

1525

DUPLICATE

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BURO 9TAIRE MILEATA 1913-21
No. W.S. 1525

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.
STATEMENT BY WITNESS.
DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 1525.

Witness

James Maloney,
Ballycampion,
Bruff,
Co. Limerick.

Identity.

Company Capt. Bruff.
Battalion Adjutant.

Subject.

Activities of Bruff Company, Bruff
Battalion, Co. Limerick, 1913-1921.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil.

File No S.2845.

1525

DUPLICATE

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-23

BIRD STAIRS WREATH 1913-21

No. W.S. 1,525

STATEMENT BY JAMES MALONEY,

Ballycampion, Bruff, Co. Limerick.

I was born in the parish of Bruff in April, 1898. I was the youngest of a family of six - three boys and three girls. My father had a good education, having taught as a pupil teacher in the Christian Brothers' Schools and later daily in Fedamore.

About the time of my birth certain events took place in Bruff in regard to the school which the children of the parish should attend. This became known as "The Agitation" and it lasted for a number of years. The Christian Brothers had been teaching in St. Patrick's Monastery Bruff when the then Parish Priest - Rev. Charles McNamara - who was pro-British - decided to have a national school for the area, which he was instrumental in starting, with the result that the Christian Brothers had to go. The people rebelled against the starting of the national school and promptly started a school of their own in Crawford St., with a Mr. Hennessy as schoolteacher. He was later succeeded by a Mr. ^{CASEY} Lacey. Things were said and done during "The Agitation" which are best forgotten. The great Edward Thomas O'Dwyer was Bishop of Limerick during the period. A settlement was reached in 1907 whereby the De La Salle Brothers came to Bruff. In between, only one or two families patronised the national school, the teacher of which was a Mr. Harry Musgrave of Newcastlewest. Musgrave never attended Mass in Bruff and always feared the consequences of a public appearance. Dr. O'Dwyer had not visited Bruff between ^{THESE} ~~the~~ years until he came in 1908 for Confirmation. Thousands thronged Bruff for his visit.

True to his personality, he addressed the people and left them in no doubt that he had been misled during those years of agitation, while the Parish Priest had to stand by and listen.

I went to school as a youngster to the Convent and later to The Monastery (De La Salle). Dr. Douglas Hyde and others had started the Gaelic League some years before and Bruff was not behind in its loyalty to Gaelic culture. We travelled to Limerick by wagonette, dressed in little sailor-like jackets and shorts, to Feiseanna, where we danced Irish dances and sang Gaelic songs like "Maidrín a Ruadh" or "Seán Ó Dhuibhir". One day about 1909 a sincere, but lame, young man spoke in Bruff. He was Seán McDermott. He first spoke in Irish, then in English. His message was forthright but strange. He was listened to by the old Fenians and the members of the Gaelic League, while we young children played around the platform. I noted old Jamsey Lee who lived in Crean and who, with my grandfather, Johnny ^{TWOMEY} Young, and others, had put their muzzle loaders in hiding beside "Morning Star" at Crean Bog as they retreated from the abortive Kilmallock Barrack attack in March, 1867. Our generation was to wipe out that defeat in 1920 with added interest.

About this time the National Party spoke for the majority of the Irish people, whilst there was a remnant who were no great believers in Parliamentary methods but were ready to give it a trial. About 1906 Joe Devlin addressed a meeting of the All-for Ireland League in Bruff opposite the R.C. Church. Prominent on the platform was a tall young man named Seán Wall (de Ehall). He had a brother, Rev. Tomás de Ehall, whose name later supplied a

much needed spark to the fire of insurgent Ireland.

Seán, with George Clancy (Seáirse MacFlanncaidh) - a native of the parish and later murdered by Black and Tans in front of his wife in March, 1921, whilst Mayor of Limerick; on the same night ex Mayor Michael O'Callaghan and Volunteer O'Donoghue were also murdered by the Tans - Michael O'Shaughnessy and others started a branch of the Gaelic League. Among the lady members was Miss Bridie Quinlan, later to become Seán's wife. I remember a feis being held in the ruins of Pierce de Lacey's castle grounds at Bruff. We were of a class from the Brothers' Schools who sang the Anglo Irish song "The dear old Tongue". We were cheered again and again. We sang in Gaelic and the cheers were more subdued. Patently the language was nearly dead and not understood. A Cork piper - Eddie Dunne - was the idol of our young hearts, in his kilts, as he sang Brian O'Higgins's "Moses - ry-tooral-f-ooral-i-a".

About 1911 or 1912, William Lundon, local Nationalist M.P., who lived at Kiltully, died. At a convention, his son, Tommy Lundon, was selected to contest the seat. He was opposed at the convention by Thomas W. Bennett. Bennett decided to contest the constituency as an Independent. Although a Roman Catholic, he was of Protestant stock and a wealthy landowner. He held a meeting in Bruff opposite the R.I.C. barracks. The Lundonites held a meeting at Hospital and later, in wagonettes and cars, arrived in Bruff, where the rival parties clashed. It was reminiscent of the faction fights; sticks, stones and every available weapon were used. I, with other lads of my age, were hurling in the green. As the fight progressed we drew closer. An R.I.C. man named Moran snapped my "scoob" and proceeded to whale right, left and centre. We ran with our lives.

My father didn't like the Bennetts and referred to them as "Soupers". He hated everything British and his hatred included the landlord class and the seoin Irish. He lamented at the happenings of the day, as to why our people failed to recognise that we had only one common enemy and that enemy was Britain.

A short time prior to the outbreak of World War 1 the Home Rule Bill had been placed on the English Statute Book. Great things were expected for Ireland and the local Nationalist leaders - Michael O'Shaughnessy, Tom Collins and others, addressed local meetings in praise of John Redmond and the Irish Party. Edward Carson in the North had organised his Volunteers to resist Home Rule by force, if necessary. In the remainder of the country Redmond and his followers organised the National Volunteers, which we joined in 1914. Drilling and parades were held and, as this looked like action, we youths woke up and took notice. Mr. O'Shaughnessy, a local draper and Justice of the Peace, was in charge and the drill instructors were ex-British soldiers. One day shortly after joining the Volunteers I remember marching to Lough Gur. Lough Gur, or the enchanted lake, was rich in antiquarian history. There were dolmens, cranógs, druidic circles and graves of the Fianna. Later we used to walk the three miles there on Sundays in summer, visiting the places of historic interest. We loved every hill and flat and our imaginations ran riot at deeds of heroes of old whose tales we had heard at the winter fireside. A book, "The farm by Lough Gur", by Mary Carberry, the story of Cissie O'Brien, whom we knew as Mrs. Mary K. Fogarty, The Bridge, Bruff, gives an excellent idea of the wealth of historic material to be found round that spot.

We enjoyed the drilling and the marches, but we sometimes queried, without understanding the fact, that a man who was a Justice of the Peace was our leader. Our minds were too young and as yet undeveloped. We were incapable of individual judgement and still harkened to our elders for mature reasoning. Then Redmond, in a speech at Woodenbridge, Co. Wicklow, advocated joining the British Army to fight in France. Somehow his light faded in our minds. We began to question amongst ourselves his wisdom and to relate his mouthings with what we knew of Ireland's past. Surely it was queer philosophy to fight for, rather than against the ancient enemy. Then came the Volunteer split. In Dublin, Eoin McNeill, Patrick Pearse and others broke with the National Volunteers and formed the Irish Volunteers. James Connolly and James Larkin, with Countess Markievicz, had emerged from the great labour strike of 1915 as leaders of eminence. These latter organised the Citizen Army and rumour had it that the Irish Volunteers and Citizen Army were in league.

In Bruff we were bewildered by the split. We had heard of so many splits and bickerings during the long period of occupation by the British that our disappointment was great. Then in 1915 came Eoin McNeill to Lough Gur. With him were Seóirse Mac Flanncaidh, Michael Colivet and others. Men marched there from Limerick: marched there under arms. The Galtee Battalion was there too. We, the youths of Bruff area, went to Lough Gur that day also but saw only the men as they marched away. They looked determined and defiant men and we wished we were old enough to be of them.

In Bruff a few copies of a little booklet "The Spark" had crept in. It preached open rebellion and I recollect

an article by Edward Dalton, if my memory is right, who openly stated he would fight to the last bullet. Here was a creed we liked, but there were no local Volunteers other than the National Volunteers. We were probing in the dark, but light was appearing. Then came Easter Week, 1916.

Rumour and counter rumour; the daily papers were no great help. There was no wireless. Some said Dublin was cleared of the British; the Germans had landed; 'twas only a skirmish; Dublin was burned and so on. Finally came the sad news of the surrender. True to tradition, England, through General Maxwell, showed no pity.

Morning after morning brought news of the execution of the leaders. Eventually Maxwell showed signs of being satiated, but the 'Irish Independent' in an article dated 12th May, 1916, was not yet satisfied and stated, among other things, "Leniency will be interpreted as a sign of weakness".

Of the leaders, James Connolly and Seán McDermott still remained. Instigated by the article in this newspaper which called itself Irish, they, too, were executed.

The Irish people were struck dumb. All the rebels who had surrendered after a week's fighting, except, of course, the leaders who had been executed, were prisoners in England. The whole nation was prostrate. The Irish Party in the British House of Commons had cheered at the announcement of the executions.

Just then two priests, Fr. Tomás de Bhall and Fr. Michael Hayes of West Limerick, spoke publicly in praise of the rebellion. General Maxwell wrote to Edward Thomas O'Dwyer, Bishop of Limerick, asking him to chastise his two priests. Dr. O'Dwyer's reply was trenchant and courageous. Both Maxwell's letter and Dr. O'Dwyer's reply may be seen

in full in "Limerick's Fighting Story". The reply and other letters which followed did more to awaken the sympathy of the Irish people for the rebels and the rebellion than any other such happening. We in Bruff were justly proud that a native of our own parish, An tAthair Tomás, had provided the spark. Sympathy turned to admiration, admiration to pride and we began to square our shoulders. Photographs of the dead leaders appeared in the shops. The mists cleared and we saw these men as the true inheritors of our nation's struggle. We spoke with admiration of this noble effort of scarcely one thousand men. We wore mourning badges and were scoffed at by the R.I.C. and their children. We felt we should be doing something. Gone was our allegiance to the Irish Party. We looked to Seán Wall and he didn't fail us. Secretly he had been weighing us up and he bided his time, and very early in 1917 a small group were invited to meet Con Collins - a native of West Limerick and who had fought in the rebellion, in a little clubroom at Fair View, Bruff, ostensibly to form a branch of the Gaelic League, but we knew better.

To the best of my knowledge, those present on the occasion included Con Collins, Seán Wall, Nicholas O'Dwyer, B.E., Liam Purcell, David Cremins, Denis Conway, James O'Connor, John Cremins, James Mortell, Denis Mortell, Geoffrey Mortell, Joseph Neilan, James ^{QUIRKE} ~~Callan~~, Martin Conway, ^{JAMES MALONEY} ~~Denis Ryan~~, and John Moroney.

About this time the Sinn Féin organisation issued instructions that all hunting was to be prevented where possible while there were Volunteers imprisoned in English jails. Seán Wall, with Denis Conway and Patrick Carroll, approached the Master of the Fox Hounds at a hunt meeting

at Bruff about February, 1917, and informed him of Sinn Féin's instructions. He (Nigel Barring, Rockbarton, Bruff) demurred but Wall stated he would use force if necessary. We had nearly seen our first test as Volunteers, but the hunt did not take place.

The small band who had met Con Collins were enrolled as Volunteers. We drilled in secret and read military text books. Seán Wall was appointed Captain, with Nicholas O'Dwyer as 1st Lieutenant. We were called from our sleep at nights for snap parades and did all-night observation on the R.I.C. barracks from the chapel grounds. Then came the amnesty and in the middle of 1917 the Volunteers were released from English jails. Next came the conscription scare. Our ranks swelled to bursting point. Bruff Company area then included outside districts such as Athlacca, Banogue, Meanus, Grange, Dromin, Knockainey, Lough Gur and Manister. We numbered well over four hundred. Mr. de Valera, who had sometime earlier been chosen to contest a by-election in East Clare against the Nationalist candidate, Patrick Lynch, had won. Some of us had gone to Clare to help in the election campaign. All of us were elated with the result. During the conscription period de Valera was very busy, and, with the willing co-operation of Mr. Dillon and other leaders of the Irish Party, the Irish Hierarchy were approached. The Hierarchy issued a statement advising the people "to resist with every means in your power" any attempt to force conscription on the Irish people. Lloyd George, the British Premier, abandoned his idea, with the result that our ranks in the Volunteers sadly deflated.

Came the general election in the fall of 1918. The European War had ended and John Bull was flushed with victory, mainly won by the Americans. The British Government rushed this general election, but Sinn Féin had been quietly preparing. After Mr. de Valera's victory in the by-election in Co. Clare, Co. Kilkenny had elected William T. Cosgrave, the Sinn Féin candidate, in another by-election "because he had fought for the green, white and gold". Sinn Féin contested almost every seat in Ireland. We threw ourselves into this new phase with great willingness. We canvassed, put up posters, painted slogans on dead walls, checked voters lists and organised transport. Dr. Richard Hayes represented Sinn Féin for East Limerick - ^{TOM} ~~Sam~~ London, the Nationalist Party. Dr. Hayes had fought in 1916 and, as such, to us was a hero. Sinn Féin won East Limerick, as it did 73% of all the seats in Ireland. There were victory meetings, victory parades and speeches and there was a general feeling of national resurgence. In January, 1919, Dáil Éireann met in Dublin and declared an Irish Republic with Dáil Éireann its Government. Eamon de Valera was elected President. He soon announced his Ministers, one of whom was Michael Collins who became Minister for Finance and who from now on figured prominently in Ireland's struggle with the British garrison.

Again our energies were directed mainly to the Volunteers. The company was now reduced in quantity but not in quality. In the Ballylanders-Galbally area of East Limerick, the Volunteers had been in existence prior to 1916. They were known as the Galtee Battalion. Like other country areas, their plans for 1916 fell through owing to McNeill's countermanding order of Easter Sunday

of that year. About this time, January, 1918, a split occurred in the ranks - locally known as the Manahan-Hannigan split. Volunteer H.Q. in Dublin was perturbed and Michael Collins became interested. Collins sent a Mr. O'Reilly to East Limerick. O'Reilly called a council of all the prominent Volunteers in East Limerick in the early summer of 1918. At this meeting Seán Wall was appointed Commander of East Limerick Brigade. Wall, who was a brilliant organiser, immediately got to work. He divided the brigade area into six battalions, each battalion to have six or seven companies, mostly according to parish area. Emy, Co. Tipperary, elected to join East Limerick Brigade and remained so to the end of the war of independence.

Bruff Battalion embraced Athlacca, Banogue, Meanus, Grange, Lough Gur, Bruff and Manister. I give hereunder the battalion and company officers of Bruff of the 3rd Battalion according to the date of their appointment. Officers relinquished these posts mainly on promotion, going on the run, arrest, joining the Flying Column or death.

Bruff Battalion Staff.

<u>Rank</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Appointed</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
Battn. O/C	Nicholas O'Dwyer, B.E.	1919	Promoted
"	" James P. O'Connor	July, 1920.	
"	" J.G. O'Dwyer	March, 1921.	
Bn.Vice O/C	Martin Conway	Dec., 1920.	Shot
Bn.Adjt.	James Maloney (Ballycurpin)	July, 1920.	On the run.
"	" Denis Conway (Bruff)	Sept., 1920.	Arrested.
"	" John O'Mahony (Athlacca)	March, 1921.	
" Q/H	Liam J. Purcell		

Bruff Company

<u>Rank.</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Appointed</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
Capt.	Seán Wall	1917	Promoted
do.	David Cremin	1919	Arrested
do.	James Maloney	July, 1920.	
do.	James O'Connor		
do.	James Mortell	Sept., 1920.	
do.	James Bond	March, 1921.	
1st Lt.	Nicholas O'Dwyer	1917	
do.	James Maloney	1919	
do.	James O'Connor		
do.	William Moroney		
2nd Lt.	James O'Connor	1919	
do.	Geoffrey Mortell	July, 1920.	

Lough Gur Company

Capt.	Robert Ryan	1920
do.	David Murnane	March, 1921.
1st Lt.	David Murnane	1920
2nd Lt.	Michael Daly	1920.

Meanus Company

Capt.	John Mulcahy	1919
1st Lt.	Thomas Mulcahy	
2nd Lt.	Frank Toomey.	

Athlecca Company

Capt.	James O'Shea
1st Lt.	Patrick Irwin
2nd Lt.	John O'Mahony.

Banogue Company

Capt.	John Carroll
1st Lt.	
2nd Lt.	

Manister Company

<u>Rank</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Appointed</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
Capt.	Frank Keating	1920	
do.	Stephen Cregan	1921	
1st Lt.	Patrick J. Costello		
2nd Lt.			

Grange Company

Capt.	Martin Conway	1919	SHOT
do.	William MICHAEL O'Donnell	1921	
1st Lt.	Edward Treacy	1919	ARRESTED
do.	Richard O'Donnell		
2nd Lt.	Jack O'Connell	1919	ARRESTED
do.	Richard O'Donnell	Nov., 1920.	

Seán Wall's driving force soon became apparent in the reports from the various battalions. Bruff Battalion was the spearhead and here in Bruff Company area Seán established his Brigade H.Q. Bruff Company was well organised. In early 1919 we moved through the battalion area collecting arms of any description. Mostly we got them voluntarily. Where there was objection we took them by force, mainly at night when we were disguised.

Dan Breen, Seán Treacy, Seumas Robinson and their comrades had ambushed an R.I.C. guard on dynamite at Soloheadbeg in January, 1919. Two R.I.C. men were shot. From then on we realised more fully that we were expected to fight if necessary. Dynamite was precious to the Volunteers and the South Tipperary men were determined. Breen and some of his comrades were forced to go 'on the run' This was to become a familiar phase from now on. One of Breen's companions - Seán Hogan - was surprised and arrested

coming out from Maher's of Annfield, Co. Tipperary. The British would show him little mercy, so Breen, Treacy and Robinson determined that Hogan should be rescued. They came to Danny Maloney's at Lakelly near Knocklong, East Limerick. Miss Mai Maloney went to Thurles and found out that Seán Hogan was being sent to Cork Jail by a certain train. She informed Breen, who, with his other companions and some East Limerick men, decided to attempt Hogan's rescue at Knocklong Station. When the train halted at Knocklong the Volunteers boarded the train and, after a severe fight, rescued Seán Hogan. The rescue at Knocklong blazed throughout Ireland as an example of the fearlessness of the Volunteers. Two R.I.C. men were shot dead and Breen and Treacy were badly wounded. They were moved from house to house and received loving care everywhere, and as the trail became hot they were moved to West Limerick. They soon recovered. On his way to West Limerick, Breen was driven through Kilmallock town. The East Limerick Brigade was now showing the result of its training and the members were not afraid to test their courage or ability against the British.

In Bruff Battalion area where the lands were rich there were more than the due share of "Great Houses". Our intelligence penetrated these houses and we learned where there were good stocks of arms and ammunition. Bruff Company was well organised and with aid from Grange Company we raided the house of Count de Salis, Lough Gur, in 1919. There we got a goodly supply of .303 and revolver ammunition, a couple of double-barrel shotguns, a rifle, revolvers and a big game gun which carried a 12 bore charge of solid lead. Among the members of the Battalion Staff who took part in this raid for arms were Seán de Bhail, N. O'Dwyer,

D. Cremins and myself, together with Martin Conway, Edward Neary and others from Grange Company.

The Sinn Féin organisation was gaining strength also and was publishing a little paper called "Nationality". The Roger Casement Sinn Féin Club had been started in Bruff in 1917. The club took over the Bruff band and appointed a new bandmaster - John Hogan. In the summer of 1917, Thomas Ashe, a teacher from Kerry who had fought at Ashbourne in 1916, was on hunger-strike in Mountjoy Jail whilst a prisoner there. He was forcibly fed and he died. The band led our Volunteer Company through Bruff from the bridge to the Courthouse and back and played Chopin's Funeral March. Even then we were able to do the slow march with distinction. As we passed by the police barracks, the R.I.C., in force, were spectators. Sinn Féin and the Volunteers went hand in hand and Seán Wall was Chairman of the Sinn Féin Club as well as Brigade O/C.

In the summer of 1919 we raided Kilballyowen House, Bruff, the residence of "The O'Grady". He had been a Colonel in the British army and was expected to fight. One of the staff, Miss Catherine O'Neill, left a window open. We surprised O'Grady and seized some rifles, revolvers and 1,000 rounds of .303 ammunition. Participators in that raid were: Seán Wall, Liam Purcell, D. Cremins, myself, James P. O'Connor, John Cremins, James Mortell, Michael Hogan, William Hogan, Edward Moloney and Denis Mortell. The R.I.C. were becoming more alert and active. Small police stations were shut down and the Bruff garrison doubled. We went into the 2nd Battalion area and raided Kilfrush House, owned by the Gubbins family. We met opposition there but procured more rifles and ammunition

together with revolvers and shotguns. To the best of my knowledge, only one man from Hospital Company - Thomas Walsh - was engaged in this raid. Among those of Bruff Company who took part were Seán Wall, Nicholas O'Dwyer, Liam Purcell - whose car carried away the booty - James P. O'Connor, David Cremins, myself, Edward Maloney (Orange) and Thomas Malone (Seán Ford). The arms were dumped at O'Donnell's ^{BALLYINCULOO,} of ~~Ballydoolee~~. "Scholar Jack" was the name of Liam Purcell's horse who invariably accompanied us in raids to bring back the arms. He survived to win a few Point-to-Point races after the war of independence. Amongst the staff at Kilfrush House was an enemy agent - a man named Burns - our evidence wasn't complete. Burns later joined the R.I.C. or Tans.

Thomas Malone (Seán Ford) had broken jail from Mountjoy. He was from Tyrrellspass, Co. Westmeath, and had come down to us as an I.R.B. man and organiser of the Dáil Loan.

The Dáil Loan was floated by Dáil Éireann. Here again we acted more as members of Sinn Féin than Volunteers. We canvassed the people to buy Dáil bonds. The response was indeed generous, having regard to the fact that the bonds could only be redeemed by the establishment of the Republic as the de facto government of the country. Indeed, payment with interest was made in all cases years later. One case in particular I remember. Seán Wall's wife's aunt, Mrs. M.A. Cremins, had invested £100 in Dáil bonds. Later Seán approached her for a further contribution. She gave another £100, but this was not for the loan - it was to buy rifles - and when, years later, the bonds were redeemed there arose the crux. There was, of course, no record of the second purchase of bonds.

Early in 1920 we raided Baggottstown House, Bruff, the home of the Bouchiers. Among those present were: James O'Connor, (carpenter), William, James and Paddy Mortell and John Cremins. Shortly after we proposed to raid Kilballyowen House again. A section including myself and brother, Patrick Maloney, Edward and Michael Hogan and Edward Moloney walked round a corner at Bruff, ^{HILL} about midnight straight into an R.I.C. patrol who were walking towards Bruff between the old Rectory and Ryan's cottage. They were walking in the water channels on either side of the road. Our men walked straight through unmolested. The raid was put back for a week. Present this time were James P. O'Connor, Liam Hayes (Kilteely), D. Cremins, John Cremins, James Mortell, William Moroney, John Moroney, Denis Mortell, William Wall (see "Limerick's Fighting Story" by me as "Seamus"). Our intelligence had reported a Lewis gun at Kilballyowen. We brought an ex-British soldier named Patrick Moroney with us on the raid. He was a brother of the two Moroneys mentioned above who were first-class Volunteers. We brought Patrick so that we would not miss any part of the gun, but during the raid he pilfered watches and other valuables of a non-military nature. On learning of the theft, Moroney was forced to give up these articles and they were returned to Kilballyowen House. Madame O'Grady had "swallowed" British propaganda. She had run along a corridor where she met me and offered the keys of the whole house if the Colonel's life was spared. She was reminded that the Volunteers did not commit murder, after which she became more co-operative. She tried a particularly mean trick when the pilfered property was returned. She asked the Volunteer who returned them - James Mortell of Ballygrennan - to deliver a passbook to a

shop in Bruff. The Volunteer took the book and tore it up in front of her. The Madame O'Gradys and others like her were fast being taught a lesson.

An attack on Doon R.I.C. barracks in February, 1920, had not been successful and the lesson learned there was to bear fruit later. Seán Wall had then decided to attack Ballylanders R.I.C. barracks. He held conferences with senior officers and April, 1920, was decided on as the date. Thomas Malone (Seán Ford) was O/C of operations. Participating in that attack from Bruff were, in addition to Thomas Malone, Messrs. D. Cremin, James Mortell and Liam Purcell.

The barrack was taken and burned. Some ten rifles and ammunition were captured as well as some Mills bombs, shotguns, small arms and bicycles. One month later Kilmallock barracks was attacked. Seán Wall had been raided for by the British and he now established his Brigade H.Q. at Liam Purcell's of Uregare near Bruff. Liam was young, a bachelor and owned a farm and large house of ten rooms. Here at this house the main arrangements for the Kilmallock attack were made. The Dáil had assumed the authority of a government over the Volunteers and we became the Irish Republican Army, shortened to I.R.A. These three letters were to become synonymous the world over with acts of bravery coupled with chivalry, and its actions under the most trying conditions - for the British are the most savage and brutal of all "civilized" peoples - were to give courage to every small nation who desired independence. Other nations which were later to achieve freedom, such as India, Palastine, Burma and others, modelled their activities on the methods of the I.R.A. in the Irish war of independence.

Before the Kilmallock Barracks attack, gathered at Liam Purcell's house (not at Sheehy's of Ballingaddy as Jack McCarthy relates elsewhere) might be seen senior officers of East Limerick Brigade. With the exception of the few, they were in years very young, barely over twenty years; yet they lacked nothing that was requisite for a successful campaign. Full of youthful boisterousness, they would become calm and collected as occasion warranted. On the night before the attack Seán Wall had his final conference in an outhouse (coffin house) at the rear of Whelan's licensed premises, Bruff. Almost every man present there wished to go to the attack, but that couldn't be. James P. O'Connor had become an officer - which rank I can't remember, but he called himself Battalion Lieutenant of Engineers. He was uppish and liked high-sounding titles. After Seán's discussion, O'Connor drew out a notebook and impressively ordered us individuals to report for duty the following night at such a place and such a time sharp. David Cremins was to man a cross-cut saw. David's language was lurid. His tongue flayed O'Connor and left him under no doubt but that David was going to Kilmallock. O'Connor wasn't keen to fight himself - he would be jealous of those who did. David spoke for us all and Seán enjoyed the passage and David went to Kilmallock.

No effort was spared to ensure that the Kilmallock attack should be successful. Sore in our hearts was the failure of the Fenians of 1867. Senior officers viewed the building from every vantage point for weeks prior to the attack. Every advantage and disadvantage were noted and due provision made. Meetings were numerous at Purcell's, suggestions and proposals were made and discarded or adopted according to feasibility. We don't

know who made the suggestion, but here for the first time bottles of petrol or paraffin were to be thrown through the roof. This weapon figured largely in every barrack attack afterwards and it was called the "Molotov Cocktail" during the Second World War, 1939-1945. Came the night May 27th 1920. Taking part from Bruff, in addition to the Brigadier, were: David Cremins, Liam Purcell, N. O'Dwyer, Thomas Malone - again O/C of operations - Martin Conway, Edward Maloney, James Mortell, William Wall, James Bond, William Moroney, Richard O'Donnell, Edward Treacy and myself (who stole away from O'Connor after cutting trees at Uregare). Midnight was the dead line. We need not go into details of this engagement as it has been dealt with in An tÓglach and elsewhere. Suffice to say the garrison refused to surrender and fought bravely if rashly. A Sergeant O'Sullivan was in charge of a garrison of 23 approximately. The R.I.C. and Tans were nearly wiped out and the I.R.A. had only one casualty - Liam Scully, a national teacher, who was killed. James Mortell, Bruff, was complimented by Seán Wall on running across from Carroll's on one side to Cleary's on the other side with a dispatch whilst under fire. The Cumann na mBan, led by Miss Mary K. Sheedy of Ballingaddy, Mai Moloney of Lackelly, Lizzie Hogan of Tankardstown and others, used a rifle and kept the kettles boiling as occasion demanded. We came home happy and very tired that May morning. The 1867 defeat had been wiped out. Prior to the Kilmallock attack we had gone to Bruree and helped the local lads to blow up the Courthouse and R.I.C. barrack - one building. Those from Bruff were: N. O'Dwyer, Denis Conway, myself, Denis Mortell and Edward Moloney.

National Archives Act, 1986, Regulations, 1988

ABSTRACTION OF PART(S) PURSUANT TO REGULATION 8

**Form to be completed and inserted in the original record
in place of each part abstracted**

- (i) Reference number of the separate cover under which the abstracted part has been filed: NS 1525/A
- (ii) How many documents have been abstracted: 3 pp.
- (iii) The date of each such document: 5 November 1956.

(iv) The description of each document:

NS 1525 petition statement James Moloney P20-22 (incl)
names of persons

(Where appropriate, a composite description may be entered in respect of two or more related documents).

(v) Reason(s) why the part has been abstracted for retention:

(c) Would or might cause distress or danger to living persons on the ground that they contain information about individuals, or would or might be likely to lead to an action for damages for defamation.

(These will be the reasons given on the certificate under Section 8(4).)

J. Moloney
Name: (J. Moloney.)

Grade: Col.

Department/Office/Court:

Date: 7 March 2003.

The Sinn Féin side was not neglected and parish and district courts were established in May, 1920. The first of these courts in East Limerick was held at the home of Mrs. Mary Cremins, Bally~~garr~~^{GRENNAN}, Bruff - mother of David and John. Ernie O'Malley, H.Q. Staff, was in the area and presided. Justice was based on common sense. Law and the litigants were usually satisfied. Courts were later held at the Ballally, Bruff, and Ballycampion, Bruff. If a fine was imposed and was slow in being paid, we removed a car or horse or such to an "unknown destination". This quickly brought realisation that the Republican movement was in deadly earnest and the fines, usually increased by 50%, were then paid. District courts were later held at Coleman's, Boherard, and at Lough Gur. Those who sat at these courts usually were taken from: Seán Wall, N. O'Dwyer, Michael Ryan, Ballynamona, Hospital, Seán Stack, James P. O'Connor and D. Cremins. I was clerk of court. The courts gave rise to a police force - the police were mostly I.R.A. men. Their duty was mainly to prevent crime and to collect fines. Stolen property was quickly recovered, for the people were 75% co-operative and those who took advantage of the times were swiftly dealt with. A case in point: the family had horses but no land. The horses trespassed ad lib. The R.I.C. as a police force had ceased and were now only an arm of the military, and the were fined. The fine was paid but the trespass continued. A heavier fine was then imposed and not paid. A horse was removed to an "unknown destination", after which the fine was quickly paid and the trespass stopped. , was fined in an abusive case. Edward Bourke, Ballycampion, was subject to abuse by --- when he went to collect the fine. The fine was doubled and levied from employer,

refused to pay. A cow was removed and the fine, plus 50%, was promptly paid, the cow being returned.

The courts helped a good deal to transform the minds of the people and were good propoganda as to the strength of the Republican movement in foreign countries. We held an impromptu court at Grange - under a bush - on two girls who were defiantly consorting with the Tans. Jack Jones, a British M.P., asked questions in the Commons regarding British loss of prestige. Thomas Sheehan, Grange, was judge, John Moroney, Bruff, was Prosecutor, and James Moloney, Bruff, for Defence. Also present were J.G. O'Dwyer, James Bond and Edward Moloney.

The R.I.C. had been strengthened with recruits from England and a few Irishmen early in 1920. The recruits were mainly from the dregs of English cities and jails. Some of the R.I.C. were disgusted and resigned and some of them even joined the I.R.A. Decent Justices of the Peace resigned as a protest against the atrocities by the new recruits. Lacking full uniform, they wore khaki pants and police coats. Before very long they were christened Black and Tans from a famous Co. Limerick pack of hounds. These Britishers had a free hand. They robbed, looted or burned after any particular foray of the I.R.A. Prisoners were shot "trying to escape". I.R.A. men's sisters and other girls had to go "on the run" fearing rape. The I.R.A. gritted its teeth and showed little mercy to the Tans after such outrages. After Kilmallock attack these Tans returned in force and burned some houses in the town. In Bruree they shot a cripple. They came to Bruff but did no damage.

Bruff R.I.C. barracks was a strong building and British District H.Q. for most of East Limerick. An open attack would fail at that time, so an attack by strategy was mooted for a fair-day in July, 1920. Two weeks before a company of the Welsh Fusiliers moved into Bruff and stayed under canvas. The plan was abandoned. One of the Welsh Fusiliers was known locally as the "Mad Sergeant". He was officious, bullied people and used a trench tool without cause on people's heads when he held them up passing the barracks. (The military had moved into the barracks after a couple of months under canvas). One night in October, 1920, with Edward Moloney I came home for a change of shirts. We had got on to the road coming towards the house. It was dark and Mike O'Donnell coming from work warned us that some of the British were coming down after him in the company of girls. Mike was surprised when we decided to remain put. One of the British was the "Mad Sergeant". It was decided this little ruffian should die. Having changed shirts, we followed the Britishers. The "Mad Sergeant" was held up and got some of his own medicine. Afterwards he was noticeably quieter.

Grange Company, under Martin Conway, raided Rockbarton House early in July, 1920. I assisted on the occasion. Barring, the owner, resisted but was overpowered. Small arms ammunition, together with shotguns and an elephant gun, were procured. Bruff Courthouse, which stood 100 yards north of Bruff barracks, with an open space between, was blown up later in July, 1920. James P. O'Connor, myself, and John and William Horoney went to ^{OVN} ~~the~~ ^{TRALEY} ~~the~~ ~~peopleen~~ graveyard to await Seán Wall, D. Cremins, Edward ~~Eccy~~ and others. These latter were late in arriving so we decided to blow

up the Courthouse ourselves. As the explosion occurred, a patrol of Tans and military was passing by. The patrol ran and when they reached the barracks they opened fire with rifles and machine-guns. Seán Wall and his comrades had arrived by then and were waiting for us when they saw the flash and heard the explosion. Next they saw men running through the fields and bullets were clipping the leaves from the bushes. Edward ^{TRACEY} ~~Keary~~ jumped on one of the running men - it was myself. There was a good laugh. (See "Limerick's Fighting Story" by me as "Seamus").

Ernie O'Malley had come down from H.Q. We met him at Boherard and Athlacco. At Boherard he ran us through wet fields covered with thistle. He made us crawl and lie flat, sometimes with water underneath. He asked Edward ^{TRACEY} ~~Keary~~ and myself to scout for him to Martin Conway's of Holycross. ^{WE} ~~They~~ were to fire on a lorry or lorries of Tans if Tans were met. We both refused but agreed to accompany O'Malley as a trio and this latter plan was adopted. O'Malley was tough, somewhat unreasonable at times, but he knew no fear and we learned to like and respect him. O'Malley held a conference at the ruined castle of Ballygrennan, Bruff. Present were: Martin Conway, James O'Shea, ^{FRANK} ~~Joseph~~ Keating, Stephen Cregan, Robert Ryan, Michael Daly, James P. O'Connor, myself and Edward ^{TRACEY} ~~Keary~~.

When I reported that the Company Captain, D. Cremins, was away from home and couldn't attend, O'Connor contradicted this and said Cremins was at Purcell's of Uregore. I was sent for Cremins. When I returned I informed the meeting that Cremins had gone travelling with Thomas Malone. O'Connor had also reported N. O'Dwyer. O'Connor was

appointed Battalion Commandant and I was appointed Battalion Adjutant and Company Captain of Bruff. O'Malley liked Bruff Battalion and East Limerick but advocated more fighting. He advised that all men "on the run" sleep in one house and under arms, but Seán Wall had already foreseen this and dug-outs were built or excavated, usually in double banks away from the public eye or paths. Those residing in these "homes" were armed. Wall's brigade dug-out was in Liam Purcell's lands at Uregore, Bruff.

Nearly all prominent I.R.A. men were now "on the run" or sleeping away from home. Raids by the British, led by the R.I.C., for wanted men were frequent. These raids were in nearly all cases accompanied by looting, styled confiscation. Nearly all units of the Tans contained a "murder gang". Tomás MacCurtain, Lord Mayor of Cork, had been murdered by men with blackened faces. Being arrested carried the risk of being "shot while trying to escape".

Donnchadh O'Hannigan and Patrick Clancy, East Limerick, had thought up the idea of a Flying Column whilst staying with other men "on the run" at Tankardstown between Bruree and Kilmallock. On August 4th 1920 they learned of a British cycling patrol passing by. With Hannigan in charge, they immediately mobilised and attacked the patrol. Some three or four of the British were shot and some rifles captured. At this engagement was born the first "Flying Column" in Ireland. These columns were to spearhead all, or nearly all concerted attacks on the British from then until the end of the war.

The Irish Republican Army was now becoming respected by most of the Irish people, although local people found it

hard to recognise their sons or neighbours' sons as capable of beating the great and mighty British Empire. The I.R.A. individuals themselves had to contend with smirking from neighbours who were either not plucky enough themselves or plainly satisfied with their lot. Neighbouring people who were on in years were often the hardest to contend with. Such reminders as "What about the trouble to your poor father and mother" or "This house might be burned" or "Can ye succeed where Germany failed" were their usual remarks. These "wet blankets" did us no good. Plainly they regarded us as inferior to the British.

The local "murder gang" of the Tans became more active. They raided in mid August, 1920, for John Moroney, Bruff, with blackened faces. John was in a neighbour's house nearby. Later the same night my house was raided. I, too, was absent, although almost a spectator. Followed raids for Martin Conway, Holycross, and Nicholas O'Dwyer. All four had to go "on the run".

Conway was Captain of Grange Company with Edward ^{TRACEY} ~~McCoy~~ as 1st. Lieutenant. He was fearless to a fault and longed for a chance to come to grips with the British, but rifles were few and ammunition too scarce to have a showdown as yet.

In June, 1920, local or County Council and Board of Guardians elections were held. Sinn Féin contested the election but its candidates were mainly returned unopposed. Seán Wall, Michael Ryan, Ballinamona, and Michael de Lacy were returned for Bruff area for the County Council. At the County Council's first meeting on June 25th Seán Wall was elected unanimously as Chairman on the proposition of Liam Manahan, Ballylanders. Anthony Mackey,

Castleconnell, was elected Vice Chairman by eleven votes to ten for Seán Hynes. Liam Purcell, who was Vice Chairman of Kilmallock Board of Guardians, sat and voted as an ex officio member of the council.

After his election to the chair, Seán Wall returned thanks and immediately proposed "that this council pledges its allegiance to Dáil Éireann. This resolution was passed unanimously and thus Limerick County Council, on this proposition of its chairman, became the first public body to pledge allegiance to Dáil Éireann. We had been busy on the civil side of the movement during this election and then turned to the military side again. Volunteers or I.R.A. companies were formed in every area, but we failed in Croom. We dubbed it "Little Belfast". The Tans became aggressive and held up people in cities and towns for searching. In Limerick City if one stated, on being held up, that one was from Bruff, the result was a manhandling or beating or kicking. If, on the other hand, one declared as being from Croom, the held up person was almost stood a treat. We didn't like Croom but later a company was formed at Honeypond, outside Croom, by a William Burke and others.

Seán Wall was now a very busy man: what with being O/C East Limerick Brigade, I.R.A., and Chairman of Limerick County Council, besides being married with a wife and family to provide for, County Council meetings were held in secret, being summoned by dispatch. The minutes were kept secret from the British who, in turn, treated the County Council as an enemy. Seán was to be seen walking through back streets to County Council meetings, a scout in front and another in the rear, ready with a change of step to become an armed guard if danger threatened. Outside Brigade H.Q.

National Archives Act, 1986, Regulations, 1988

ABSTRACTION OF PART(S) PURSUANT TO REGULATION 8

Form to be completed and inserted in the original record

in place of each part abstracted

- (i) Reference number of the separate cover under which the abstracted part has been filed: WS1525/A
- (ii) How many documents have been abstracted: 1A
- (iii) The date of each such document: 5 Nov 1956
- (iv) The description of each document:
WS 1525 Written statement James Moloney p 27
names of persons

(Where appropriate, a composite description may be entered in respect of two or more related documents).

- (v) Reason(s) why the part has been abstracted for retention:
- (c) Would or might cause distress or danger to living persons on the ground that they contain information about individuals, or would or might be likely to lead to an action for damages for defamation.

(These will be the reasons given on the certificate under Section 8(4).)

J. Moloney
Name: (J. Moloney.)

Grade: Col.

Department/Office/Court:

Date: 7 March 2003.

at Bruff, a County Council workman who was a member of the I.R.A. was constantly cleaning the footpath or some such similar duty. His name was John O'Brien of Dromin. His job was to intercept dispatches or to direct known I.R.A. men to Brigade H.Q., or, alternatively, to warn of danger from the British.

Some young girls created a problem. The British uniform was an attraction for them, as indeed would any uniform. They could be a real danger to the movement and gave bad example by consorting with the enemy. They were warned repeatedly and stronger measures had to be resorted to. No Volunteer liked the job, but on occasions these girls' hair had to be cut. Years later Dame Fashion was to dictate bobbed hair but at this period of revolution it was deemed shameful. Girls' hair was bobbed at Grange and at Camoss, Bruff. In the latter case the girls concerned were named _____ They worked at _____

The name is _____

_____ reported to the R.I.C. that I led the raid. (I did not). A good Tan named McGrath, a Galwayman, made a copy of the report and gave it to Jack Caulfield of Bruff, who had served in the British army. McGrath also warned that I should not allow myself to be arrested as a Tan named Roberts would shoot me "trying to escape". Caulfield conveyed the message to me. In 1922 _____ approached me for help in another matter and took the opportunity, as he said, "to deny absolutely" the rumours that she had reported me. When I produced a copy of the report she felt very small.

Michael Collins had organised an intelligence system in Dublin and throughout the country which penetrated the

most guarded of British secrets, and reports were often in I.R.A. hands before being dispatched to their logical destination. One letter I remember. Mrs. Cecil, wife of a British army captain, wrote to Sir John French, then G.O.C. Irish Command, to send her husband, Cecil, to England with prisoners so that she might be with Sir John. French was then in his seventies.

The new Flying Column moved to Ballinamona, near Hospital, early in September for an ambush. The British failed to appear and the column marched back to Ballygrennan, Bruff, where the men billeted.

A district court was held at Lough Gur in mid October, 1920, at which Seán Wall presided. Solicitors and even counsel attended. The column did protection duty. Later the court sat on the trial of an enemy agent - O'Meara, Knockainey. O'Meara's case was adjourned and some weeks later, whilst being escorted near Oola, he made a break on hearing a lorry load of Tans on the road. He was shot dead.

The column remained in billets in Lough Gur and during that time Martin Conway, James Maloney (Kilcullans), Edward ~~Neasey~~ ^{TRACEY} and myself approached D. Hannigan and Thomas Malone and suggested an ambush at Grange. A meeting was held within a few days at the home of Robert Ryan, Lough Gur, the Company Captain. Present were: D. Hannigan, Thomas Malone, Robert Ryan, James Maloney (Kilcullans), Martin Conway, Edward ~~Neasey~~ ^{TRACEY}, James Maloney (Meadagh, Bruff), Seán Clifford (Fedamore), Richard O'Connell, O/C of Mid Limerick Column, myself and David Cremins. J.P. O'Connor, our Battalion O/C, was not present. He was known as "the man with the fainting wife". If O'Connor was summoned to anything that spelled danger, his wife fainted and he had

to remain to mind her. O'Connor had a motor car and the car was found burned near Bruff Bridge in October, 1920. Seán Wall compensated him by having him appointed Gate collector under Limerick County Council.

Grange ambush took place on November 8th 1920. The previous night Thomas Malone had dispatched the Battalion Commandant to present himself at Count de Salis's gate at 5.30 a.m. November 8th. He did not come, his excuse later being that he had had a headache and, having taken some tablets, had overslept. (This ambush is dealt with in detail by me as "Seamus" in "Limerick's Fighting Story" to which please refer). Let ^{ME} ~~us~~ add that whilst we lay in ambush for one lorry, we attacked a convoy of ten lorries, including an armoured car - steel lined cars. One lorry had a machine-gun on a tripod. Martin Conway was in charge of local preparations. He was plucky to a fault but had no head for details. It was faulty scouting which signalled one lorry instead of the convoy. The outpost south at Quilty's quarry, under Dick O'Donnell, had been at fault in allowing themselves to be observed by the British. Consequent on this latter, the British sent one lorry into the first suspicious position (the ambuscade) whilst the main body remained outside on elevated ground. The fight took place from Clancy's publichouse and post office to O'Neill's house and yard to 100 yards north this house.

The first lorry and occupants were bombed and shot up and all were casualties. Martin Conway, myself and Jim Murnane, Lough Gur, had gone out on the road after the lorry had passed. We had acted under orders. To our surprise, chips were knocked off the road and walls from behind and

beside us. Turning round, we quickly sized up the dangerous position. Military were firing on us from the running-boards of a steel-lined car ten yards away. We three retreated and signalled Hannigan and Malone, but the Column Commanders had observed the situation. British military, under Lieutenant Watling, appeared at O'Neill's gate, which was then open. We three fired. Lieutenant Watling was killed and that section of the British retreated hastily. Had they got inside, they could have outflanked the I.R.A. on one side. Earlier two I.R.A. men had been seen going away from the ambush position by Hannigan. He asked me if I recognised them. Using binoculars, I replied that I didn't recognise them. I hadn't told the truth. The men were J.G. O'Dwyer, later to become a world famous international horse show jumper, the other John Hayes. I was never sorry. Hannigan and Malone staged a masterly retreat, fighting all the while. We had two casualties (wounded) - Billy Burke, Kilbehenny, shot through the soft part of thigh, and T. Fogarty, Knocklong, shotgun pellets in chest. These men, with Owen O'Keefe, were in the post office. They were carried to safety. British losses numbered about ten dead and wounded. Present from Bruff were: Denis Cremins, John Moroney and myself. Others were members of Lough Gur, Grange and Meanus Companies and the column. We had but twenty-one rifles and an average of six rounds of ammunition per man, with about the same number of shotguns and some revolvers. The I.R.A. retreated mostly through Lough Gur and moved later to Ballycahill near Elton. P.K. Hogan, RathJordan, refused some of the I.R.A. a meal; it was taken. Later again the same man was to refuse spades and shovels to bury our dead.

He was lucky to be left alive.

Edmund Tobin of Glenbrohane and myself slept that night at O'Brien's, Ragamus. Next morning we went to Paddy Kennedy's, Killballyowen, where we met Martin Conway. We were presented with three tumblers of whiskey. Conway and myself were temperate but Tobin was definitely not. P. Kennedy drove us to Ballycahill to the column and almost ran into two lorry loads of Tans and R.I.C. from Bruff at Knockainy Cross. (See "Limerick's Fighting Story" pages 95, 96, 97 and 98. In page 97, line 16, change "Martin Portley" to "Morgan Portley". Line 13, change "Ned Daly" to "Michael Daly".

KEARNEY'S

The following met at ~~Kearney's~~ cottage, Newbinn, the following night to watch for reprisals: Martin Conway, Edward Neary, James (Benny) Maloney, myself, Tom O'Brien, Q.M. Grange Company. To our surprise, no attempt at reprisals was made on this occasion. We slept that night on top of Knockderk under a tent made from the cover of a steam roller from Knockderk quarry. M. Daly supplied the bedclothes and we had a clear view of Bruff and Grange to observe fires. It was November 9th and it certainly was cold.

The people who billeted and fed those of us "on the run" deserve every credit. They ran great risk to life and property. Had the British raided a house and a gun fight ensued, that house invariably was later burned by the British in force. Despite this the people always gave us a hearty welcome. Others, or the "safe" people, did not welcome us. They didn't want to be disturbed and would be satisfied to carry on being lickspittles to the British and pro British Irish. One such family is typical.

Late in November, 1920, I was one of a party who were continuously on the go all day long; no breakfast and no dinner, as the Tans were hot on my heels. In passing alone by a certain comfortable farmer's house I met the wife in the passageway. Her three sons were good school pals of mine up to a couple of years previous. She talked to me, sympathised with me but urged me past the house without offering the hospitality of the table. I was weak with hunger and perished with the cold.

The following were the members of Bruff Company - no ranks given - who bore the brunt of the Tan war in 1920. In addition, they did battalion or brigade work as required or as it presented itself: Liam Purcell, David Cremins, Edward Mortell, Denis Mortell, James Mortell, Geoffrey Mortell, Patrick Mortell (all brothers), Denis Conway, James O'Connor (Carpenter), James Maloney (Meadagh), William Meade, William Moroney, John Moroney (brothers), myself and brother Patrick, Michael Hogan, William Hogan (New Road, brothers), Richard Fitzgerald, Edward Bourke, James Bond, Nicholas O'Dwyer, B.E., Patrick O'Donoghue, Edw. Moloney, Grange (killed in action 27/12/'20), operated in the main with Bruff Company. Denis Conway, who was a van salesman, travelled around the country and was the trusted friend of Seán Wall. Conway it was who carried the more important dispatches regarding engagements, councils and court meetings. He was able to induce a girl to consort with a Tan with a view to getting information and could offer her protection. He was privileged.

Patrick Maloney, Ballycampion, was Wall's driver. He drove a hackney car (1914 model Ford) nicknamed "Mary Ellen" belonging to W.B. O'Donovan, Bruff. It was always at Wall's disposal. Seán Wall, Nicholas O'Dwyer and Liam

Purcell lived at the dug-out in Purcell's land.

During these last months of 1920 the war was intensified. East Limerick Column had an average of one major fight per month to the Truce in July, 1921.

Ernie O'Malley, G.H.Q., came round again in December, 1920. We had, through our grape-vins, heard a lot of his many adventures. He was with Liam Lynch at the taking of Mallow barracks and fought in Tipperary with the South Tipperary men. He had run into two lorry loads of Tans at Kilballyowen, Bruff, with Owen O'Keefe and Jerry Kiely and emerged safely. He called a Battalion Council meeting for "Jack's House" in the Caherguillamore-Rockbarton woods. O'Malley, Martin Conway, myself and James (Benny) Maloney walked back the steeple road towards the council. The local boys told vividly of Grange ambush and its disappointment but rejoiced at the British casualties, when we had to withdraw. O'Malley was very pleased, and as we gave him more details he listened keenly. He missed O'Connor's, the Battalion Commandant's, name and asked the reason. He was told that O'Connor was not at the ambush. At the Battalion Council he promoted Martin Conway to be Vice Commandant, with full charge of the battalion, and severely reprimanded O'Connor. Although he didn't remove his rank he would be ineffective.

Martin Conway was ordered to form a battalion fighting unit and O'Malley enjoined that he was to have a meeting of the following with himself before embarking on any planned attacks: James (Benny) Maloney, Robert Ryan and myself. When Ernie O'Malley left we got down to planning for the 3rd Battalion fighting unit. Tentative arrangements for attacks on British patrols, as others, at

Bennett's, Holy Cross, The Pike, Bruff, Kilballyowen, Bruff were made, whilst in between we hoped to join the Brigade Column. There again the lack of arms, especially rifles, was the snag. O'Malley had stated that rifles could be bought at G.H.Q. We discussed several ideas which might produce funds. We thought strongly of a levy, but as we had not permission from higher-ups this form of getting funds didn't come till later. That we eventually decided on running a dance - as if there was no war on - looks fantastic, but we knew it would appeal. There had been no public dance for quite a while and it would give the youth attached to the movement a chance to meet again under pleasant conditions. By inviting only "safe" people the secret would be preserved and the actual site, or rendezvous, was known only to a few. We hoped at a charge of 4/- per head, to get about 240, which would procure us nine or ten rifles. We chose Caherguillamore House, which was not occupied, and was situated about three miles north of Bruff, thirteen miles south of Limerick, eight miles east of Croom. It was the residence of the Viscounts Guillamore (O'Gradys) for generations. Beside it was Rockbarton House, owned by Nigel Barring, whose wife was a daughter of Lord Fermoy (Roches). Mrs. Barring's mother was a sister of Viscount Guillamore.

Thomas O'Donoghue was caretaker of Caherguillamore and his son, Patrick, was a prominent member of Bruff Company, so we had no trouble about securing entry a week beforehand. To the general body of the I.R.A. we told the dance would be in Herbertstown, three miles east of Caherguillamore. To anyone invited they were told to go to such and such a crossroads, such as The Pike, Bruff, Kilcullane, Herbertstown, Grange Cross, Holy Cross, where

they would be further directed. The only I.R.A. man to know the actual destination was posted at Caherguillamore main entrance. Yet the information as to the actual rendezvous got into the possession of the British.

I am personally satisfied that the following is the explanation: A member of Lough Gur Company, who would not normally be told until the last minute, was sent on a message to Caherguillamore. He was a good man, but he saw Conway and others making preparations. On going home he mentioned this to his mother. The mother went on a visit to Cork City. There she met former friends who were officers in the British army. Without meaning to do harm, she mentioned the dance and its locale. Our movement had at all times to contend with such chances as this, when our army for the most part lived and worked all day at home and any chance word might spell disaster, as indeed it did in this case.

We had discussed the possibility of having what guns we had near at hand to fight our way out if surprised. Approximately 200 attended the dance on the 26th/27th December, 1920. About 12.30 a.m. I got a message via Thomas ~~Hourigan~~^{HOURIGAN}, Holy Cross, that Martin Conway wanted me out on the ~~Cahir~~^{CAHIR} Road. He mentioned a shot having gone off. James (Benny) Maloney, Edward Maloney, John Moroney, all good shots and courageous men, accompanied me out. There we met Dr. Michael O'Brien coming in. He told us it was a false alarm. The British, hidden in the woods, had watched us go out and back again, and as we reached the courtyard hell was let loose. This story of Caherguillamore is dealt with in "Limerick's Fighting Story" by me as "Seamus", to which please refer. In that account

Page 103, line 12, change "Seán Maloney" to "Seamus Maloney".
 Lines 9-10 should read "Ed. Moloney, with a revolver,
 brought down") Some 140 men were captured and it
 broke the back of the 3rd Battalion strength.

To the critic I would say, nobody can question our
 sincerity to come to grips with the British. We had
 given ample proof already, and that there were not more
 engagements round Bruff was not lack of fighting men
 but lack of the wherewithal. Had we succeeded in
 getting material for fighting, I venture to say Bruff would
 have been a much hotter spot for the British and R.I.C.,
 and, anyhow, its record is a proud one.

Five of our men were killed at Caherguillamore.
 They were: Martin Conway, Lieutenant John Quinlan,
 Volunteers Edward Moloney, Daniel Sheehan and Henry Wade.
 Wounded was Robert Ryan. One Tan named Hogsden from
 Bruff barracks was killed.

During the night the Tans, R.I.C. and military,
 true to British custom, showed no mercy to their prisoners.
 Rifle and revolver butts were freely used until nearly
 every man was wounded, some very seriously. Next morning
 the girls and youths under 15 years were released,
 and the remainder of us were piled into lorries and, under
 heavy guard, conveyed to the New barracks (now Sarsfield
 barracks), Limerick. We cut a very sorry sight, covered
 as we were with blood and with our clothes stained and torn
 by bayonets. Later we were lodged in Limerick jail, but
 not before being questioned before an enquiry board
 attended by local R.I.C. (^{FRED} ~~was~~ McGarry and Pat Mullins, Bruff)
 and our histories against the Empire, in the person of His
 Majesty George V, laid bare.

We were tried by courtmartial, which court we refused to recognise, and sentenced in some cases to ten years penal servitude. The courtmartial was presided over by Major General Eastwood. We were taken by a small minesweeper from Limerick on 20th January, 1921, via Cobh to Portland prison, England. In England we were treated as convicts, only more ruthlessly. In February, 1921, we staged a strike in Portland, and owing to some miscarriage of information between ourselves and Robert Barton, T.D., (also a prisoner in Portland) the strike was not a success. We were again tried and sentenced to nine days No. 1 diet, bread and water; 42 days No. 2 diet - 1 pint of porridge each morning - 1 potato and some salt midday - 1 pint of cocoa and four ozs. bread each evening. We were transferred to punishment cells and were without even our boots - even a pin was taken - as prisoners were known to commit suicide under punishment like this. Each evening we had to strip, as Adam, roll up our clothes and lay them outside the door. We brought in our blankets and mattress. The procedure was reversed each morning. This indignity could only be practised by a barbarous people or on their behalf, and embarrassed every Irish boy. We were allowed to write and receive one letter every two months and a visit every two months or a letter in lieu thereof. In practice it didn't work out that way. In any small infringement of the rules, such as breaking the silence rule, one was brought before the Governor, who usually inflicted three days bread and water, with a loss of 960 remission marks. Remission marks were earned at eight marks per day towards remission of sentence, with a maximum of 25%, so that 960 marks meant a further 120 days without a letter. I fell foul of a warder named Wills. He saw to it that I was reported and brought before the Governor on flimsy charges. I wrote or received no letter from May, 1921, to release at

amnesty in January, 1922. In Portland I worked in the engineering (fitting) shop. The warden in charge of the shop, Johnson, was married to a Limerick woman and was a gentleman in so far as regulations allowed and we co-operated with him. Portland at least was a clean prison, but in July, 1921, we were transferred to dread Dartmoor. It was as wild as an American prairie. It was damp, dirty and reeked of filth. Sanitation outside during work was of buckets emptied once weekly, and we hated it, as indeed did the warders. We used to communicate by tapping the morse code on the walls and any given piece of news could be conveyed to any Irish prisoner within an hour. I was caught transferring a copy of morse code to Patrick O'Donoghue and was removed away from my own companions. It was like being transferred to another prison.

The Truce came on July 11th 1921. Every day we had hopes of release but as time rolled on to late autumn we opined something was none too rosy with the negotiations. We planned a break from jail, but it would be necessary to get outside help by way of transport and the priest (chaplain), Fr. Finnegan, refused to help or get in touch with the Self-Determination League in Britain.

We heard of the signing of the Treaty early in December, 1921. We were jubilant. That night we sang songs of Ireland and defiance, but John Bull wasn't finished. The warders under Snell came into the cells and freely used their truncheons. Many carried home sore heads in January after the Dáil had, by a small majority of seven, ratified the Treaty. As we reached Dublin that cold morning in January, 1922, after passing through the west coast of England where we had been feted by the Self-Determination League presided over by Dr. Amigo, Bishop of

Southwark, we were in a sorry mess and if a match were struck without our knowing it we jumped with nerves.

Meantime the Bruff Battalion had been practically denuded of fighting men. O'Connor assumed command of the battalion again, keeping quiet about O'Malley's degrading of him. A few good men had escaped from Caherguillamore, or weren't there at all, and they did trojan work during these early months of 1921.

Jack Moloney of Ardgeohane was a shoneen and joined the British army during the 1st World War. Afterwards he was an enemy agent. When he saw Ned Maloney and myself cross the river by stepping stones at Ardgeohane in October, 1920, going towards my married sister's house, he reported it to the R.I.C. We were "on the run" and my sister's house was raided that night for us. He didn't stop there and his communications were discovered by I.R.A. intelligence. He was executed early in the spring of 1921. Frank Caulfield, Newtown, also an enemy agent, was for execution the same night but plans miscarried. Michael Moroney, a member of the British army, fled the country. He also was an enemy agent. Spies had infiltrated to the Fenian movement in ¹⁸⁶⁷~~1850~~ and spoiled that fine organisation, but the I.R.A. made certain that despicable and usually cowardly traitors were severely dealt with and in a large measure killed spying in this period of Ireland's history.

Perhaps some I.R.A. man who was not in prison for the first six months of 1921 would supply details of the 3rd Battalion activities during that period. We who were in prison managed to learn of Drumkeen ambush in February, 1921, when the combined East and Mid Limerick columns ambushed two lorry loads of British and R.I.C. at Drumkeen and

inflicted a crushing defeat on the John Bull forces. British casualties were eleven dead, one of them, a district inspector, escaped, having asked a farmer to upset a load of farmyard manure on him. To us, in a letter, it was described as a hurling match. The casualties were referred to as goals and (wounded) points. Even in prison we were subject to the usual British propaganda. Books issued for reading or study, even fiction, had for the hero one of the blue blood English, Eton, Oxford and Cambridge, the beau ideal of "civilised manhood". This had been our lot almost wholly from the time we could read, but in some families the mist was penetrated and the English laid bare for what they indeed were - brutal, savage and undisciplined when dealing with subject nations - cringing cowards in battle when faced with an adversary equal in strength and arms.

As I have already pointed out, there was a prison within a prison - punishment cells - or "chokee" as dubbed by the lags. A prison officer may not strike a prisoner normally, but when arrested for infraction of the rules, however slight, the bullies took this opportunity to pretend we were fractious and used the baton freely. A favourite mode of punishment by these morons was a kick in the testicles. On saving ourselves the backs of our hands were often badly injured.

In Portland we remained until after the Truce, 11th July, 1921, then on to Dartmoor. We had refused to travel in prison garb and so we got our own clothes. We went by the warship H.M.S. Valiant - fearing our rescue I presume - from Portland to Portsmouth and thence by special train to Dartmoor. There we were kept until the treaty was passed by An Dáil in January, 1922, when we were released.

Bruff, as I have already said, was the H.Q. of East Limerick Brigade, which was rich in its contribution to the great struggle. I knew every active man in the district. Knowing them, I worked with them in everything little and a lot of things big. They were and are to-day, those who are surviving at least, fine fellows, unselfish to a fault, and if some gave more than others it was because they filled a particular need or were more suited or just plain lucky. They gave of their best without counting the dangers, which were very real and many. A committee, of which I was honorary secretary, erected a worthy memorial to the personnel of that movement at Bruff. The memorial was unveiled by Seán T. Ó Ceallaigh, Uachtarán na hÉireann, on the 12th October, 1952. Mr. O'Kelly made an historic speech on that occasion. In passing, I regret to relate that a movement, which in my opinion was mean in the extreme, subtle and underhand and led to our chagrin, led by the local Catholic clergy, sprang up with the object of gaining control of our funds, some £1,650. They promised G.A.A. fields and other amenities, but my firm belief is that their real intention was that the movement, as personified by our memorial, was best forgotten.

Signed: _____

Date: 5th November 1956

Witness: John J. Doherty
(Investigator).

