Volunteer by the name of Pat O'Reilly handed a note to Tom McCarthy,

a Company officer of my Battalion. While Tom McCarthy did not tell us what was in the note, a rumour came from O'Reilly that a mobilisation had been ordered for the following morning. The ceilidhe continued on until after midnight on that night.

At 9.30 a.m. on Easter Monday morning Richard Whelan, Company Organiser, called to my house with instructions to parade at Larkfield at 10 o'clock. I immediately contacted John Traynor at Kilmainham and proceeded from Kilmainham to Larkfield and on our way across to Larkfield we called at Whelan's lodgings and then all three of us proceeded to Larkfield. As it was coming near the appointed time, we asked a man with a slop car to give us a lift. We got there in quick time. On arrival we found that the most of our Company was present under George Irvine and Willie Cosgrave. When the Company 'fell in' between 40 and 50 strong, Willie Cosgrave told us that we were then moving to Emerald Square via The Ramparts at the back of Mount Argus and on to Dolphin's Barn. At Emerald Square the Battalion was on parade. We joined it. Eamonn Ceannt called out the officers and gave them some orders which we did not hear. George Irvine returned and told us that we were moving off for the South Dublin Union with Eamonn Ceannt, and to enter it through the back gate at South Circular Road, Rialto. As far as I can recollect regarding the move off from Emerald Square, about three Companies marched up the Canal under Ceannt. As we got to the Rialto gate the small wicket gate was open and some Volunteers went in through it. The main gate was then opened and the main body marched in. Incidentally, I should have mentioned that part of the Battalion occupying the South Dublin Union went in through James' Street. I think that this party was under Liam Cosgrave and Cathal Brugha. As we entered the gate I recollect distinctly having heard Eamonn Ceannt detailing George Irvine to select six or eight Volunteers under his

command to lock and barricade the Rialto Gate and the wicket gate.

Easter Monday 24/4/1916.

On entering at the back gate of the South Dublin Union, Eamonn Ceannt detailed Captain George Irvine of "B" Company to lock and barricade the gate. Irvine picked the following Volunteers to stand by:- Section Leaders, William Corrigan. John Traynor, James and Patrick Morrissey, John Downey, Sean McGlynn and Gerald Doyle.

I have just a faint recollection that when the gate was locked and barred we were to trench behind the gate and put loopholes in the gate to cover the South Circular Road, facing towards the Convent of the Little Sisters. As there was, however, no provision made for pick and shovels the idea could not be carried out. Captain Irvine then instructed us to take over a corrugated hut lined with light sheeting which overlooked the Boundary Wall of the Union. From the windows we had a clear view of the South Circular Road but only a view of a person walking over Rialto Bridge.

When we entered the hut we found that a number of male patients were in the beds under the charge of a nurse and it was only under pressure that they left. The nurse got them over to the yellow building behind, in charge of nun. When the nurse heard that there was going to be fighting she wanted to remain but Captain Irvine insisted on her leaving. We were then instructed to let down the tops of our windows, and place mattresses against them, and use small tables as a platform to stand on in order to get a clear view of distance over the wall on the South Circular Road side. The hut windows also covered the back gate entrance.

When the windows were barricaded, Sean McGlynn left to get in touch with the main body which had taken up position down at the Main Building, James Street. Just as we were listening to the Angelus

bell ringing out, we heard the first shot - it was like the sound of a shot-gun going off in the distance. We all got to our stations at the different windows when, over the wall, climbed a man in Volunteer uniform. We were in the act of firing when someone shouted not to fire and it turned out that the Volunteer was James J. Burke. He got into the hut through a back entrance and was detailed with John Traynor to take position in the room on my right.

Shortly after we went into action, as British troops appeared and started to come over the wall at South Circular Road but were beaten off. After a lull, there came over Rialto Bridge some British troops with two prisoners in Volunteer uniform. They were Thomas Murphy and John Darcy from "F" Company, 4th Battalion, Inchicore. They had missed their own Company parade along with other Volunteers under Lieutenant Larry Murtagh of Chapelizod all attached to "F" Company and had made their way down to the old Cement Mills at the first lock (now Suir Road). They decided, under instructions, to make their way to Marrowbone Lane Distillery but were captured at Rialto Bridge by British troops who were then converging on the South Dublin Union from Wellington Barracks, (now Griffith Barracks). Lieutenant Murtagh and others on that night made their way through the centre of the city to the General Post Office where they took part in the fighting for the remainder of the week. We were instructed not to fire on the party with the prisoners in case we would hit them also, so we watched them pass - held as prisoners. We then saw a British Officer climbing a telegraph pole to see into the Union grounds and he was at once fired on. It later turned out that it was Captain Ramsay of Ballsbridge, Dublin, who had been killed.

Firing then became general from Water Lane side of our hut and John Traynor and J.J. Burke found their own room untenable so they retreated to my room. As John Traynor entered through my door - he was hit and died practically instantly. With a prayer on his lips "Lord Jesus, Mary, Joseph, have mercy on me" he died. That Easter Monday was his birthday - he was 19 years of age. We all then realised that our hut was not really safe and that we had no protection against the bullets which were coming right through the walls and partitions. Captain George Irvine detailed four of us, J. J. Burke, two Morrisseys and myself to try and see if we could make our way through the main body and if so, we were to report back to him in order to direct the way. As we moved over to the three-storied yellow brick hospital and went in through the archway across some open ground, I was some ten yards in the lead when we came under fire. At first I thought it was our own people but when I looked back to see if the other three were coming I saw James Morrissey bending over his brother and with him was J.J. Burke. They shouted to me that he had been wounded through the leg or thigh. We then discovered that the British troops had got into the South Dublin Union grounds between ourselves and the main body of Volunteers. We carried Morrissey back under the archway. Burke and James Morrissey brought him upstairs into the hospital and dressed his wound. They left him on the bed and the nun in the ward wanted them to take him out again but they left him there and reported back, with me, to George Irvine.

We informed him of our position and of being cut off and surrounded by British troops. He instructed us to get back to our stations. Some were taken from the front of the hut, to the back, in order to cover off the archway. A Church in the grounds gave the

British troops cover to get into closer reach and they got a machine gun into position and opened fire on the hut. At the same time the gateway from the South Circular Road was burst open and troops started to make short dashes through. A Sergeant came around in front of the hut and he was at once dealt with. Just then, a British soldier had got in close to the back of the hut under cover. When he came to the window, both himself and William Corrigan fired one at the other - Corrigan was wounded on the forehead and his face was filled with broken glass - the soldier was also wounded. Captain Irvine, J.J. Burke and another Volunteer dressed him. John Downey and myself did not know how badly he had been wounded. It really looked as though we were in a hopeless position because at this stage the troops were firing through the end door on the north side of the hut. A British officer called upon Captain Irvine to surrender or they would blow the hut up. Captain Irvine, having consulted with William Corrigan and others, agreed to do so.

We were then instructed to lay down our arms and proceed - in single file - to the end door. The British soldiers had pulled out the bedsteads which had barricaded the doors. The seven of us marched out into the open and were at once surrounded by a ring of fixed bayonets and searched. The officer demanded from Captain Irvine the whereabouts of the rest of the Battalion and would not accept Captain Irvine's statement that it was all he had. The hut was then searched again. One soldier who had searched me found my Rosary Beads in my pocket. He also found a Volunteer membership card (which was later produced at my Courtmartial). He put my Rosary Beads back into my pocket with a remark that I would need them later. The officer then said "You all know the rules of war where rebels are concerned - they are shot without trial." He then ordered a party of soldiers to fall-in in front of us. Captain Irvine spoke a few words to us and we waited for the end when a

high-ranking officer appeared through the gate and ordered the officer to stop. He instructed him to take us as prisoners to Kilmainham.

We were marched up the South Circular Road under heavy escort and I helped William Corrigan as he was then suffering great pain from his eyes and face. As we neared the Police Station people on sideways boohed us and shouted at the soldiers to shoot us out of hand. The soldiers at no time molested us and when we were locked into cells the police on duty started to shout at us through the grills. One policeman in particular, his name was Sheppard, was very abusive. The soldiers on guard would not let the cells be opened. The time of surrender was between four and five o'clock.

Later on in the night we were moved up to Richmond Barracks (now Keogh Barracks) and put into the guardroom where we also met Murphy and D'Arcy whom we had seen earlier in the day as prisoners. There was also another Volunteer who was wounded and Michael Sweeney then only a boy of sixteen who later became an officer in the Dublin Brigade Active Service Unit during the Black and Tan War and was killed later, just at the start of the Civil War.

It was about 10.30 p.m. on that Monday night when we were taken from Kilmainham Police Station (which then stood at the cross-roads of South Circular Road and Emmet Road) and even at that time there was a large crowd waiting outside to see us being moved, under a very heavy escort, to Richmond Barracks. The crowd followed us up to the gate of the Barracks where a woman rushed up with an uplifted jug and hit one of us. The officer knocked her back into the mob shouting at them that they should be ashamed of themselves.

In the guardroom we were lined up in front of two officers who questioned us as to how many more men were with us and how they had escaped. Captain George Irvine in answer said that this was the whole party, except one who was killed (John Traynor). Our names and addresses were taken. My people had moved from Old Kilmainham to Goldenbridge on Good Friday and I gave the old address, which later proved to be a Godsend, as the empty house was later wrecked when a party of soldiers called at the house. After this ordeal of interrogations we were put into a large cell attached to the guardroom and in the darkness we tried to have a talk and surmise what would be the next move of the British. We were, however, all more or less exhausted having been in top gear from 9 a.m. on that morning and it was now after midnight so we just lay down and fell asleep. The soldiers were moving around and seemed to have other ideas because every hour or so they would flash their torches in on us and let a shout. At the changing of the guard we were all made stand-to while we were counted again and the key of the cell door was then handed to the Sergeant in charge. When morning came we took stock of one another and, having been lying on the floor all night, we most certainly looked a dirty lot of men.

William Corrigan's face was now very sore and the other Volunteer who had been taken prisoner with young Sweeney had been wounded severely in the muscles of his upper arm. The soldier who fired the shot which wounded him, was so near, that the bullet burned the wound as it passed through him and as a result the wound did not bleed. This man's name was Conlon and he was a Silk Weaver by trade.

April 25th, 1916.

At about 9 o'clock on this morning we were brought out of the Guardroom and lined up. A number of British officers stood around us and one of them stepped forward and spoke to Willie Corrigan.

He recognised Corrigan. It later turned out that this officer was Lieutenant Barron who had served his time as a solicitor's apprentice in the same solicitor's office as Corrigan. Barron said that he was very sorry to see Willie in his present position and asked him if he was in need of money. Corrigan replied and said that he need not feel sorry for him (Corrigan) as he was very proud of his comrades and,as regards money, he informed him that he had quite enough to carry him through. Barron again said that he was sorry and then stepped back. The officers then questioned Barron and they all moved off.

Lieutenant Barron later returned to the Guardroom and three of us were brought under escort to the Cookhouse where we were handed a flat tin of stew with hard biscuits mixed in it. We were also given a large can of tea and tin mugs and again brought back to the Guardroom. This was very welcome as we had nothing to eat or drink from the previous morning. As we were not allowed to have knives, forks or even plates, we all had to sit around and eat out of the tins with our fingers. The tea was the best we ever tasted. On the changing of Guard, Lieutenant Barron again spoke to Willie Corrigan and gave him a pass which he could show to whatever Sergeant was in charge. The pass enabled Corrigan to buy directly from the Army Canteen and was used right up to the day of the trial.

On Wednesday morning, after the changing of the Guard, J.J. Burke and myself were brought out into the guardroom to wash out the floor. In the centre of the floor was an open box of hand-grenades and we were told to lift them over into the corner. Something about the attitude of the soldiers, however, warned us not to move them and so we refused to go near the box. The soldiers then shouted at us to move them or they would make us wash the "so and so" floor. Just then an officer came into the room and spoke to J.J. Burke who pointed

to the box on the floor. The officer instructed the guard to put us back into the cell and for the remainder of the week nobody else was put to wash this floor again. It was not really until we returned to our cells that we realised what a narrow escape we had had. If we had lifted up this box, we would have been shot there and then and the soldiers would have said that we were endeavouring to escape. Then the Guard was again changed and this time the officer in charge was a member of the Munster Fusiliers. He was very friendly and offered us some cigarettes and when we asked him to get us some, he went to a shop across the road and brought them back as well as some magazines. He also permitted us to have a wash under the pipe in the yard. On the Thursday morning we were allowed out for exercise in the ball-alley at the back of the Guardhouse and the soldiers kept on telling us how they were mopping up the rebels throughout the city and when all was over a big trench was being dug in order to shoot the remainder of us out of hand without trial.

At about 3 o'clock on that afternoon there was great excitement in the guardroom. There was a burst of rifle-fire which sounded to us from the Inchicore Works. Speculations amongst us were that it was Volunteers from the country coming into the city and then when some of the men, who had been brought to the canteen for tea, returned, they informed us that there was a great cloud of smoke over the city and thus it looked as if the whole city of Dublin was being consumed by fire. As it got dark, the glow could be seen in the sky through the cell window.

In our cells on that evening, Captain George Irvine and Willie Corrigan discussed with us every aspect of our position and how we stood as prisoners. They said that every trick would be tried in order to get us to make statements in which we would give information

to the British regarding our leaders and officers and the extent of our Volunteer organisation. Captain Irwine's position was well known but any questions asked about persons outside of him were to be answered, "I do not know". We also studied each others' signatures in order that we would know if they were faked on statements. These plans later worked out very successfully.

All day Friday the great pall of smoke still hung over the city, and on Friday night some of the soldiers on guard informed us that the rebels were on the run and surrendering all over the city. As we could hear the sound of guns we did not believe this and no further prisoners had been brought into Richmond Barracks. Another point which we could not get clearly was, how the rest of the country had fared up to this? What had happened in Cork, Tipperary and the rest of Southern Ireland? Even the ordinary British soldier did not know anything of what was happening down the country. They did admit that there was still fighting in the South Dublin Union and in the centre of the city. We did not sleep at all on that Friday night, although by this we were all getting used to the hard floor. The glare of fire was bright in the sky and as J.J. Burke said at some time during the night "That little paper 'The Spark' has caused a big blaze in the City of Dublin". How true J.J.'s little joke turned out to be in the years that followed and that some of us would even live to see.

On Saturday morning we were again allowed to exercise in the Ball-alley and from there we could still see the smoke over the city. The soldiers in the guardroom spoke through the grill and said that it was all over. At about 6.30 p.m. on that evening there was some shouting-out of military commands and the marching of soldiers. When the cell door was opened we were made stand to

attention and counted, after which an officer signed a document and we were marched out into the open in front of the guardhouse. We were placed in the centre of a very heavy escort of about 100 soldiers and informed by the officer that any attempt to escape while marching through the streets would mean that we would be shot at once. We did not know where we were going until we were halted outside of Kilmainham Jail and, as we were being marched into the Jail, some man in the crowd shouted "Up the Rebels!." (This was the first voice we had heard in sympathy with our cause). When we had passed through the cordon of soldiers and down through the dark passages of the jail we were marched into the main hall - the scene - Beggar's Description. Some of the soldiers acted in a decent manner but others were brutal and when a prisoner lifted his hands over his shoulders to be searched the soldier would bring up his knee into the pit of the prisoner's stomach while others hit them in the face. One soldier who stood out for his brutality was an - Irish Guardsman believed to be from Waterford. The soldier who searched our party was from the North of Ireland and he did his job in a decent manner. Once when the Irish Guard came over to him he ordered him away. We were later put into cells on the ground floor and about six or eight of us were all bundled into the one cell where there was also one other prisoner who had been badly beaten up earlier in the evening. His face was all cut and bleeding and on questioning him he informed us that his name was Ashe and that he worked in Ordnance Survey at the Phoenix Park.

By this time it was pitch dark in the cells and right through the prison we could hear the banging of doors. We could also hear the shouting and screaming of prisoners who were being beaten up in the cells through which the soldiers had run amok. We then heard

them outside the cells in our passage and the next one to ours was opened. We could hear the shouts and groans when, suddenly, our door was opened and in rushed two soldiers demanding to know what we were shouting about. One of them hit James Morrissey and then withdrew. After about an hour of this hell the prison again became quiet with the measured tread of the sentry marching up and down the passage.

On the dawning of the next day (Sunday) we took stock of ourselves. Ashe's face was swollen and cut and dried blood covered his clothes. Corrigan, with a bandage around his head (now all dirty), was badly in need of a shave, Morrissey had a black-eye and James Downey, who was not feeling at all too well, was beginning to feel the strain and suspense. Between 8 and 9 o'clock in the morning we heard movements out in the passage and cell doors being opened and locked again. Ours was opened and a two-gallon bucket about three-quarters full of what appeared to be a cold mess of sloppy porridge called 'skilly' was left in. Although we were very hungry it was some time before we tried to eat this mess with our fingers as we had done a week ago. As we did not know what was to happen next we had to try and eat something to help us to keep up our strength, so we managed to eat a few mouthfulls of this mess slowly and after an hour or so the buckets were collected.

Next was an order shouted to us in each cell that, as our names were called out, we were to knock on our cell door. An orderly then started calling out the names and it turned out to be Captain George Irvine who was called. This at once started speculation in our cells - we were wondering if the time had come for our end. Next name called was somebody whom we did not know and the third name was that of William Corrigan. He was away for about from

twenty to thirty minutes when he was brought and put back into our cell and informed us that he had been brought into an office before two officers and stood to attention by two Military Police. They knew that he was a solicitor by profession and had a list of his activities prior to the Rising. They questioned him as to who was in command of the South Dublin Union. He warned us not to make any statements when questioned. James Downey was next called and I myself was next.

I was asked, when brought in, my name and occupation. In reply I informed them that I was a plasterer by trade and when I was asked if I knew who was in command of the South Dublin Union, I said "No". The officer then produced a paper stating that the man before me, had said that I was well known to the police and that he had signed this statement. When I asked to see this statement one of the Military Police hit me on the side of the head and knocked me against the side of a table. The second officer who had not spoken to me up to this, said to the policeman, "That will do", and ordered that I be taken back to my cell. On my way back I met J.J. Burke but I failed to recognise him as his face was all swollen and black and blue - he had been given a terrible beating. Poor J.J., being in uniform, had come in for special attention from the soldiers when they raided the cells on the previous night. When I got back to my cell I told them all about my interview and Downey repeated what he had said but said that he, definitely, did not sign any statements. We were all satisfied that he did not, but it warned the rest of the men, of the grim game that the British were playing. Next a number of us were brought out into a yard where there were more officers who questioned us as to our ages and where we were born. When I said that I was born in the Slade of Saggart, County Dublin, a Sergeant said to me, "So you are a bloody madman" and the other

officers at the table laughed. I did not get what the joke was to mean, until about two years later. (It seems that a man named James Connor from Slade, Saggart, was released from Grangegorman Mental Hospital on Easter Monday and declared cured. He was in O'Connell Street when the Volunteers had taken over the G.P.O. and the excitement had again made him as bad as ever. He was captured and brought to Kilmainham where he was locked in a padded cell. As I knew Connor, personally, I told the story to relations when I visited Saggart after my release from Lewis Jail, and we then had our own laugh about the humour of the British Officers at Kilmainham). After our questioning was finished we were marched back to our cells and on Sunday evening, George Irvine, and the rest of us who had been in the South Dublin Union were removed from our cells to another building which was the warders' quarters. We were put into a large room in which there were about another thirty prisoners, some of whom had taken part in the fighting in the different parts of the city. Others who had been taken were only visitors to the city for that week. Two of these were from Northern Ireland and when the prisoners started reciting the Rosary before settling down for the night, these two men started kicking on the door to be let out of the room. The sentry outside shouted through the door to know what was wrong, and they replied stating that they were afraid of their lives, because all the rest of the men in the cell were Roman Catholics, and would kill them when they finished praying. The sentry shouted that if they did not get away from the door he would bloody well let them have it. He then started to work the bolt of the rifle. This was my first experience of the bigotry of Northern Ireland and their impressions of the people of the South. After the Rosary, however, some of the men started speaking to them and making friends.

After breakfast on Monday morning 1st May, we were brought out for exercise and a wash. On returning to our cells another lot of

prisoners were being brought in and I recognised Michael Staines and Liam Tannam as they were passing. I stopped to talk with Staines,and the soldier coming along with the second crowd of men shoved me along with the men going out and so I got my second dose of fresh air. All three of us thoroughly enjoyed the situation and began to compare notes of the events of the week as they had happened. When exercise was over I still remained with Staines and I told him about the South Dublin Union and how we had been prisoners in Richmond Barracks all the week. They then realised that George Irvine and the rest of my comrades stood in real danger of facing the firing squad. They advised me to sit tight. There was also a bricklayer named Walsh in the room and a young brother of Sean Connolly who had been killed in the attack on Dublin Castle. They also had taken part in the fighting around the City Hall and Evening Mail Office, Cork Hill.

Next morning, Tuesday 2nd May, when we were out on exercise I found that my comrades had been transferred to Richmond Barracks. At about 1 o'clock, all in our room were again brought out into the Lower Yard and again made stand around in a circle. Two or three officers started going from one prisoner to another looking them over. One of the officers had a short blackthorn Shillelagh attached to his Sam Brown Belt with a Green Ribbon. One of the prisoners passed a joke on the officer and I immediately started to laugh. At once, one of the officers put his hand on me and said "This is our man". The rest of the men were then put back into their rooms while I was held under guard. I was then handcuffed to a soldier and marched, through the streets, from Kilmainham to Richmond Barracks. On my way to the Barracks a girl named May O'Callaghan standing on Emmet Road, Turvey Avenue, saw me passing by and followed to see where I was going. She then

went and told my people what she had seen, and I know that the information was the first my mother heard about me, since I left the house on Easter Monday morning. (This girl O'Callaghan had a brother Michael O'Callaghan who had taken part in the fighting around Church Street). On entering the barracks I was marched on to the big green where there was a large number of prisoners under a heavy guard. They were sitting on the ground and all the prisoners were facing a block of buildings on the east side of the green. On seeing Jack Shouldice and Harry Boland I moved over to where they were sitting and they informed me that P. H. Pearse had been brought into the end section, of the block where Courtmartials were taking place. He had been there for some time.

While awaiting the return of Pearse, I was looking around at my fellow-prisoners and I saw Joseph Plunkett wearing his uniform and also his two brothers George and Sean. I was of the impression that Joseph appeared very sick but he kept up a general running commentary on what was going on, to his two brothers. Naturally, I was very interested in him and had never been so close to him, to say that I would recognise him walking through the streets. Also sitting on the grass was, Eamonn Ceannt, Major McBride, Con Colbert and Willie and Phil. Cosgrave. Eamonn Ceannt questioned me as to why I was made a special prisoner having been brought to the Barracks by myself handcuffed to a soldier. I told him the story of what had happened down in Kilmainham and how the switch had occurred. There was a general laugh around the circle of prisoners who were listening in.

Just then Pearse came out of the building and faced us on the green. All at once, all prisoners sprang to their feet and stood to attention. He smiled across at us, saluted, and marched off

under an escort of officers. I can see the picture of him as he marched away in his Great Green Overcoat and Hat. His very attitude gave courage to everyone of us who were to face our trial, in turn. Next came Thomas McDonagh and Tom Clarke. The prisoners again stood to attention as they came out from their Courtmartial. McDonagh was also smiling as he came out of the building in his Commandant's uniform - Tom Clarke was a grey-haired man in civilian clothes. They were also marched away and by this time I had been put back again with my own comrades. When the prisoners were marched off to other parts of the barracks we were again marched back to Kilmainham and put back into the same room in which the incident had occurred with the two men from the North. In this room Tom Clarke sat alone on an upturned bucket and we all gathered around him there in the dusk of the evening to ask him questions about the Courtmartial. He had no doubt as to his fate on the next morning as he proved to us in his own words "The British have been watching their chance down through the years, and are not going to let it slip now" - Looking at some of us whom he considered were only boys, he said "This is not the end of our fight for Irish Freedom; it is only the beginning and I believe from this last week's fighting that men will come forward to carry on from where we left off. Some of you will live to see Ireland respond to the call". It was only later that I realised that Tom Clarke, although he knew that he would be facing the firing squad within the next six hours, believed in his heart and soul, that he and his comrades had defeated the British Empire, and that Ireland would win her freedom.

The room was now getting very dark and the blankets which had been left in by the soldiers were spread on the floor so that we could lie down and rest. The room was on the left-hand side of the passage as you entered the Warder's quarters and was facing the yard.

I was on the outside next to the door; next was Tom Clarke and on the other side of him lay J.J. Burke, James Morrissey, William Corrigan, James Downey, Eddie Duggan and George Irvine. We must have fallen into a dosing sleep because Tom Clarke was lying on my arm and he said that I was hurting his arm and informed me that he had been wounded. While we were talking we heard soldiers outside of the door and they were also talking. They then opened the door; the soldiers flashed a light in our faces and then called out the name of Tom Clarke. We then immediately got to our feet and Tom shook hands with us in turn. I, being next to the door, was the last to shake hands with him and they then took him away. We then said the Rosary for him and later in the day, as light came into the sky, we heard three volleys. We again recited the Rosary for the three men who died at that hour of morning.

Some hours later tea and hard biscuits were brought to us, and at 9 a.m. we were again marched to Richmond Barracks. This time we were put into the Blacksmith's shop (now Finnery's Grocery shop in Keogh Barracks) and a number of other prisoners, including Eamonn Ceannt, were already there. Eamonn Ceannt asked us where we had been taken on the previous evening, and we told him all that had happened and what Tom Clarke had said to us on the previous night. At this he gave a great smile.

Lieutenant Barron then came over and called out our names from a sheet of paper he held in his hands and he informed us that our Courts Martial trials would be held in the buildings opposite. The British had decided that in order to hurry up the trials they would have two or three Courts Martial carried on at one time. All day Wednesday we watched men going in to their trials and being marched away again. Liam Tobin, Thomas Walsh, George Irvine,

Michael Mervyn, and Peadar Clancy (who was murdered four years later by the Black and Tans while a prisoner in Dublin Castle) and others, were tried. At that time I did not know that we were to meet again as prisoners doing time in Portland and Lewis Jails in England.

The attitude of these men towards what was facing them and the manner in which they discussed their fate gave even the weakest of us courage to meet our fate also. As the day of our trial came and we knew the way in which P.H. Pearse, Thomas McDonagh and Tom Clarke met their death, we were also keyed up to show our captors that we also would have courage to face our doom. On that Wednesday night we were not sent back to Kilmainham - only the men who were tried were marched off while the remainder of us were put into a large room on the first floor. On the next morning we heard that Joseph Mary Plunkett, Edward Daly, Michael O'Hanrahan and Willie Pearse had been shot on that morning. Included in the group of prisoners who were in the room on that Thursday morning, awaiting trial, were, Eamonn Ceannt, Willie and Phil. Cosgrave, Thomas Hunter, John McBride, James Mallin, Con Colbert, Sean Heuston, Willie Corrigan, J.J. Burke, James Morrissey, James Downey, Joseph Byrne and many others. I remember Con Colbert going over to a window where men were talking near a door and making them go and stand in the centre of the room telling them that the doors, walls and windows in the place had ears. Con, small and compact in his uniform, said, "If you were escorted to a lavatory, you were no sooner in until a soldier, who was not one of your guard, would slip in beside you and ask questions about someone who had yet to stand trial". I was asked if it was true that Willie Cosgrave was in charge of the South Dublin Union instead of Ceannt and I replied "I do not know."

After we had tea on that Thursday morning, a number of us were again moved over to the Blacksmith's Forge. There were two

Courts Martial set up in two rooms on the first floor. The prisoners were marched in two at a time. As you went upstairs on to the landing you were halted, and prisoners marched one into the room on the left and the others into the room on the right. Willie Cosgrave, Thomas Hunter and Major McBride were tried on that Thursday. I can remember that it was later on the Thursday evening when McBride came out of the Court carrying a dust-coat on his arm. He was put into line with the other men who were ready to march away. He was asked how the trial was, and if he had received his sentence and his reply was, "I looked down their rifles during the Boer War and I will do the same tomorrow morning". From there we were marched out to the big square and, while lined up, three officers came over to where McBride was standing. One of them had a camera and the first two leading soldiers stood out while the officer started to take photos of McBride standing in front with his hands in his pockets and the dust-coat over his arm. I believe that one of the officers had met Major McBride during the Boer War and recognised him. (The photo is at present in the 1916 collection at Kildare Street, and also included in it are Eamonn Ceannt, two Plunketts - George and Sean - Williem Corrigan, myself, James Downey and John O'Brien - whom I believe was a British soldier who fought with the Volunteers in King Street area) but I know that on account of his position as a prisoner it was never discussed during our period in Lewis Jail.

On the morning of 5th May, about twenty-five prisoners were brought to Richmond Barracks and included were Con Colbert, Eamonn Ceannt, Michael Mallin, Sean Heuston, William Corrigan, James O'Sullivan J.J. Burke, John O'Brien, John Downey, James Morrissey and myself. We were again placed in the Blacksmith's Forge, but other prisoners were being brought from different places in the Barracks and they were going and coming all that Friday for trials. We were not, however,

called and on that Friday night we were put into a large room under heavy guard and all had to sleep on the floor or rest as best we could. Thanks to a pass that William Corrigan had received from Lieutenant Barron we were able to get a large can of tea, a couple of large loaves and tins of bully beef. It was the first taste of food we had from 7 o'clock on that morning.

Saturday morning, 6th May, after tea and hard biscuits we were again marched across to the forge at about 11 a.m. Both Eamonn Ceannt and Con Colbert were called and after about three quarters of an hour Con Colbert appeared and was placed under a heavy escort of soldiers. Then came Eamonn Ceannt and after some time next called were both William Corrigan and myself. We were brought to the landing on the first floor and while Corrigan was turned facing the door on the right I was turned to face the door on the left. A soldier standing by my side whispered into my ear, "This is it, son, and I wish you luck". (He was one of the Notts. and Derbys). The door then opened and I was handed over to two Military Police. At the end of the room there were three high ranking officers sitting at a table. On the left facing me was another officer with a mass of papers on a small table and on the right was a Lieutenant. He was the witness against me. I was marched up to the table where the three officers were and I was placed in a chair.

The President of the Court then read out a charge to me, as follows: "You, Gerald Doyle did, to wit, take part in a rebellion against the lawful authority of His Majesty King George V., resulting in great loss of life to his loyal subjects". He then asked me if I understood the nature of the charge and I replied, "I do". The Lieutenant was then called and he gave his name as Lieutenant O'Callaghan, Royal Irish Rifles. As soon as he started to speak I knew that he was from Cork and he proceeded to give an

account of our surrender to the forces, under him, at the Back Gate of the South Dublin Union and described me as having been in full uniform of the Irish Volunteers. After he had given details of us having been lodged in Kilmainham Police Station and later that evening sent to Richmond Barracks where we were handed over to the Commanding Officer of the Barracks - in his charge - the President of the Court asked me if I had any questions to put to the witness. I said that I had and then asked witness if he was sure that I was in full Volunteer uniform and he replied that I was. I then asked him if he thought it possible that I could have a change of clothes smuggled into the barracks and the uniform taken out and I under close guard and observation from the time of our surrender. He replied that he could not answer that question.

At this point the Captain who was sitting at the small table rose to his feet and addressed the President stating that he would like permission to speak. The President in reply said, "Captain Wiley, as Prosecution Counsel, you may do so". Captain Wiley then made a suggestion to the Court that he be allowed to conduct my defence. I turned in my chair to look at him in surprise. (My mind at once sensed a trap and I decided to turn down the offer). The three officers then consulted with each other and the President replied stating that he had no objection if the prisoner himself agreed to accept the generous offer. He then put a question to me, "Are you prepared to accept the generous offer of Captain Wiley who is also a skilful lawyer and prepared to conduct your defence?", and I replied stating that while I wished to thank Captain Wiley for his offer I did not agree to accept. Captain Wiley then said that he could understand my mind, but that I did not realise the seriousness of my position. The President then picked up a Volunteer membership card and I immediately knew that it was the one which had been taken

from me when I was searched at the time that we were captured. It was only a new card which I had received about three weeks before the Rising and there was 1/6d. contribution marked on it. I had lost my old card and received a new one from William Corrigan who was my Section Leader. One of the officers said "According to this card you are only a member since three weeks before the Rebellion and I replied "That is the only card I have". He then passed the question and asked if I knew my Commanding Officer and I told him "George Irvine". I knew at this time that George had already been tried, sentenced to death, commuted to ten years Penal Servitude and that this had been published in the newspapers. (Note: Captain Wiley referred to later became Judge Wiley and a prominent member of the Royal Dublin Society, Ballsbridge). I also knew by their touts that they were all the time endeavouring to fix Willie Cosgrave as the Officer-in-Charge of the South Dublin Union. I was questioned as to how many men were in the South Dublin Union and in reply stated, "I do not know".

The President then closed the proceedings and said that I would be notified of the decision in due course. I was then marched out of the room and handed over to the guard outside. Next I was brought over to where Eamonn Ceannt, Con Colbert and other men, who were tried, were being kept separately from men who had not yet stood their trials. Some ten minutes later William Corrigan appeared and just about this time tea, bread and bully beef were handed around to the soldiers who were guarding us. The Sergeant asked one of us when we last had anything to eat and someone said "At about 8 o'clock this morning". He did not say anything else but went off and having been away for about twenty minutes returned with two soldiers and bringing with them a bucket of tea, bully beef and some bread. This was exactly the same as our guard had received and we thought it a very decent turn indeed.

Just about this time, however, a rather ugly incident occurred. Two "G" Men (detectives) came along and stopped directly in front of where we were sitting on the grass. They must have been informed that we were the latest batch of prisoners who had been before the Courts Martial Tribunal and one of them in particular, named Smith, became most abusive as he jeered at Con Colbert, and was particularly offensive to Willie Corrigan, who had been a solicitor and who had met Smith from time to time at the Courts. His first remark was, "Well Corrigan, I am seeing the last of you; you are going to get what you deserve and will never again be able to jeer the police in Courts!" At this stage one of the prisoners shouted at Smith "Now, don't be too sure of yourself; it is a long lane that has no turning!". The two officers in charge then came over and told the two detectives to move on (I cannot remember the name of the second man but it was a well known fact that both had been particularly active in the years before the Rising). Numbers of men picked out by them were, in fact, actually under escort, and going away to English Jails when they recognised and segregated them from the men who were being deported. (Smith was later shot for his activities as Secret Service Agent 1920-21). Later on that evening about twenty-six of us who had been tried on that day lined up, and were marched off to Kilmainham Jail under heavy escort. As we were marching towards the main square of the barracks we passed Sean McDermott who was standing to one side under guard of a couple of soldiers. He shouted something to Eamonn Ceannt who replied and Sean then started to smile at us and raised his hand in salute while we passed. This was our last glimpse of this great soldier.

As we left the barracks and went out on to Emmett Road there were about from 60 to 80 men all standing silent. It was the same at Turvey Avenue and when we arrived at Kilmainham Jail, about 200 people

stood around the roads and footpaths. We could sense their feelings by the way they were watching and two girls in the crowd who recognised me shouted my name and said they would inform my mother. A number of men then shouted "Up the Rebels!" I then heard an order given to get the men who shouted. As we entered the Main Hall we were led to cells on the first landing and my cell was facing the stairs with William Corrigan on my left and J.J. Burke on my right. As the key turned in the door I looked around my cell and there was a small board fixed to a wall which was to act as a table and a stump of tree fixed to the floor for me to sit on. In the first hours in my cell I began to review in my mind the events of the past weeks and all that happened. P. H. Pearse and Thomas McDonagh and the smiles that they bore on their faces as they came out from their Courts Martial. I could see again Thomas Clarke as he sat on that upturned bucket and the calm way in which he had discussed the position fully with all of us. On the night before his execution he prophesied "This is not the end, it is only the beginning and the young men of Ireland will justify their actions". Major McBride's attitude to his trial and the determined manner in which he had taken the whole situation were quite clear to me, as the yard where the executions were carried out was directly beneath my cell window. I prayed that when my time would come I also would meet death with the same great courage as those who had already gone before me.

My thoughts then turned to home. How were they faring? The house might have been raided, (it was directly beside Richamond Barracks in Goldenbridge, Inchicore). My father had joined the British Army about seven or eight days before the Rising. He had been a member of Redmond's Volunteers and the first time I ever saw him in uniform was on the Easter Monday morning as I myself was

leaving the house to report at Larkfield, Kimmage. He had come from Wellington Barracks, South Circular Road, and we just met and passed each other with a casual "Good Morning!" I was the eldest of a family of seven, five boys and two girls, all of whom took an active part in the War of Independence 1918-1921. I was really worried about my mother who had a heart of gold and great courage to meet the situation facing her at home, which was of grave concern to me as I was the only one of the family who had been working up to Easter Monday because of the building strike in the city.

I suddenly became aware that Willie Corrigan's cell door was being opened and closed again. I pressed my ear against the wall and could hear the sound of voices. As the cells were now dark I began to wonder what was going on and I started to walk up and down my cell. I also heard the sound of someone moving outside of my cell and I cannot really estimate how long it was before I heard the key being turned in the lock of my cell and when it opened, in walked one of the priests from Church Street - it was Father Aloysius and he had come to hear my confession. After hearing my confession he gave me his blessing and warm encouragement and he then prayed with me in my cell. As a priest, he told me that my name would be written in letters of gold in the Scroll in Heaven and that I would meet what God had willed in the tradition of our race. As he was about to leave he said that he would be back to see me again and I knew then that if he did come back again, the decision of the Court Martial, as far as I was concerned, would be quite clear. He did, however, leave me with a new strength and peace of mind and after my prayers I sat on the tree stump and started to dose.

I lay on the floor and slept until about day-break when I awoke cold and chilled. I started to walk up and down the cell to warm myself. It was a Sunday morning, somewhere around 10 o'clock,

and I got some skilly, a mug of tea and hard biscuits. I asked the Sergeant if I could get to a lavatory and he said that he would be around again. I was later brought under armed guard to a lavatory and there I saw a pipe which I turned on and splashed my face with water. It was the first wash in seven days. I know that Eamonn Ceannt, Sean Heuston, Con Colbert, J.J. Mallen, all heard Mass on that Sunday in the prison chapel but whether I was overlooked or not, I did not get any Mass. I received a mid-day meal of tea, bully beef and biscuits and I got the same again in the evening. The day dragged along with now and again a tap on the wall with your heel to let your comrade on either side know that you were still there.. As it got dark I sat on the floor and fell asleep but I was suddenly awakened by the sound of marching feet, rattling of keys and the opening and shutting of doors. On looking towards my cell door in the darkness I could see a little pinhole of light in the centre of the peep hole, through which the warders would peer into the cells at the prisoners, at intervals, day and night. By standing on my toes I could just get my eye to the hole and see the stairs leading down to the main hall. There were two soldiers with fixed bayonets standing at ease on the landing. I cannot estimate how long I watched through that small hole. I remember walking up and down the cell - I kicked the wall of Corrigan's cell and it was at once answered so I knew that he was still there and awake. I then tried the wall on the other side and this was again answered by J. J. Burke. I heard the sound of a number of people moving outside on the landing and going to the peep-hole I noticed that the two soldiers had moved to one side. They were watching towards cells on my side of the landing and after a while two officers and the major, who took Thomas Clarke from the room over at the Warder's quarters on the morning that he was executed, appeared at the head of the stairs and started to go down. Next behind them came Con Colbert

and Eamonn Ceannt and as Con took the second or third step down he turned back and looked at Eamonn Ceannt. I cannot say, however, whether he spoke to Eamonn or not. Next came Sean Heuston and J.J. Mallen and I immediately knew what the decision in their cases had been. I then started to pray for them. I had started to walk up and down the cell for some time when I heard the first crashing sound of the volleys echo through the prison. In the silence I could hear the sound of Corrigan's voice through the cell wall and I knew that he also must be praying aloud for our comrades. I still continued to pray also. The volleys still rang out.

Some time later, just as daylight was really breaking, I again heard the march of soldiers. They were coming up the stairs and coming to my side of the landing but they passed by the door of my cell. Some three or four cells from me I heard the sound of keys and after that a cell door being opened - I remember having counted three doors being opened when I next heard the keys in J.J. Burke's cell and the door opened. I then heard the sound of men marching into his cell. After some ten or fifteen minutes I heard a key being turned in my cell door and I stood to attention determined to face what was coming as the door was opened. Three officers walked in accompanied by the Major who ordered me to stand to attention. The four of them stood looking at me for a few seconds and then the senior officer proceeded to read out charges against me as had already been read to me at the beginning of the Court Martial. "You Gerald Doyle did take part in an armed Rebellion against his Majesty the King and having been tried by Courts Martial are found guilty and sentenced to death". Here he stopped. He then asked me if I understood and I said "I do". He then proceeded to read "The Court having considered your case has commuted the sentence to life imprisonment and on their further consideration, taking your age into

consideration, the sentence was commuted to three years penal servitude". I was again asked if I understood the sentence and I said "I do". The Major ordered me to stand at ease and then again gave the order to stand to attention. He then informed me that I was a convict and a felon and that I would be transferred to one of His Majesty's Prisons in England. He then turned and slammed the door. I stood listening and next heard Corrigan's door being opened. Knowing that he had been practising as a solicitor up to the time of the Rebellion it would be very hard on him. I waited until I heard the cell door being slammed, and then went to the back of the cell and kicked on the wall. He answered and I then put my mouth to the wall and shouted "Hello". His answer then came back very distinctly. He then shouted "Five Years" and I replied "Three Years". He kicked back and then shouted "Good Luck". I then tried on J.J. Burke's cell and in the same manner got back word of the duration of his sentence when he shouted "Three Years". I then felt suddenly very tired and sat down on the floor once again reviewing all the incidents of the past few weeks. Patrick Pearse and his brother Willie, Thomas McDonagh, Major McBride, Joseph Plunkett and Thomas Clarke. The four men Eamonn Ceannt, Con Colbert, Sean Heuston and J.J. Mallen who had gone bravely to their death on that very morning. To me the outlook of the country was very black indeed and I could not refrain from wondering in my mind what was in store for Eamonn De Valera, Sean McDermott and James Connolly? (whom I knew very well through his Trade Union activities from 1913 onwards, as I also took part in the 1913 strike as an apprentice plasterer). Again turning my thoughts towards home, I began wondering how my people at home would get to know what was to become of me? How were the Irish people taking the whole position? What happened in Southern and Western Ireland? And I could also not help wondering

what would be Professor McNeill's position in days to come? It was now about 9 or 10 o'clock in the morning and I heard the cell doors opening. It was the soldiers again going from one cell to another with tea and hard biscuits for the prisoners, but as I could not eat anything, I only drank the tea.

Somewhere about 3 o'clock on that Monday evening the cell doors on my landing were being opened and after a while my own door was opened and I was ordered to stand at the door. On looking down the line I saw Harry Boland, Jack Shouldice, William O'Dea, J.J. Burke, Willie Corrigan, James Morrissey, John Clarke (North County Dublin), John Kelly and a number of other prisoners. After a while we were brought downstairs and out to the yard. Outside was a Black Maria and a couple of D.M.P. standing around it. We were herded into it and locked in. Two police stood at the back and we could see them through the grating. They seemed very friendly and asked us questions as to what part we had in the fighting One of them said that he also had a nephew who had been out, but that he had been deported to some part of England and he could not say exactly to what part he had been sent. He informed us that we were for Mountjoy and that from there we would be sent to convict settlements in England. The route taken was down Johns Road, Benburb Street, Smithfield, Bolton Street, and on to Mountjoy. While we were crossing Smithfield a woman threw herself on her knees and started cursing and screaming at the Black Maria - whether she was cursing at us or at the police we did not know. On being brought into the "Joy" we were met by a crowd of warders and after the usual taking of names and checking of a list we were brought to the baths. The first six or seven lads were lucky in getting hot water baths but the remainder of us had to be satisfied with it cold.

It was, however, so long since some of us had had a decent wash that it was really a luxury to feel clean once again. Each was then handed a shirt, grey blue trousers and socks and told to go over to where there was a heap of piled boots on the floor and told to take a pair for ourselves. From there we were marched into Wing "A" and put into separate cells. The first thing I saw in the cell was a flat board bed with a fibre mattress and blankets. At the end of the bed was a round board to act as a pillow but I soon solved that by rolling up my new suit to form a pillow. A warder then came along and said that tea and bread would be handed in to us, then it would be time to go to bed. When the bell rang I immediately got into bed and I really did enjoy it having been lying on floors in clothes for three weeks. It was really like heaven and I fell asleep immediately.

Next morning the bell went for prisoners to get up, make their beds, slops to be collected and prisoners to wash themselves before having breakfast. Breakfast consisted of porridge and milk, a mug of tea and a 12 oz. loaf. It certainly was a nice change.

At about 12 o'clock we were taken from the cells to be exercised in one of the yards. The concrete paths were in a circle and one set of prisoners was sent walking in one direction while the others went in reverse with instructions that we could not speak to each other. This instruction was, of course, ignored and the warders had eventually to give up their efforts to enforce order. On my third morning there the first man I sighted across from me, on the opposite side of the wing, was Eamonn De Valera. He had been brought in on the previous night and committed to a life sentence. We were all overjoyed to see him, as not one of us who had gone through Courts Martial could, even in our wildest dreams, believe that he would not be executed.

After dinner a warder came along and handed us pen and paper so that we could send a letter home and inform them that we were in Mountjoy Prison. That evening, after we had the usual tea and 12 oz. loaf, about thirty cells, including my own, were opened and we were again instructed to stand at the doors. I then asked the warder what was the matter and he informed me that we were going away to England but that he did not know to where. We were marched once again into the Black Maria but this time under a heavy escort of soldiers. The route this time taken was North Circular Road, by Croke Park, through Sheriff Street and on to the North Wall to the boat. As we passed through Sheriff Street, the people were out from their houses on the footpaths watching the van and, looking through the grating, who should I see but a man named Harry Tuite who was a lifelong member of the Geraldines G. F. C. and, putting my mouth to the grating, I shouted "Up the Geraldines!" I watched Harry and knew that he had heard me because, although he was without a coat and in shirt sleeves, he started following the van up the Quayside. Being a docker he soon succeeded in making his way near to the ship. As I walked up the gangway he shouted "Good Luck Ger!" and he then shouted "Up the Geraldines!"

One of the prisoners, William O'Dea, was to have been married on the Easter Monday morning but he was mobilised and turned out. He had his wedding ring in his pocket and while standing on the deck he saw his girl standing on the Quayside. There was a young officer standing in charge of us and O'Dea spoke to him and showed him the ring. He then pointed out his girl in the crowd and explained the position. At first we thought that he would not do anything for him but he did, however, call a Sergeant and pointed the girl out to him. He was instructed to give her the ring. When the people around her discovered what had happened they gave a loud cheer and

after this the soldiers lined along the Quay Wall, put the people back across the road and we were brought down into a saloon with soldiers guarding the stairs. As the boat cleared the point of the wall, we could see through the portholes the lights along Dollymount and Howth. Someone then remarked "I wonder how many of us will ever see those lights again", and I think it was Peadar Clancy who replied "Well, we will go down fighting". There was general agreement on that issue.

After we had left Howth behind everyone settled down to take the sea journey as best we could. For a couple of pounds the Sergeant of the Guard said that he would try and get us some tea. After two hours had elapsed he arrived back with an orderly and a two-gallon can of tea and the usual biscuits. It was very welcome after all the excitement of the past few hours. Dawn was just breaking and there was a light fog when we arrived at Hollyhead. I immediately recognised the place as I had been between Ireland and England a few times in 1915. Having been put on to the train an amusing incident occurred. In the grey dawn of the morning some 'Wacs' (Womens' Auxiliary Corps) came along to our carriage and threw in packets of cigarettes. They had mistaken us for recruits who had been called up for service in the army and some time later, having discovered their mistake, back they came - the ordinary British Tommy had nothing on them for their language. The lads next the window, however, showed them how much we enjoyed their cigarettes. The soldiers who were doing guard also enjoyed the huge joke immensely and after the train had started off the Captain in Charge came to each compartment and informed us that we were for Portland Prison and explained how he had arranged for any person who wished to go to a toilet, to do so.

EXPERIENCES IN PORTLAND, LEWES & PENTONVILLE PRISONS.

After long delay we left Holyhead in the grey dawn of the morning and it was raining. There were eight of us to each carriage with a soldier at each door in the corridor which was kept open and any man going to the toilet was passed from one soldier to another and passed back again. It was now definitely known that we were bound for Portland convict settlement on Portland Bill, South of England. It was also known that other prisoners had been sent there a couple of days previously. It was a long and tedious journey and we were often left in on sidings for as long as half an hour. (This was, I believe, to make a way for the troop trains which were moving troops and munitions for the channel ports.) Our train, however, arrived at Portsmouth eventually and here again we were put into a siding. Alongside us was a big munition train with huge field guns on flat cars and as it passed us by it seemed to be endless. Willie Corrigan, who was sitting beside me, said in a low whisper, "Look at these guns, Ger! Just imagine what we tried to tackle in Dublin!" Michael Scully, who was sitting near to us, overheard the remark and, in reply to Willie, said, "Willie, it may seem that we were all mad but what we did in Dublin has shaken the British Empire to its foundations, and its repercussions will be felt in America and elsewhere". We then repeated to him what Tom Clarke had said to us in Kilmainham jail on the night before he was executed, and continued discussing affairs. Where we were now going, the men of a previous generation who had also been held as prisoners - Michael Lavitt, O'Donovan Rossa, O'Leary, Daly and a host of others - had also gone. Michael Scully, who was an

employe of the Corporation and had been the job of cutting telephone cables connected to the barracks, told of how, on Easter Monday morning when he lifted up the manhole, a D.M.P. man asked him what was wrong and he said that the cable was out of order. The policeman then proceeded to see that the traffic did not interfere with him, and at about this time there was a volley of shots from the Four Courts and the policeman disappeared. Michael then reported back to the Four Courts. The story lost nothing in the telling as we listened to his soft Galway accent.

I had to go to the toilet and standing outside of it was a soldier (a little man who appeared to be a friendly type). I awaited my turn and, while doing so, the solider spoke to me and said, "I suppose you are the black sheep of the family, but you don't look like it!" He then asked me if I was in the fighting, and I said that I was, so he said to me, "It was bloody hot while it lasted!" He then informed me that he thought that he had landed in France, and asked me if I would give him my Rosary beads as they were booked to travel to Flanders next week. I asked him if he was a Roman Catholic, and he said, "No", and went on to say, "The Rosary beads are a very lucky charm to wear around your neck and you will not need them in Portland as there will be no fighting there". I had not time to finish my conversation as I was then moved along. When I got back to my carriage, I took delight in telling the story of the soldier on toilet duty to my comrades, and there was general amusement about the incident.

It was some time in the evening before we arrived at Portland Bill. The Prison is some ten miles from

the mainland and connected by railway with a small village at the bottom of the hill. We were marched from the station up to the prison, and the people came and stood at their doors to watch us as we passed. They did not appear to be hostile. As we neared the gates, anyone who had cigarettes left gave them to their nearest escort because we all knew that they would be confiscated as soon as we were handed over to the prison authorities. Waiting for us at the prison gates were about thirty warders - each one held an old-fashioned gun and in his belt carried a short sword. As our names were called out, we were told to step forward facing the warders, who, in turn, took us in charge. Having completed the formalities of checking the lists, we were marched to a long, one-storey building - this was the bath-house. There were a number of convicts in charge of the baths, and each prisoner was told to strip and have a bath. This we did, and as each one of us came out, we were handed inside-knicks, blue striped shirts and brown knee breeches and jacket, with a broad arrow stamped all over them. Each prisoner had then to stand exactly where he had left his own clothes, and having been searched, the clothes were made into bundles, names pinned on to them and any money a prisoner had was counted and he signed a receipt for that amount. I had exactly 1/6d. and I had to sign for it.

The officer-in-charge of warders then addressed us and said that we were now convicts and that we would have to obey the regulations of the prison. Each man would be supplied with a copy of the regulations which he must hang up on the wall of his cell, and once a man carried out all these regulations, he would get along alright.

We were then marched to A. wing of the prison, and each put into a cell on the second floor. After the noise of the slamming of cell doors and the rattling of warders keys thoughout the prison had ceased, a dead silence settled. I began to have a look around my cell and found that there were a tin mug and a plate, a little tin of salt, a tin with white brick bath for polishing your basin (in which you washed your face) and attached to the wall a bed. You pulled down the two legs of the bed, and this kept you about eighteen inches from the floor. Fibre mattress, sheets, two blankets and a pillow completed the bed. In a corner beside the door was a two-inch table board fixed into the angle of the wall, and over it was a small pane of glass through which the gaslight, used to light the cells during winter, came in. In summertime there was no need for it as all prisoners had to be in bed by eight o'clock. I then took stock of my new uniform with its broad arrows and, quite unconsciously, I began humming to myself, "The Felons of Our Land". I must say I felt the better of it. Again started the opening and slamming of doors; this time it was that a pint of cocoa, twelve ounce loaf and ounce of margarine were being handed to the prisoners. It was the first bite we had to eat since we left the boat on the previous evening. As the warder closed the door, he informed me that when the bell would ring it would be time for bed and, on hearing it on the following morning, it would be time to get up. He said that I would then have to get up, get myself washed, tidy my cell and be ready to hand out my slops when the warder called for them.

After I had eaten my meal, I washed my mug and made up my bed. I was very curious to know exactly what

could be seen from my cell window as I knew that, by standing on my bed, I could see out. My window was higher than the boundary wall of the prison, and outside was the sea, the English Channel. Across the bay was the coastline of the mainland, and out to sea I could see ships. One, which seemed to me as if it was coming to land, appeared to be a naval vessel. I did not know at this time that there was a naval base at Portland. I was soon brought back to realities, however, when a voice from the door ordered me to, "Get down from the window and get to bed!" I looked, and all that I could see was an eye, looking through a spy hole. I said my prayers and got into bed, and, after a while, I heard the flap of the spy-hole move again, but I did not bother to look and was, as a matter of fact, very soon fast asleep. It seemed as if I had only fallen off to sleep when I heard the bell ringing for to get up and meet a new day. Remembering my instructions, I got up and got busy. Soon I hear the familiar rattle of keys and the noise of the opening and slamming of doors along the line of cells. When the warder opened the door, he had with him two prisoners who were carrying a big container into which they emptied all slops. One was Denis O'Callaghan and the other, John Williams. Both gave us a wink, with a smile in their eyes. I had to keep a straight face, as the warder was facing me, but I could not help noticing the remarkable change in both of them since I had last seen them in Richmond barracks. O'Callaghan's head of red, curly hair had gone - and it had been shaven off tightly, right to the skull, making him look like a really tough guy. There was, however, still that twinkle of good humour in his eye. John Williams - who previously had a mop of black hair - had also been shaven and his face appeared very long and serious.

Having seen both of them, I began to grow amused figuring exactly what I myself would look like with all of my hair cropped off, and being blessed with a pair of large ears, I tried to imagine how they would stand out from the side of my head.

At about 7.30 a.m. our cell doors were pushed open again, and the same warder and two prisoners appeared, this time pushing a large trolley. They handed in a large tin containing about a pint of porridge, a pint of cocoa and six ounces of bread. After the tins were collected, silence again reigned for about an hour until I heard the sound of marching feet in the yard outside of my window and orders being given to halt. Getting up on to my bed, I could see down into the yard where there were about two hundred convicts in batches of twenty. Some had the same uniforms as myself, with numbers on their chests and hats, others were black and white like draught boards, and others had jackets, one half, black, and one half, yellow. Some wore knee breeches and stockings. In another corner of the yard were four-wheeled floats, with sixteen men attached to each, and about thirty guards stood around, armed with their shot-guns and short swords. These men, chained to the carts, were being taken out to work in the quarries, and the others, I later learned, were convicts who had escaped from other prisons and convicts who were termed as dangerous, vicious killers. It was by their distinctive class of dress that each prisoner was known at a glance. How often I used to watch that scene in the mornings and watch the men returning from the quarries in the evenings. All were searched before being marched off to their cells for the night. On that first morning, the thought entered my mind - if such tasks are to be the

lot of the Irish prisoners, to be sent out to the quarries chained to carts like animals, how will they face it? After some time I again heard doors being opened and shut. It was the prisoners who had been brought into the prison on the previous evening being taken away and brought back. It came to my turn. Two warders came to my door, stood at it and told me to put on my jacket and hat. Having done so, I was marched across to another section of the prison into a large room, handed an old coat, told to put it on and then to sit in a chair. I was then photographed in this dress - photographed in my convict uniform - and my fingerprints taken. I was measured for height, my weight checked, and then handed over to the prison doctor. He brought me to another room where I was told to strip. The doctor examined me to find any distinctive marks on my body and to find if I suffered from any disease. I was questioned as to what I worked at outside, and having been asked what standard of education I had reached on leaving school, I was handed a book out of which I had to read a paragraph. With this ordeal over, I was again marched back to my cell. Soon afterwards, I had a visit from another warder. He had come to take my measurements for uniform, boots and slippers. He also handed me a copy of the prison regulations, to hang up in my cell. He asked me if I had ever previously been in prison, and I said, "No", so he explained to me what to do and also showed me how to make my bed. He said that the floor of my cell must be washed and polished every morning for inspection and that my pot basin be cleaned and polished with the sandstone in the jar. He also said that I was not to attempt to hide things in my cell and not to lose my temper, and I would

would get along alright. After about an hour, he came back to me again with a complete new uniform. He also gave me a boat-shaped hat, with the number Q167 on it. The same number was also on my coat, a pair of heavy boots and slippers. Boots were to be worn while out working or at exercise, and slippers to be worn while in the cells as prisoners could not make any noise. From the moment each prisoner received a number, he was never again addressed by his name but by the number of his coat.

Dinner was served at 12 noon. This meal consisted of a pint of soup, with a few pieces of fat meat floating on top, two potatoes and some cabbage. After dinner, I had another visitor - this time it was the warder in charge of the workshop for making sacks, mailbags and coalbags for the navy. He had a roll of sacking, a length of rope, skein of hemp, sackmaker's needle and a leather palm, with a metal cup in the centre. Again, the first question I was asked was if I had ever before been in prison, and when I replied, "No", the warder said, "Them I must explain and show you how to make a mailbag". He then proceeded to show me how to make wax end and use the palm. The cup in the centre was for pushing the sack needle through the sacking. After he had seen me started at my work, he left and said that he would be back again tomorrow to see how I was getting on. I then asked him if we were allowed out for exercises, and he said, "Yes", but continued saying, "After you have done the next four weeks in solitary confinement and if you keep yourself busy making mailbags, it won't be long passing!" Not long after, the prison bell rang, and each prisoner was instructed to leave the sacking needle, palm, rope, wax and hemp outside of his cell

door. It was done in such a manner that no one prisoner could see the other. Next thing was that a pint of cocoa, twelve ounce loaf and half an ounce of margarine were handed out to each prisoner - it was time for bed, and so ended my first day of experience as a prisoner. On that evening, however, I waited until the warder had completed his rounds of the cells, to see that each prisoner was in bed, before having my look out at the sea and the sun shining on it. By looking to my right, I could see a portion of a field with wheat growing in it and two men working in it. All too soon, the 5.30 a.m. bell rang for yet the start of another day. After breakfast and cell inspection, my sacks were handed in to me, and I was told to "get to it" and the door slammed. Some time later, the door was opened and a tall, old warder, wearing glasses, came into my cell. He said that he was the librarian and a school master, and that, if I wished to study any subject I liked, he would help me. He said that I would get a slate and pencil to do whatever I wished to work at, and that I would also get a book from the library every week. All that I would have to do would be, select a book from the list, write the name of the book on the slate and leave it outside the cell door on a Friday morning. He then asked me if I had a trade and what I had worked at outside. I told him that I was a plasterer by trade but, not being twenty-one years of age, I was not counted as having completed my apprenticeship. He then asked me what religion I was, and I told him that I was a Roman Catholic. All this information he noted down in his book. I then asked him when I would get a book to read, and he said when I had my four weeks' solitrry detention over. He pulled the bell handle on the cell door for to be allowed out, and turning to me before

he left, said that he would be seeing me again. (This much I will say for him, he always did try to get whatever book you asked for, if it was on the list at all.) I read nearly all of Canon Sheehan's books, including Glenanaar, Graves of Kilmorna, My New Curate, Lisheen, three volumes of the American War Of Independence, and also a book, in English and Irish, by Bishop McHale, Tuam, and books by a host of English writers.

My next visitor was the prison chaplain, Fr. O'Loughlin. He appeared distant, rather restrained, not so sure of himself. He stood looking at me. I waved my hand at the prison stool and remained standing myself, showing my respect for a priest. He then informed me that he was the prison chaplain and that his name was Fr. O'Loughlin, an Englishman. He questioned me as to when I had last been to Confession, attended Mass, and if my parents were alive. He told me that I would get pen and paper to write a letter home, but that I could put nothing in it about the prison. He also said that he was making arrangements for us to hear Mass on Sunday. He suddenly said, "I am sure that you are now sorry for the trouble you brought on Ireland by your action", and, in reply, I said, "No, I am not sorry! I have faith in my country". He shook his head, and rang the bell for the door to be opened. It seems that, before the arrival of the Irish prisoners at Portland, he had received reports that, during the fighting of Easter Week, the Volunteers had raped, robbed and burnt down the city of Dublin, and now that he was meeting them, face to face, as individuals and as Irish Catholics, he was meeting a new situation which meant a new adjustment of his own point of view and ideas. There were doctors,

solicitors, chemists and men who were prominent in the public life of the city, civil servants, tradesmen and school masters, as well as farmers, all of whom make up the decent citizens of a country and who, in this instance, had dared to take up arms in the defence of their own country - that was the crime they had committed.

Our first Mass was in a loft on a shed, as there was no proper Catholic chucch at Portland prison, but they were building one at the time. The seats were arranged so that a warder always sat up on a high stool in order that he could see and watch each two seats of prisoners during Mass. At the end of the Mass, a special prayer was offered up for King George of England, but the Irish prisoners changed that prayer, and they prayed aloud for Ireland. The result - that prayer was immediately dropped altogether at our Mass in future. As we were still all in solitary confinement, we were, once again, marched back to our cells, not to see each other until the following Sunday. On the fourth week, however, I suddenly got an idea - why not use my rope from the top of the mailbag as a skipping rope? I immediately took off my slippers and commenced skipping up and down my cell. I really enjoyed the exercise. Once again, I was under observation through the spy hole, and on the next morning I was brought before the Governor of the prison and charged with not doing my task. As a result, I was given three days on bread and water, and brought over to what are known as the separate cells in another part of the prison.

My experience here was: my boots were taken from me, and I was given a pair of canvas slippers. Next, about eight or nine pieces of tarred rope, about two inches thick and nine inches long, were thrown into my cell and the door slammed. I picked them up, had a

look at them, and then threw them back into the corner of my cell. I then proceeded to march up and down my cell. Somewhere about four o'clock in the evening, a warder opened my cell door, had a look at me and then said, "Do you refuse to pick oakum?". I looked at him, and then asked, "What's that?" He pointed to the pieces of rope and said, "Them!". I shook my head. He then asked if I was ever in jail before, and I said, "No". He then asked me if I had ever made a fiddle, and again I replied, "No". He then sat down on a stump of a tree which was fixed to the floor to act as a stool, and taking two pieces of the tarred rope, beat one against the other until he loosened the strands. (An inch thick rope is five other small strings which, when twisted together, give you a rope of an inch thickness.) After he had loosened them and separated the strands, he tied them, end to end, in order that they would go as a band around the thigh, just above the knee. He then took one of the other strings and, putting it under the circle around the thigh, began to draw it back and forth until the strands became loose. He then pulled all asunder until it was a little heap of fibre. Thus, I became initiated into the art of picking oakum. He informed me that I would have to have six pounds picked by the following evening. After he had left the cell, I began to try it out, until I had about six strands done, and noticed that the tops of my fingers were becoming red. I knew that, if I continued, I would soon have sore fingers, and so I had a sit-down strike on my own. Next, the door opened and I was told to put my bits of rope and little pile of oakum outside the door. No comment was made on what I had done for the day. Next, I was handed a rubber pint measure of water and twelve ounce loaf - my evening meal. In

about an hour's time, I estimated that it was about 6.30 p.m. - my cell was again opened and I was instructed to hand out my clothes. I was left standing in my shirt, and next thing handed to me were two blankets to sleep in. The door was then slammed for the night. I folded the blankets around me, and walked up and down the cell for a couple of hours. I could hear the sound of warders' voices in the corridor, and my eyes were becoming used to the darkness of the cell. I could still see a little grey square, high on the end of the cell wall, and this I knew was my cell window. I sat with my back to the cell wall, trying to get some sleep, but I woke up with a pain in the back of my neck. Next I spread out one blanket on the floor and, sitting on one half, I pulled the other half over my feet, to try and keep them warm. I then wrapped the other blanket around my shoulders, turned on my side and tried to get some sleep. When my hip and shoulder became sore, I turned on to my other side - the same story. So I ended up lying on my back. When next I opened my eyes, the light of a new day was shining through my window. I became aware that my shoulder blades were sore, and so I got to my feet and, making a skirt out of one blanket and with the other around my shoulders, I again started to walk up and down the cell. This was to take the stiffness out of my bones.

About 6 a.m. my cell door was opened and my clothes handed in to me. My blankets were taken away. Next thing my rubber measure and loaf were again produced. Next meal would be 5.30 that evening. At about ten o'clock an order was shouted through each cell door, "Prisoners, stand at your doors!" When the inner door was opened, there was still a steel grid door on the

outside. The head warder passed from one cell to another, and had a look at each prisoner, and next the prison doctor examined each prisoner in his cell. This he did under the eyes of the warders. After this, my rope and little nest of oakum were again handed in to me, and once again I tried to tease the hemp strands in order to pass my time. Several times during the day, I heard the spy hole moving but I never once turned to look. The day passed again, and on that evening no comment was made on the amount of work I had done. I received my bread and water, my clothes were taken out, and my blankets handed in. I walked up and down my cell until I was tired out, and this time I tried going to sleep by lying on my back. Eventually, by lying in a relaxed position, I succeeded in doing so. I was suddenly awakened by a considerable commotion, and a man shouting and using obscene language, cell doors opening and slamming, and warders' voices outside. All became quiet again, however, and my efforts to get to sleep followed on the same lines as on the previous night.

At 6 a.m. I received my clothes, pint of water and loaf, pieces of rope and what oakum I had picked. I could hear the sound of people talking in the corridor, and more activity than usual. About ten or eleven o'clock I heard a scream, followed by another. It was an awful experience, and I later learned that it was a convict who had, on the previous evening, attacked a warder, and who had been ordered six lashes of the cat. Sometime around twelve noon, my cell door was opened, and my boots handed in to me. I was also handed my hat and what was known as a "slops jacket". (It was a cotton article, with red, white and blue stripes.) I was then marched to my cell in A. wing and handed over to the warder in charge of the wing.

As soon as I entered the cell, I knew that it had been searched. The yellow sand stone for cleaning cell utensils had been thrown all over the floor and walked into it. It really was a job to get it out of the floor. The warder looked over my shoulder to see what I was looking at, and when he saw the cell, he did not pass any remark but brought be down to a water pipe, handed me a cloth and a bucket and told me to have the cell washed out and polished for inspection after dinner. This searching of the cells was routine and, while some were decent about doing so, others took delight in leaving the cells in a mess, especially when the prisoners had been let out for exercise. Along with my sentence of three days' bread and water, I forgot to mention that I was also deprived of the privilege of receiving or sending home a letter for six months. The bread and water sentence was nothing to compare with the loss of a letter from home.

On that evening, Fr. O'Loughlin came into my cell to see if I wished to go to Confession. I said that I did. I could feel quite clearly the change in his manner which he had adopted since our previous meeting. He was more friendly, and also knew that I had just come off my bread and water diet. He asked me what I had done, and I told him about my skipping exercise in the cell. I could see that he was amused, and I laughed myself also. He then told me that he had a letter from home which he would let me read but that I could not keep it. He also promised that he himself would write to my mother. On the following morning, I was taken from my cell and given the job of washing the little white recess where the gas-light (used to light the prison cells) was fixed. While doing this, I got to know of everyone who was on

my landing on the wing. The warder was a man who had been out on pension but who had been recalled, to permit younger men to be released for active service, and as long as he could see me from a distance and I was using the brush, I could continue to talk to my comrades on the inside, and exchange names and tell from what part of the country we came. At last our four weeks' separate detention was over.

On the morning of Monday, after breakfast, we were brought to the chapel for morning prayers after which we were marched back to our cells to clean up and get ready for inspection. After this, orders came to dress in our slop jackets and hats and stand at our cell doors. Each prisoner stood just inside of his door to await the order, "two paces forward, right and left turn". We were then marched downstairs to the bottom floor where we were lined, two deep. Each one of us was then searched after which the Superintendent informed us that we were being brought for exercise. He said that each prisoner would remain three paces from the man in front of him, and that any attempt to speak would be punishable. About ten warders were placed at vantage points around the yard in such manner that there was always one of them facing the line of prisoners and could see them as they were marched in single file. It was the first opportunity we had had of really seeing each other when we were all together. Naturally, the names which came firstly to my mind on that June morning were the names of the men who were in my own company - B. Company, 4th Battalion, Dublin Brigade, Irish Volunteers. Captain George Irvine, one of the gentlest of men in manner - it was really only those of us who had been with him under fire who could realise the fighting

spirit hidden beneath his gentleness. Although a member of the Church of Ireland, George always joined in our prayers with us, and attended at Mass on all occasions while a prisoner in England. 1st Lieutenant William Cosgrave - he was Chairman of the Finance Department, Dublin Corporation, later to become T.D. for Kilkenny in the first Dáil election, and the second President in the Government of Saorstál Éireann in 1922 - was a man of great determination and ability and one who was quite reserved in his manner. His brother, Phil Cosgrage, full of life and ever willing to play a joke and take one too, did his part in the second phase of the fighting during the Black and Tan period. (Their step-brother, Frank Bourke, had been killed in the fighting at the Mount Brown side of the South Dublin Union, James Street.) Willie Corrigan, who was a solicitor by profession, was one of the best as he proved during the fighting and later while awaiting his court martial. There were John Downey, James Morrissey, J.J. Burke, Thomas and Charlie Bevan (brothers), Maurice Brennan, James Brennan, Michael Brady, Joseph Byrne, John F. Cullen (who died shortly following his release in 1917), John Clarke (a North County Dublin farmer who took part in the battle of Ashbourne), Frank Brooks (a painter by trade), Richard Coleman, J. Derrington, James Dempsey, Richard Davies, Peadar Doyle (Adjutant, F. Company, 4th Battalion), John Faulkner, Seamus T. Hughes, Richard and P. Kelly, Finian Lynch (teacher), George Levins (painter), Michael Mervyn (electrician), James Melvin, John Marks, J. Norton, Vincent Poole, George and Seán Plunkett (brothers of Joseph Mary Plunkett who was executed), William Meehan, Peadar E. Sweeney, J.J. Reid, Liam Tobin, Denis O'Callaghan, John Williams, Edward Duggan (solicitor), Pearse Beaslaí, Joseph McGuinness,

Thomas Peppard, James O'Sullivan, John O'Brien, Henry O'Hanrahan (brother of Michael O'Hanrahan, executed) and Peadar Clancy. I can still picture him, six feet tall, with the bearing of a soldier.

One morning while on exercise, I was taken out from the line and brought to see the dentist as I was having considerable trouble with my teeth. While waiting for a warder to come and take me away, two superintendents, who had come into the yard and were standing watching the Irish prisoners as they passed, spoke, and one of them remarked about Peadar Clancy, saying, "I like the cut of that lad! What a soldier he would make!" (Both of them had already fought in the Boer War.) Little did they know that the lad on whom they had picked was to be perpetuated in Irish history, and that one of our military barracks - Clancy Barracks in Dublin City - would be given the name of this great soldier. What greater tribute could be paid to him?

After exercise on that morning, the new routine was started. We were divided into two parties - one remained in A. wing, and the others were sent to D. wing. Here, they had stools which stood about three feet apart, in order to keep the prisoners from talking to one another while at work. The mailbags, on which we had been previously working in our cells, were again handed out, and a warder named Quelch always kept walking up and down the line and watching us at our work, in order to prevent us from talking. After the second or third time, we were able to time him as he walked up and down, and we managed to get a few words at a time to the man on either side. Fr. O'Loughlin, who had by this time become quite friendly with us, began to give us

information on the general trend of events at home, as well as some war news. It is amazing how quickly the news passed around. Roger Casement's trial - the death sentence, and when it was to be carried out. On the morning of his execution, we all prayed for the repose of his soul in our morning prayers. We also got to know all about what had happened at Dartmouth prison when Eamon de Valera called the prisoners to attention when Eoin McNeill came to the jail as a prisoner, and also that Dev. had since been removed to another prison. One day while I was telling Willie Corrigan about my three days' bread and water and my experience picking the oakum, Willie started to laugh, and Quelch caught him and just said, "No. so-and-so! Cut it out!" On the next morning, a strange warder came to where we were working, and called out Corrigan's number. He told him to dress himself, and as Willie folded up his sack on his stool, he whispered into my ear, "It must be a visit from my father or my brother. If so, I will get him to call to see your mother when he gets back". After dinner, however, there was still no sign of Corrigan, and Tom Hunter, who was in the cell sitting on the other side of me, asked where he was. In stages, I told Tom exactly what Willie had said to me, and Tom said back, "It is a very long interview". We were watching the warder and, as he turned, I said to Tom, "They must have let him out for the evening". At this remark, Tom took a fit of laughing, and Quelch again caught him. Next morning, in came the warder, called out his number and told him to fold up his sack. He said to me, "I'll soon find out what happened to Corrigan", and he was then taken away. I was then moved up on to Hunter's stool, beside Jack Plunkeet, and after a while, Jack said back to me, "I suppose I am the next one who will

disappear". I asked him, "Why?", and he said, "Because both Corrigan and Hunter are gone from each side of you". By this time, I guessed where they awere, and was waiting Corrigan to return next day. When I thought of Willie Corrigan on bread and water, I became amused and laughed, but I was caught myself, and on the next morning I was again marched off for my second spell of bread and water. On the way over, I met Corrigan on his way back, and he had a big grin on his face as he passed me. As a result of his grinning, he too was nearly being taken back for his second term.

After these incidents, there was an awakening of ideas as to how to combat the jail system and start a movement for the status of political prisoners but, due to the manner in which we were regulated, it was very difficult to get the idea circulated, as none of the prisoners were allowed pens, pencils or writing paper. On the other hand, prisoners who had received letters from home could read between the lines and know that there was also a general awakening at home. Larry Ginnell had raised questions in the British House of Commons about the prisoners in Frongoch Camp and, with these tit-bits beginning to come through, we also found that there was a new spirit amongst the prisoners in Portland. A new innovation was brought about in the prison. It was announced that, after dinner on Saturdays, news of the war and how it was progressing would be read to the prisoners in the Presbyterian church. Father O'Loughlin was to read the news. It was an old, large church, with the gallery at the back. It was on the gallery that the Irish prisoners were seated. The front of this gallery was of such a height that, when you took your seat, you could not look down into the body of the church. We

could, however, see the altar of the church. We were the first to be marched in and, after us, came the convicts. They were also marched in, but amongst them could be heard the noise of rattling chains. Being in the front row, I stood up to look down and see what was the cause of the rattling, and there I saw a number of convicts who were chained from their wrists to their waists, from their waists to their ankles, and they were being herded into their seats. It was the first opportunity that we had got of seeing such men.

When Fr. O'Loughlin came on to the altar, he had with him a large map of Europe which he hung from two lines. As he spoke of the different theatres of the war, he gave a general idea of how the battle line raged across Europe, the Balkans and Russia. It was at this first lecture that we heard about the tanks and of how they had broken through the German lines. He tried to make the war news interesting in his descriptions of what it was claimed that the new war weapons could do. We had those lectures on war news continued for some weeks.

It was at the end of September when we had a taste of some excitement. We had just been put into our cells after dinner hour when all the land batteries from the naval base opened fire. The walls of the jail trembled, the heavy iron jail doors rocked and banged from the concussions. I jumped up on to my bed to look out to sea. I later learned that a German submarine had come into the bay, and as its periscope cut through the water, the sea-gulls started to fly around, so its location was picked up by the look-out at the base, and the batteries immediately opened fire. It was around the same time that we also heard of the air raid on London by Zeppelin airship. One night, there was a great commotion

throughout the prison. News had come through to the prison that there was a night raid by some Zeppelins over England, and that they were coming in the direction of the naval base and the prison. Most of the Irish prisoners were awakened by the noise and, as a precaution, the convicts were moved to basement cells, but the Irish prisoners were not moved. Father O'Loughlin, who had now come a long way over to us, began to get the Irish daily papers and, as he had been studying carefully the situation in Ireland, he made it known to us that there was a general expectancy in Dublin that the prisoners in Frongoch would be released by Christmas. This was hard to believe, but the rumour became more insistent when, in a letter, came the news that men had been released.

I received a letter from home - it was, in fact, a number of letters written into one, as each paragraph was written by different persons. Five of them had been in Frongoch and had been released, with a hint that things were moving in our direction and the possibility of a change of residence in the near future. I was not allowed to keep this letter, as I had been deprived, at that particular time, from receiving letters for a period of twelve months for a breach of prison regulations. We noticed that some of the regular warders had disappeared, and were being replaced by older men from other prisons. One night as I lay in bed, I could get the smell of tobacco coming from under the door. It certainly was a delectable smell but, at the same time, it was tantalising. At last, I got up and spoke to the warder through the door. I asked him if he could not smoke somewhere else, and he gave a bit of a chuckle. Answering back, he asked me, "What part of Ireland do you come from?" - and I replied, "Dublin". He then informed

me that he was from Belfast and had just been transferred to Portland. I asked him how the war was going on, and he said that the Russian front had collapsed. From time to time, he would step into the recess of my door and have his smoke. From there, he could see down the whole wing of the prison to the intersection of the four wings. About a week or so later, he was on night duty again and, when I knew that he was outside the door, I let him know that I was awake. He whispered through the door that there was a chance we might be shifted to another prison before Christmas, but that he could not really say if there was any truth in it. This confirmed in my mind exactly what had been hinted at in my letter from the lads at home. Next morning, to my amazement, when our cells were opened to go to our morning prayers, Seamus Brennan (whose cell was opposite to mine but on the bottom floor) was able, by standing back, to give me a signal that we were going on a journey. I thought the same warder who had given me the news had also given this message to him, but it was not so. He had heard from Father O'Loughlin that efforts were being made on our behalf for this action to be taken. The pressure at home was beginning to take effect on the Irish Party, and the question had been raised at Westminster. I had, at this time, a very severe cold which I had caught through having had a warm bath and then being put to work in a draught. I was threatened with pneumonia and drafted over to sick bay. At the same time as patients in the hospital were Peadar Doyle, John Cullen, Michael Scully. Our cell doors were left open all day and all night, but there was an outer steel grill door, locked, and this meant that we could be under observation both night and day. It was a convict who acted as male nurse. He was a doctor who had been convicted for illegal

operations, and was doing a five years' sentence. His time was up about Christmas. He also had the rumour that we were going to another prison. About two weeks later, Fr. O'Loughlin came in, in great excitement. He said that he had come to tell us that it had been confirmed that we were being transferred to Lewes jail, and that the men from Dartmoor and other prisons were also being transferred. The change over was due to take place before Christmas. He also said that, when transferred, he would be transferred with us as chaplain. We were all glad to hear the news. We asked him what our conditions would be at Lewes, and he said that there would be no restrictions as regards talking to one another, and that we would be allowed to exercise together. He also said that, although we would still have warders, we would have to do all our own cooking, laundry, and work in the prison workshops, and that we would be allowed to write letters home once a month. He said that we would, however, still have to wear our convict uniforms. I could picture the excitement amongst the rest of the lads over in A. wing when the news was confirmed. I would like to have been over with them at the time, to get full details of the conditions under which the transfer would take place.

Transfer to Lewes Jail:

The Governor and Fr. O'Loughlin were present when the official order was given. It was announced that, if the Irish prisoners would give their word of honour, that there would be no attempt to escape, that they would not be handcuffed while travelling. (I believe that J.J. Walsh and a number of others would not give their word of honour and, as a result, they were transferred,

dressed in convict uniform and handcuffed.) Next thing we heard over in the hospital was that a number of prisoners had already been transferred, but that we would not be allowed go until we were well enough to travel. Our carriage was reserved, and we were accompanied on our journey by Warder Quelch who had got me the three days' bread and water sentence. We were the last of the prisoners to leave Portland. Quelch informed us that he was transferred to travel to Lewes with us. For the first hour or so, he sat in the corner of the carriage, and did not speak, but, after a while, he began to talk of the jail system and said that it was a continual grind on prisoners and that, if they were in any way weak in the mind, there was a possibility of them losing their minds completely. We knew for a fact that the silence system had made a number of our lads talk out loud in their sleep or that, when they would be locked into their cells in the evening, they would read aloud, just to hear the sound of their voices. Pearse Beaslaí, who was in the cell beneath mine, would very often read aloud passages from whatever book he would be reading. I would often tap with my boot on the floor, just to get him to answer back. I asked Quelch would there be another chaplain appointed to Portland in place of Fr. O'Loughlin, and he said that he did not think so as there was an old priest and curate in the village who would look after the Catholic prisoners. (I was to meet this old priest later, and what a gallant personality he was!) It was during this journey that we saw the famous white horse cut out of chalk in the hills of the Downs, outside of Lewes. It was some time around 7 p.m. when we arrived at the jail. Having been handed over, we were changed into our convict uniforms. The head

warder introduced himself, and outlined our changed living conditions. His name was Stone, and he was later christened "Von-Cloc" by the prisoners. He became rather friendly with us all. We later found out that the warders who had come from Dartmoor and Portland jails found their changes very hard to operate. They were never, in most cases, as easy to deal with as the warders from Lewes jail itself.

After we were put into our cells, we were handed a pint mug of tea, a twelve ounce loaf and half an ounce of margarine and, in addition, a square of cheese. The tea was the first I had tasted since leaving Dublin. Michael Mervyn was the orderly, and it was a change indeed to hear him saying, "Hello, Ger! Glad to see that you have arrived!" He said that Dev. had also arrived on the same evening from Maidstone where he had been sent from Dartmoor. After I had gone to bed, I found that I could not sleep. At first, I was thinking that, at last, I would get a chance of writing a letter home and hearing once again from the family.

On the following morning, the bell rang as usual, slops were collected, and then breakfast was handed out. It was Michael Mervyn and Vincent Poole who brought around the trays. A pint of porridge, pint of tea, twelve ounce loaf and one ounce margarine. The tea was really a welcome change to the heavy, greasy cocoa which was handed to us at Portland. The smile of welcome from my comrades was a surprise, due to the fact that the warder did not intervene when we shook each others' hands and spoke to each other. After breakfast, the cell doors were opened, and a warder called to us to stand at our doors. As the cells on the opposite side

of the wing opened, I could see some of the other Portland prisoners whose faces I recognised, and also some new faces that I had never seen before. They were some men who had been brought from the country and tried after I had been taken from Richmond barracks. One face which I did recognise immediately was that of Austin Stack. I had met him in Kerry when I travelled with the Geraldines Football Club to play in Tralee in 1915. As we were given the order, one pace forward, right and left turn, the man to step from the cell on my right was Desmond Fitzgerald. On my left was Con Collins of Limerick. They had both been in Dartmoor. We were marched to the chapel for morning prayers, but my thoughts were not on my prayers as I looked at all the familiar faces around me to discover that I had a number of old friends here near to me. After prayers, we were marched down to the bottom floor and lined two deep. We were then broken into working parties.

The work parties were workshop, garden, laundry, cleaning parties. We had to wash bottom floors or landings and cat-walks, or clean offices. We also had to clean chapels. As the four of us from Portland were last into Lewes, we had to wait until the others were marched away. We were then brought to the doctor for examination. Peadar Doyle was put into a party for sweeping out offices and the chapel, John Cullen was put into sick bay on a special diet, and Michael Scully and myself were both brought to the workshop. Michael Scully was put to work with Con O'Donovan, making fibre mats and I was put to work at one of the hand looms with Finian Lynch. Also on the hand looms were Frank Fahy, Thomas Ashe, Harry Boland, John Shouldice, Eamonn de Valera, Thomas Hunter, Willie Corrigan, and William Partridge

(who was in the forefront during the 1913 strike and formation of the Citizen Army). Dartmoor had taken toll of his health, and he was constantly complaining of pains in his stomach. Everyone knew that he was a very sick man, but his great courage prevented him from giving in although advised by Dr. Dick Hayes and others in the hospital wards to take it easy. Efforts were later made to try and have him released for proper hospital treatment outside, but the British authorities refused to act.

At eleven o'clock, we were marched out for exercise. Once all out in the grounds, we were permitted to mingle together as we wished, and to march around in groups. That first morning was, however, a busy one, with handshakes and introductions to new friends and comrades from all over Ireland. Jack Shouldice, Harry Boland, Finian Lynch and myself had a lot of information to exchange with each other about old comrades who had been released from Frongoch and who had written, asking about a lot of us and enquiring as to how our health was keeping. Then, as I met such different personalities as Eoin McNeill - it was with some reserve that I first spoke to him, remembering, as I did, that notice which had appeared in the papers on Easter Sunday morning calling off the parade. I did not, however, attempt at any time to bring this subject up, no matter how often I was in his company and despite the fact that he worked with me on a loom for a period. Hand looms in Lewes were made chiefly for making woollen mats for use in sitting rooms or Government offices. You worked according to a card placed on your loom (showing the number of different colours used in the pattern) which could also be turned into use for the

making of cloth just like the hand looms that make the Irish tweed. I do remember an incident which took place when, on one day, Eoin McNeill was in another working party making mail bags. With him were Austin Stack, Tom Hunter and a number of others. Suddenly, there was a sound of angry voices, and Eoin McNeill jumped to his feet and shouted, saying that he was not revolutionary of that type and that he objected to secret societies and would have nothing to do with them. There was a shocked silence. The warder, who was at the end of the shop setting up a frame for the making of fibre mats, came up but everyone was working and had calmed down. The affair passed off. It was learned that he had been approached to join the Irish Republican Brotherhood, always referred to as the I.R.B., and had refused. While working on the looms, we had always time for a talk. During our time in the shop, Tom Ashe, Harry Boland, Finian Lynch and Frank Fahy used to enjoy their debates with one another. Harry Boland was always ready to play a joke and let others do so, but, under all his boyish pranks, he was a man of sheer determination that all that had taken place last Easter would be carried on this time until independence was won for Ireland. It was the Fenian tradition showing in Harry. It was my privilege indeed to be in the company of such men and to take part in their discussions when trying to estimate the changes that were taking place at home and how they could take advantage of the authorities at Lewes jail. Dev., flanked by Thomas Ashe, had emerged as spokesman for the Lewes prisoners, also supported by Harry Boland, Austin Stack, Frank Fahy, Thomas Hunter, Willie Cosgrave, Jeremiah C. Lynch, Michael de Lacy, Seamus Doyle, Seán Etchingham and Robert Brennan. It was the I.R.B. taking control. Men were being re-valued, and their strength

or weaknesses being examined. It was around this time that I myself was sworn into the I.R.B., in company with Joseph Byrne and a number of others, younger men. There was a general uplifting of spirit and discipline and men quietly taking charge of each working party. Harry Boland, Jack Shouldice, Desmond Fitzgerald and myself were shifted on to the sweeping and cleaning party through the inside of the jail. Others, who had already been on that party, had asked for a change out to the workshop, and it was all done in such a manner that "Von-Cloc" (Head Warder Stone) took it that the men wanted a change. The warder in charge of the cleaning party was one of those people who, if he saw one of the prisoners doing some trick or feat of strength, would have to try it himself. One amusing trick was when little Charlie Bevan challenged me, stating that he could reach higher up the wall than I could. Looking at the difference in height between us, anyone's first thought would be that I could easily beat him by six or seven inches, but Charlie made it a condition that both of us would sit on the floor with our feet flat against the wall. The man with the shorter legs, being nearer the wall, reached further up, and Charlie, therefore, beat me without a doubt. It was on the warder's weakness that we played in order to get him interested, and when he saw us, he said, "Blimey, I never sawy that trick before!" Invited to test it for himself, he did so, and, in the meantime, Jack Shouldice and Harry Boland had slipped into Father O'Loughlin's office where there were a couple of days copies of the "Freeman's Journal" and some English papers. In such circumstances, they were able to go through the newspapers and get the latest reference to what was taking place in Ireland, and the

reactions of the English papers towards them. During this period, the "Irish Independent", a newspaper whose name alone was a bad odour as a result of its leading article calling for the execution of James Connolly and Seán McDermott, was even making its comments on how things were shaping at home in view of the coming Roscommon bye-election. It was vaguely hinted that Sinn Féin would be putting up a candidate. The Governor, Captain Marriott, who, by this time, had realised that he had as prisoners men of the highest education and integrity and who, from the time that he realised this fact, took advantage of his position and frequently visited their cells to speak to them. At this time, there was a copy of the "Freeman's Journal" in the Governor's Office and, as I was in the best position, I nipped in, got the paper and passed it to Desmond Fitzgerald. He slipped it under his jacket and, just as he had done so, the bell rang for dinner. He had not time to read it, and so had to carry it with him into his cell. After he had finished his meal, walking up and down his cell, he started to read the paper, forgetting that prisoners were under continuous observation while in their cells, so, while Desmond had his interesting read of the paper, he was also being keenly watched by the warder. As a result his cell was not opened on that day after dinner. We all marched to the bottom floor to join our working parties, and I at once reported to Harry Boland that Des had the paper and that, as he had not been allowed out after dinner, it must have been found out that he was in possession of it. This was a bit of a set-back because, up to the time, there had not been any slips made by us. When Desmond's cell was, however, opened, two warders stepped in and asked him for the newspaper which he

had been reading. Knowing that he would be searched, he had to hand it up as he knew that he had no earthly chance of hiding it. He was then marched downstairs and put into one of the cells under the ground floor while waiting to be brought before the governor. He was, eventually, brought before him and questioned as to how he had come to have this paper in his possession. Naturally, he had to take whatever was coming to him and accept full responsibility himself for having taken the paper. As punishment, he got three days' separate cells, but without the bread and water stunt thrown in. This meant that Desmond was shifted out to the garden party, Robert Brennan taking his place. By this time, we had also got the privilege of having our notebook and pencil, in order to enable us to study in our cells at night. One day, Phil Cosgrave said that he had a book which he had got from the library and that, as he had now finished it, I should try to get it. We were not allowed to hand the books to one another, as it had to be handed back when the warder came from door to door, at the end of the week, to collect them. Talking matters over with Phil, it suddenly struck me that he was in the cell directly under mine and that, if I tied a weight to the end of a piece of twine, which I could get from the workshop, we could, by agreed signal on the floor, arrange for Phil to stand up on the end of his bed and take my book through the ventilation pane which you could slide back to allow fresh air into the cell. He would then tie his book on to the string and pass it up to me to read. In this way, we were able to change our books and have them read and returned before the date of collection. Con Collins, who was my next door neighbour, then got an idea to try and see if we could also arrange to change

sideways, from window to window. We tried this out, and, by tying half a bar of soap to the end of twine and stretching our arms through the window, we could swing the twine and land it on our next door neighbour's window. After a time, we became experts at this practice which later proved very handy for passing special communications on. It often resulted in a special message passing from one end of the wing to the other.

I was next shifted into the laundry. Jos. Byrne was in charge but he was watched over by another old warder who had come back to relieve younger men who had been called up for the war. This old warder had a beard, and we called him "Pa". All that he wanted was to sit on his stool down near the drier at the end of the laundry, and leave the remainder to us. While talking to us, Pa told us that everything was now rationed outside, and that it was very hard to get potatoes. Every second day or so, we had to bring clean linen to the cook house, and every time we passed through, a couple of potatoes came back with us. Pa managed to get them home himself. He then broke all regulations himself by smuggling in a small packet of Woodbines. Five cigarettes between fifteen meant a few whiffs each, but we did not attempt to encourage him to do it a second time. Even then, we could not allow things to go on without playing tricks on the lads inside.

When we were making up the clean inside clothes, each set would be put into a numbered bag, this bag having the number of each prisoner's cell on it. In this way, we knew exactly who was getting each set of linen. The convict knicks came below the knee and

tied, and so we knew how to select the longest knicks which we could find and put them into the smallest man's bag, and reverse the situation for the tallest. Naturally, Dev and the rest all had this trick played on them a few times. Once, Dev got a knicks that would fit a boy of about six, and Charles Bevan was given some for a man of about seven feet. In fact, when little Charlie came to the door, he got into them and was holding them up, hand high, with his head sticking out from the fly. Even the warders could not refrain from laughing and, although we found time to play such pranks, the laundry workers had to keep up their work all the time. We had often to keep our eyes open when the garden party, on which Dev worked, came into the laundry, because sometimes, if you were not minding, you would get a cold, wet shirt lapped around your neck, and when we retaliated, we had no irespect whatever for personalities, but it was all in good fellowship and spirit. This helped greatly to ease the natural outbursts of spirits.

At last came the news that Count Plunkett had been selected to carry the banner of Sinn Féin in the Roscommon bye-election. It was a wise decision. Here, was the father of Joseph Mary Plunkett, who was executed on last Easter, with two sons as convicts in an English jail. It was a definite test, to see if the ordinary people had come over in support of the cause for which P.H. Pearse and his comrades had fought and died in Dublin. From this on, letters from home began to inform us that our old friend Caitlín Ní hUallachain was in good health and spirits, and that she had made a good recovery. Then some of the men replied back, sending their good wishes to Caitlín, and the Governor, who censored the letters personally, came across one

letter from Denis O'Callaghan to a friend in Dublin, and he made special reference to Caitlín Ní hUallacháin, and enquired about her welfare. He got curious and sent for Denis, and when the warder called O'Callaghan out and informed him that he was summoned to attend before the Governor - not knowing what it was about and knowing that he had not done anything which could be termed a breach of discipline - he thought that it was bad news from home. When he came into the office, however, he could see his letter in the Governor's hand. He was told to stand at ease, and the Captain said to him, "I can see by your letter that you have a dear lady friend in Dublin of whom you are very fond, but I also notice that some of your friends are also asking about the same lady. She must be very clever indeed to keep you all on her hands at the same time!" Denis told him that she was a very old friend, and also a very nice person. The Governor said, "I am thinking of taking a holiday in Dublin this year, and I should like to meet her". O'Callaghan said that he could not say for the moment, but that, by the time the Governor would be going at the end of summer, he hoped that he would have her own private address. Donnacha always got a laugh when relating this story. Quietly, the lads were told to lay off mentioning the lady's name, but news still continued to trickle through as to the campaign's progress and the date of the voting. It was also arranged that a telegram be sent to Harry Boland, telling him how his uncle was, in Roscommon. The Governor was then approached on a matter of allowing the prisoners to hold an open-air concert in the evening. The date of the concert coincided with the date of the result of the elections. We had some very

good talent in such prisoners as Gerard Crofts, Seamus Hughes, Thomas Bevan and a number of other prisoners. It was just under way when the telegram arrived, and just one look at Harry's face and we knew that Count Plunkett, Sinn Féin candidate, had won. How we let ourselves go, singing, on that evening. It was the first hurdle on the road back and a definite proof that Roscommon had shown the way for the remainder of the country. It was at about this time that the Governor approached de Valera and said that he would like to have his house painted on the inside, and that one or two ceilings needed repair. All tradesmen had been called up into the army, and so Frank Drennan (Thornton), George Levins, Frank Brooks (painters), Richard King (Wexford) and Michael Reynolds (Dundalk) (carpenters), and I, having been a plasterer, with Phil Cosgrave and little James Joyce as labourers, were given the job. The warder in charge of us was my old friend, Quelch, and our privilege was that we were to get extra food, given to us in the evenings at about four o'clock. It was brought up to us by a servant, and the Governor showed us what work had to be done. It was soon discovered that the entire house wanted painting and fixing, and that we were to say what we wanted in the way of materials. A list for the amount of paint and other materials needed was then made out, and the Captain was so pleased that he turned and said to the warder, "I think that these men know their business". I was then brought over, with my two helpers, to where there was a heap of lime and mortar that had to be broken up and beaten into soft mortar. Phil found great amusement in the idea of working as a builder's labourer with little Jimmy Joyce. The warder had

some plastering tools in the shop, and so I took what were wanted for the job. Michael Reynolds got his carpenter's tools, a number of which had to be sharpened to his own satisfaction, and then we all got to it, at our own particular jobs. We were, no doubt, given the complete running of the house. The Governor consulted with Frank Thornton as to what colour scheme he would suggest, and finally Frank said that he would talk it over with the other painters. On that evening, however, Frank got a brainwave to paint the house in the Republican colours, and to blend it so carefully that the Captain would not recognise it. The staircase, leading from the hall to the sitting-rooms and the bedrooms upstairs, was the first to be completed. The bottom part of the wall on the stairs they painted a very nice shade of dark green; the top was a creamy yellow, with a little decorated dado in between. When completed, it was really a beautiful job. The Captain was so delighted that he gave the lads a free hand. Reynolds had a job on some of the doors, and I myself found a tricky bit in a job on a cornice in the sitting-room - taking down and replacing ornaments which had fallen down.

In the sitting-room, the fireplace had a wooden surround on which a very bad attempt at graining had been done previously. This was cleaned, re-painted and finished, with the appearance of a white marble with green veins through it. The remainder of the room was painted in order to blend with the general scheme. The Captain used to come in every second day or so, to see how the house was looking and the work progressing. An inspector from the Board of Works offices came to the prison, and he was also brought in to

see the job. He asked all of us our names, and said that, as soon as we would be released from prison, there would be jobs available for all of us at our trades in the Board of Works. We took this as a great joke between ourselves. From the front of the house, we were quite close to the public highway, and from time to time we saw German prisoners of war passing in lorries. On one occasion, three German officers came in through the gates, and, after some time, they were taken away again.

Then two young ladies from the road tried to get our names, but the distance was too far, and had we shouted, we would have drawn attention of warders to the gate. We believed that they were down from London on a chance of getting in touch with the Irish prisoners.

One day, my legal adviser came to see me in the prison. A warder came to tell me, and I was marched, completely mystified, to see who my legal adviser was. It was George Gavan Duffy, accompanied by a local solicitor. We were put sitting at a table in a visiting room, but kept under strict observation all the time. A warder remained standing at the end of the room. I was then informed that the Prisoners' Dependents organisation had decided that my trial by military court martial was invalid, as I had been taken prisoner before martial law was declared. They were preparing a habeas corpus case on behalf of both Con O'Donovan and myself, and so I had to give him a complete statement of my part in the fighting at the back gate of the South Dublin Union; the time we were taken prisoners and where we first lodged. It was in the police station at Kilmainham that I was first lodged, and from there transferred to Richmond

barracks, and from there to Kilmainham jail, and then back to Richmond for court martial. After my statement had been read back to me, I had then to swear that what I had stated was the truth, and nothing but the truth. He said that he would be seeing me again. Con O'Donovan then had his interview. When I got back, I told the lads, with whom I was working, the whole story and, by that evening, all the prisoners knew, and all kinds of speculation on what this would mean to the rest of the prisoners, if our case had a chance of success, was going on amongst the lads. About this time, Nora Ashe got a chance of visiting her brother, Thomas. On George Gavan Duffy's second visit, he had the case prepared, and I had to sign some legal documents. He also informed me that there was a chance that Con O'Donovan and myself would be brought to London. The application was to the High Court in London, and the case, which was later heard in London by seven judges, was decided against us.

In the meantime, Dev and the officer council were preparing a demand for full political prisoners' status, and we were being organised into small groups to cope with the probability that, when the fight began, we would be broken up and spread to a number of jails, in order to weaken our resistance in the coming fight. Then came the Longford election and the nomination of Joseph McGuinness, a Lewes prisoner, as candidate. Again, Sinn Féin won - this time, by a narrow margin and following a re-count. Our first demand was for an improvement in the food and, after much delay, we got a head a salad, a small bit of cheese, and a red herring on a Friday which it was impossible to eat.

One morning, we were marched out for exercise, and the warder gave the order, "Fall out for exercise". Eamonn de Valera stepped forward, and at once called us to attention. He then informed the head warder that he wished to speak to Captain Marriott. The warders appeared stunned; they did not move. Then Head Warder Stone went for the Captain. When the governor appeared, Dev delivered his ultimatum and handed him a copy of our demands. After reading them, he said that he would send them at once to the Home Office in London. As the governor left the grounds, we were dismissed and proceeded to walk around. We then got into small groups, and the men who were appointed as leaders instructed us that, no matter how small a group we were broken up into in the different jails, we were not to accept, again, prison discipline. There was no attempt to call us to go to work. However, the governor eventually came, and spoke to Dev near dinner hour. Dev, having consulted with our senior officers, decided that we would march in for dinner, on the undertaking that we would be allowed out again for exercise. We were not, however, taken out again, and so passed that Thursday evening.

On Friday, the lads used to stand at the windows and sing songs. On Saturday, along the line came a message that, when we would be brought to Mass on Sunday, on returning to our cells we were to place our prayer books behind the jamb of the door. By so doing this, the heavy doors would jump, and their hinges would be affected to such an extent that it would be impossible for them to be shut again. It was my job, as orderly on my side of the wing, to pass on the order to the orderly at the other wing, and this

I did, when going down the stairs to the bottom floor. The other orderly was Vincent Poole. I then had to pass the message to Harry Boland. One of the orderlies in that wing was Furey from Galway, and I whispered to him that it was a special message for Harry Boland and to make sure that he got it. I saw him putting it into his pocket under his handkerchief and marching off, with his trays for his wing. I reported that the message had been passed to the other wing, and, next morning, we all awaited the call to go to Mass, but no sign of our doors being opened. Next thing, along came Fr. O'Loughlin. He had come to inform us that we would not be allowed out to Mass, but that he would leave the chapel doors open and say Mass in as loud a voice as possible, in order that we could follow. This was alright for those near, but all we could hear was the Elevation bell. Our scheme had gone wrong somewhere. It was not until later that it was found that Furey, in taking his handkerchief from his pocket, pulled out the message also, and did not miss it until he reached Boland's cell. A warder, seeing the piece of paper on the floor, picked it up to put it into the waste-paper tin and, in doing so, read it. Having noted the instructions, he immediately brought it to Head Warder Stone.

On the following morning, Monday, instructions were sent around that, if we were not allowed out for exercise, we were to break all of the glass out of the cell windows. The signal was to be the Angelus bell at six o'clock. Everyone was standing at his window and, at the first stroke of the Angelus, pandemonium broke loose in the prison. Glass was heard breaking, prisoners shouting and cheering, warders running

frantically all over the place. People living just outside the prison heard the noise, cheering and the crashing of glass, and thought that we had got out and that there was a riot inside. The military were called to stand by. After we had sung and shouted ourselves hoarse, to add to the din, a very heavy thunder-storm broke out. It came in from my side of the wing, with very heavy wind and rain, and as a result, all of the cells were flooded to a depth of about three inches. We baled out through the windows until the storm was over. One man was heard to shout, "Even the heavens are against us this Tuesday!" None of us were taken out. The warders served us through the door. On Wednesday morning, word came up along the line that Dev was missing from his cell. It was also reported that Harry Boland was missing in the other wing. Someone on the other side had broken a window where the gas-light was, and could see down a part of the wing. He said that he had been taken away early that morning. On the following morning, my cell was suddenly opened, and in stepped four warders. They took me out and brought me to a room in front of the prison. Austin Stack and Peadar Clancy were there before us. When I looked, the first thing I noticed was that the Chief Superintendent of Portland was also there, and, so, I knew exactly where we were going. Peadar, who had a stub of a pencil, managed to write on a piece of toilet paper, "Going to Portland", and he rolled this up in a ball and put it in his handkerchief. We knew that Dublin had got the information of what had taken place, and that there was a possibility that someone would be over to watch the jail. Next to be brought into the room was Desmond Fitzgerald, followed

by John Quinn (Dundalk), Dick King (Wexford), Con Collins and George Irvine. We were handcuffed in pairs, with a chain running through the centre. This meant that eight of us were chained together.

Return To Portland.

Stack and myself were the first in line; next came Peadar Clancy and Des. Fitzgerald, followed by John Quinn and Richard King, and lastly came George Irvine and Con Collins. We were marched out, put into a covered lorry and brought to the railway station. As we crossed the platform, Peadar and I spotted Michael Staines, sitting on a seat and supposed to be reading a newspaper. There were only a few people waiting for the train and, in the midst of all the confusion in our carriage, Peadar Clancy shot his pellet of paper over towards him. He thought that he did not notice because, having stared at us just like the rest of the people on the station, he took no further notice. We then knew that he had seen the pellet and that he would retrieve it as soon as the train moved off. On that night, the Dublin newspapers were able to publish the names of the prisoners who had been sent to Portland jail. (In some cases, Michael Staines even took the same train as the prisoners, in order to find out where they were going.) Mick certainly did great work during this period, and it was a great boost to our spirits to know that the people at home were alive to the situation and watching the position as it developed. When we arrived at Southampton station, we were taken from the train, to await another connection. While waiting on the platform, a troop train from France pulled in alongside us. They were the Dublin Fusiliers, and how they had got to know who we were, I do not know, but they

started to call us all sorts of names. One soldier started to spit at us, and called us "Casement's bastards", and it certainly looked real ugly for us, as some of them started to climb out of the window of the train. At this stage, officers came running along the platform, with revolvers in their hands, shouting that they would shoot the first man who came through a window. We were then brought into a waiting-room and given a cup of tea and a small cake. As we were again brought out on to the platform and as we came, we saw a lady looking at us from her carriage window and, as her train moved off, she shook a tricolour at us. We knew that we had at least one friend in that station.

It was very near the dark of night when we arrived at Portland and, as a part of the usual routine, we were, at that time of evening, brought to the bath, but we refused to get into it and claimed that it was not clean. The Superintendent tried to talk us into having one, but we still refused, and so were marched off to our cells for the night. I was put back into the same cell as I had previously occupied. On a slate, I had written, "Slán leat!", when last leaving for Lewes, and when I looked at the slate, it was still written on it. I had to laugh to myself at this idea. Next morning after breakfast, they brought around mail bags for us to commence finishing. We refused to do any work and, as the warders were leaving our cells, we threw all of the working materials out after them. The eight of us had a whole wing to ourselves. Next, we were brought to the yard for exercise, but still we just kept to ourselves and remained in our group, talking to one another. More warders came into the yard, but they did not molest us. When our period of time was

up, they just came along, crowded around us and moved us off to our separate cells. When we were put in, we started to sing. The Superintendent came into my cell, and said, "You were here before! You know the rules and should obey them, or you will get what is coming to you!" He then stepped out and slammed the door. Next, eight of us were brought before Governor Von Muller" (a German, who was later interned), and he started to threaten us as to what would be done to us, and said that they could tame lions in Portland. In reply, Austin Stack informed him that we were fighting for political prisoners' status, and that we would continue to do so, no matter what punishment he meted out. He also told him that he might be able to tame the beasts of the fields, but that he could not do that with men who were prepared to endure. Des. Fitzgerald then spoke. He told him that he had a damned nerve to speak to us like that, and this statement resulted in our all being marched to dark cells. In these cells, there was only a ventilation hole, high up in the wall, through which no daylight could come directly. All that could be seen was a faint glimmer of light, and as soon as this glimmer faded, the darkness of the cell seemed to press down like a blanket. The only way to beat it was to try and sleep, and even this was very hard to accomplish because we had to sleep on the floor in our clothes. It was their first shot at breaking down our spirits. We were kept here for a full twenty-four hours, and then put into the other cells where prisoners do their three days' bread and water punishment.

On that evening, we heard singing. It was "Twenty Men From Dublin Town", and so we joined in at once, also. This let them know that we were also in

the prison. They all started to cheer, on hearing our voices. The convicts in the cells, overlooking where they were, then started to shout through their cells, "Go on, Ireland!"

On the next morning, they were transferred over to the separate cells over us. This was a block of what were called the punishment cells, and, while there, prisoners were allowed out only to go to the toilets. The extra numbers made our position all the stronger, and we kept up a continuous noise, all singing and cheering in turn. During the day, my cell door was opened and in walked an old priest. As soon as the cell door was closed behind him, he caught hold of my two hands and he said, "Boy, I am proud of you! Keep it up, and you will have to win!" He then continued, "I was the prison chaplain here when Michael Davitt was a prisoner and, because I saw him off at the station and raised a green flag in farewell, I was not allowed to come into the prison again. I am the parish priest of the village and, as no other priest is available, they had to let me in again. I am here to arrange for Mass on Sunday." Father Carey was from Waterford and, if ever a man showed that he was in this fight, he did. I then gave the names of the other men who had come in with me, but I could not tell the names of the men in the second batch. He then left me, and went in next door to George Irvine; he paid him a visit the same as every other Irish prisoner in the jail. He gave great encouragement to everyone. On Saturday morning, he came back to me again, and informed me that we would only be allowed to go to Mass, handcuffed and chained, and that he had refused this condition, as Irish

Catholics always recognised the sacredness of the Mass and would cause no disturbance. In spite of his efforts, however, the Governor insisted. Father Carey immediately sent a telegram to Larry Ginnell and John Redmond, demanding them to raise a protest in the House of Commons. He also got in touch with the Irish papers. We did not hear Mass on that Sunday, nor did we know what action was being taken outside. On Tuesday, he came in, carrying under his coat a copy of the "Freeman's Journal", and, when he closed the door, he stood with his back to it, put his back up against the spy hole and took out the paper. He had marked in it a section stating that there was a mass meeting at the Custom House, Dublin, at which Inspector Mills had been killed by the blow of a hurley. It also gave information that some of the Irish prisoners had been sent to the Isle of Wight, some to Maidstone, that some were still at Lewes and others at Portland jails. After I had read these bits of news, he took the paper and said, "I must let the rest of the boys see that bit of news". His last words going away were, "The British Government must give way - feeling is now rising very high in Ireland and elsewhere!" Of he went to the next cell.

It was certainly the spur needed, and gave the lads great spirit. I did not see him for about two days, and next time it was a young priest who came to see me. He said that the parish priest was not well, that he was down with a cold. Immediately he spoke, I knew that he was an Englishman, and he started to ask questions about Ireland. He then asked me, "If you had to go through this again, would you be prepared to do so?", and, when I replied "Yes", he got red in the

face, and said, "I think you are all mad!" He left my cell. This poor man knew little about Ireland or her history, or he would not have asked such a question. At the end of the second week, Phil Mahon and a couple of others were taken away out to exercise, as a test. As soon as they got to the parade group, Phil started to shout up to the cell windows, calling on the convicts to join in with us, and some of them shouted back. As a result, Phil and his comrades were again rushed back to their cells. We spent the evening singing songs. The noise that we were creating could be heard on the public roads outside. Early in the third week, our old comrade, Father Carey arrived back again. He again urged everyone to keep up, and assured us that, as soon as he received any fresh news, he would be back again. So passed the remainder of the week, waiting up to Saturday morning for news. Suddenly, in arrived Fr. Carey, but this time he appeared to be a bundle of nerves from excitement.

<u>News of our Release</u>:

He said, "We have won! Orders have been issued that you are to be released. I must run now and tell the others!" With that, he rushed out of the cell. The only reason that he used to come to me first was that I was in number one cell on the bottom floor, and that was the cell from where the warder would start opening doors. It was a couple of minutes before the full meaning of what had been said registered, and I took up my shoe and started tossing it against the roof of my cell, striking three times. It was a signal to Phil Mahon, who was in the cell above me, to come to his window. I jumped and caught the edge of the ventilation window, and shouted, "We are to be released!

We are going home!" I told him that Fr. Carey had just been in with me, and that he was going around to tell everyone personally. Outside in the passage could be heard a lot of talking, as if the warders had gathered into a group. I tried to hear what they were saying, but could not do so. Next, George Irvine knocked on his cell wall and I answered back. By this time, the excitement of the news had gripped me also. I could not keep easy in my cell, and kept walking up and down. Next, the doors were opened but the grills outside were still locked. The head warder and the governor then came around from cell to cell, and announced that we were being sent to Pentonville, London, on this evening, and that from there we would be returned to Ireland. He again repeated that all prisoners would be released, and that a train was arranged to take us to London. He said that he wanted us all to march out and give no demonstration when leaving. I said that we were soldiers and would obey our officers. He knew, from our first meeting, that Stack was our senior. Next thing was that tea and meat sandwiches were served to each prisoner, and I had to force myself to eat mine, because of the excitement caused through the news that I was going home. Although it was the first real meal I had been given in weeks, I could not manage to eat.

Our cells were then opened, and Father Carey stepped forward. He shook hands with each of us in turn, and said, "Thank God, I have lived to see the day!" It was obvious that the head warder (whom I have previously said liked the look of Peadar Clancy) was coming to London with us, accompanied by three others. We lined up, four deep, and marched to the front gate in silence. We were there put into covered lorries,

and brought to the station. There was no hitch. Two open saloon carriages were reserved for us. It was obvious that the news had been kept from us until the last possible moment, as everything could not possibly have been arranged so quickly. At a couple of stations on our way to London, ladies came to our carriages to hand in cigarettes, but it was most amusing to watch the expressions on their faces when they saw the broad arrows on our uniforms and hastily walked away, to get into a huddle and stare at us as the train moved off. It was dark when we arrived at Waterloo. It was crowded with people, standing around in silence. On the centre of the platform was a Red Cross train which had just arrived before us, and they were taking British and German wounded from it. As a result of the delay, we were kept in our carriages. The news of our release had got to the Irish circles in London, and numbers were on the station to watch for us. At this stage, I wish to record an incident which happened. Two Irish girls, Margaret O'Sullivan and Mary O'Byrne, had come to welcome the prisoners. They were standing at the platform where the Red Cross train had come in, and were looking at the stretcher cases as they were carried by. Suddenly, Miss O'Sullivan recognised her brother, Joseph O'Sullivan, as one of the stretcher cases. Both were shocked, as no information had been received at home that he had been wounded in France. A Red Cross attendant told them the name of the hospital to which he was being removed. This lad, Sullivan, was later to take part in the shooting of General Wilson in 1922, with Michael Dunne, for which offence both were later executed in London. As the

German prisoners were, however, carried along, some of the crowd began to booh and call names at them.

As we watched the Red Cross train moving back out of the station, another train moved in beside us. From it, we could see Dev, and about another thirty prisoners, forming up to march away. There was loud cheering, accompanied by some boohing, and I also believe that a few bottles were thrown at them. It then came to our turn to march down the platform to where covered lorries awaited us to take us to Pentonville prison. When we arrived, we were brought to a wing of the prison which I am quite sure had not been used for some time. There was general confusion and excitement until tea was served. Two priests, both Irish, were just as excited as we were. At last, however, we were allotted our cells. Blankets were then issued for our beds, and we started to make our own. In starting to make mine, I lifted the wooden bed boards to look underneath, and I got a most terrible shock - it was walking with bed bugs. They were everywhere around the cell. I rang a bell at the door and, after some time, a warder came along and I explained to him the state of the cell with bugs. He said that he was sorry that he could not do anything about it, but that he had no keys for the other cells. He did, however, compromise by leaving on the light in my cell, as bugs do not travel around once there is light to be seen. So I spent my last night in an English jail, sitting on a table, with a couple of blankets around me to keep me warm.

As it was very difficult to get some sleep, I began to go back over the past six or seven weeks. I thought of the fathers, mothers and wives of men who

were about to go home. Some of them had had sentences from five years to life imprisonment passed on them. Then came the thought of what the future held in store for us and what changes had been brought about. I must have dozed asleep, because the next thing I heard was the prison bell ringing and I awoke. It was Sunday morning. Our cell doors were opened, and this time left open. I immediately heard lads shouting over at each other, "How did you sleep with the bugs?" Dev and some of the boys were badly bitten and blistered all over. After breakfast, we marched to Mass. The Lewes choir sang the Mass. Some of the prisoners were so overcome with emotion that they had to be taken away. As soon as Mass was over, we were marched outside to a yard, and at once they started taking us, four at a time, to fit us out in clothes and shoes. In the first four or five lots of prisoners who were fitted, the warders were very careful to see that each article of prison clothing was handed in, but time was pressing and, in order to keep in time for the train, some of the later prisoners got suits which were rather large for them, and then they managed to keep their convict jackets and bring them home. I myself managed to get my convict hat and bring it home with me. I was dressed early, along with Harry Boland, who still had on his convict's stockings, which he later used when hurling for Faughs hurling club, of which he was a member. Harry, Jack Shouldice and myself then got talking to the priest. Harry asked him about who was here when Robert Casement was a prisoner, and he said he was. He then gave the whole story of his trial and the slander against his name. We asked him what part of the prison he was in and if there was any

chance that we would see his grave. He said that he did not think so. Having looked casually around at one of the lads who had been fitted out, he turned to us again. Before he started to talk, he warned us not to look around. I was standing directly facing him. He explained that if we could follow the wall around to my right, about fifty yards from the end of the prison, we would see a six-inch stone, inserted in the wall, bearing the letters, "S. R. C.", engraved on it. There would also be some daffodils growing against the wall, and this would be the grave. It was a dare, just like what Harry Boland liked to take on. We tipped off Dev and Peadar Clancy as to what we were about to do, and so we began to walk around a couple of times. We walked outside of the warders who were standing near to the opening at the end of the prison. It was done in such a manner that they did not notice us. As we passed them for the third time, Harry shouted, "Now!", and we had got a start of about twenty yards before they could realise what had happened. They shouted at us to come back, but we kept running until we found the stone in the wall, just as the priest had described. We stood around the grave and said a decade of the Rosary. I took a daffodil from that grave which I kept and treasured for years in my possession, until it fell to dust. We then walked back with the two warders, and the gate was shut and bolted. It is a memory that I have always treasured, having seen the grave of Roger Casement at Pentonville. Shortly after the last of the lads were dressed, we were brought for a meal of tea and sandwiches.

Next, open drags were brought into the yard, and

we all took our places. On the driving seat, with the driver, was a Scotland Yard detective, to see that we were brought to the station. So we had started on the first stage of our journey across London to Euston for the Holyhead train. As we arrived at the station, we were marshalled into the reserved carriages. At once the crowd on the platform began to cheer and wave flags, men and women crowded around the doors and windows, and handed out cigarettes, tobacco pouches, pipes and fruit. We were overwhelmed, and someone shouted, "Dublin has not gone to bed these two nights, awaiting your arrival!" As the train moved off, there was a further burst of cheering, and we settled down in our seats and related our experiences from the time we were taken away from Lewes. I do not think that Willie Cosgrave, Peadar Doyle, F. Brooks, G. Levins and others were shifted from Lewes. Brooks told of how the governor of Lewes had come to say good-bye to all of them, and how he (Brooks) informed him that his house had been painted in the Republican colours. The Captain, in reply, said, "I don't care what the colours represent! I was delighted with the job!"

As we were getting to the suburbs of London, the train slowed down. It was said that there was an air attack on London that evening. When the train stopped at Rugby, arrangements were made to have tea ready at Crewe station. When we got out of the train, we got into line, two deep, and then awaited the order, "Attention! Form fours!". We were then marched up the platform to where the tea was waiting. The whole operation was carried out like clockwork, and we were back on our trains in good time. As night fell, we were coming through Wales, and the strain of the last

few weeks was beginning to take its toll. The men tried to rest and doze. The journey now began to feel very long and tiresome. At last, word went around, "Holyhead is near!", and our train pulled into the station in the early hours of morning. We again formed up, and marched, two deep, on to the boat. There was some delay and, after all were aboard, a whisper went around that there was a German submarine in the bay outside. As soon as the boat left the harbour, we were free to walk around any part of the ship. A lot of us kept pacing up and down the decks. It was good to feel the good, clear air of freedom blowing in our faces once again. We were instructed that, when landed on the pier in Dún Laoghaire, we were to remain together and obey orders in a disciplinary manner, as carriages had been reserved for our train trip to Westland Row. Daylight was now coming on the sky, and it was a lovely soft morning. Everyone was crowding on to the deck to get their first glimpse of Wicklow and Dublin Bay. As the sun came up, it cleared the mist from the sea, and next thing to appear - the Wicklow Hills, displaying all their grandeur, with the dark greens blending against the lighter greens. Then came Ben Eadair (Howth), and, as I looked, I began to feel a lump in my throat. When I turned to look at some of my comrades, I saw Peadar Doyle and more of the lads standing on the decks, with tears streaming down their cheeks. Jack Shouldice then started to recite that lovely poem -

"Glory to God! But there it is,
Dawn on the Hills of Ireland!
God's angels lifting the night's black veil,
From the dear old face of my Sireland!"

These words sounded prophetic. Someone then called on Gerard Crofts to sing a song, and he began singing the "Soldiers' Song". We all joined in, but the time had come when we could see the crowds standing on the pier and in the sheds surrounding the harbour. Flags waved, and we could hear the cheering of the crowds. As the ship came slowly into the harbour, the crowd began to sing, "Step Together", an old marching song. We could not talk to each other, but stood on the deck, looking in wonder at the people around. There was a notable change in their bearing. There was a defiant note through all this cheering. The British military police, who were always on the pier, were withdrawn. Again and again, the cheering broke out, as we marched down the gangway and into our carriages. As the train moved out, all the fog signals that had been placed along the tracks began to explode, and, all along the journey to Dublin, people lined along the railway to catch a glimpse of us and wave their flags.

At last, we reached Westland Row. We were back in Dublin city. One of the first men whom I saw on the platform was Michael Collins. He had all arrangements made to have us brought from the station to P. Mahon's hotel, Gardiner Street, for breakfast. Volunteers lined the platform, to try and keep back the crowds, but they might as well have been trying to keep back the waves of the sea. We could not get out of our carriages. Eventually, the Volunteers succeeded in getting a passage way down the stairs, and, in the street when we emerged, the scene beggars description. The people of Dublin appeared to have crowded themselves into one street, and we were actually carried and

placed out on the wagonettes. As we were recognised by old Volunteers, whom I had last seen when being marched out of Richmond barracks and deported to England. They called out our names in greeting, and the crowds joined in. Volumes of cheering, old friends of the football and hurling teams - all tried to get near to us and shake our hands. The climax came when Eamonn de Valera, Thomas Ashe, Austin Stack, Harry Boland and Jack Shouldice appeared, and got on to the wagonettes. On seeing them, the crowd simply went mad. Rounds and rounds of cheers rent the sky. There, again, was the senior officer of the men of Boland's Mill and Mount Street Bridge (Clanwilliam House), Thomas Ashe of the Battle of Ashbourne, Co. Dublin. In the midst of all this excitement, I had kept my eyes open for the one person whom I wanted to see. At last, standing over at the door of the hotel, near the railway station, I saw her - my mother - and she could also see me, up on the drag; and immediately I caught a glimpse of her, I waved my hat, and she waved her hand. The crowd saw what had happened. I tried to get down and over to her, but it was absolutely impossible. At length, Paddy McGrath and one or two of the other boys (comrades from B. Company) said that they would see, when all was over, that she would get home alright. Later, she told me that herself and the rest of the family had set out to walk into town at 5 a.m. on that morning, as no one could get any information as to the time or place of our arrival, and whether we would land at North Wall, Dún Laoghaire, of the railway station.

The fights that we had put up during the past six weeks in English jails had fired the people's spirits

into a flame. We came through Westland Row, Pearse Street and, as we came into O'Connell Street, we saw for the first time the result of the fighting around the G.P.O., and the shelling from the warships at the Liffey. Gone were all the old familiar buildings from Hopkins & Hopkins crrner, at the Bridge, up to Talbot Street, on one side, and, on the other side, from Abbey Street to Henry Street, with but a shell of the G.P.O. still standing. What a thrill we all got, as we looked up towards the G.P.O. to see the Tricolour floating from the old flagstaff in the breeze. It certainly took some nerve to climb to that height on the crumbling walls. We were halted in front of the G.P.O. where we took off our hats and observed a minute of silence, to honour the memory of our dead comrades. We then moved along O'Connell Street to Gardiner's Row. O'Connell Street was a mass of people and, as each one was recognised by a friend, his name was called out, and the crowd gave their welcome cheer. It was impossible for us to grasp or realise the full extent of the changes that had taken place. Some of us, who had passed through the Dublin streets as prisoners in those weeks during the Rising - people silent and afraid to recognise us - it was a changed Dublin and also a new Ireland. Here, now, were men, old and young, eager now to meet whatever was going to be planned.

Thomas Clarke, P.H. Pearse, James Connolly and their comrades had judged the people of Ireland correctly. On that very evening, there was a meeting of the old officers of the Dublin Brigade held, and, from this meeting, a message was smuggled out to John Devoy in America.

There was, no doubt, a resurgence of national

spirit. It was the Dawning of the Day, and a preparation for the next phase in the fight for Ireland's Independence.

SIGNED: Gerald Doyle

DATE: 15/10/56.

WITNESS M Ryan Comdt.