

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21  
BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21  
No. W.S. 1543

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS.

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 1543.

Witness

Patrick J. Lynch,  
Ullanes,  
Ballymakeera,  
Co. Cork.

Identity.

Captain, Ballyvourney Company, I.R.A.  
Member of Brigade Flying Column.

Subject.

Activities of Ballyvourney Company,  
Irish Volunteers, Co. Cork, 1916-1921.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil.

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BURO STAIRÉ MILEATA 1913-21

No. W.S. 1543

STATEMENT BY PATRICK J. LYNCH,

Ullanes, Ballymakeera, Macroom, Co. Cork.

I was born in the parish of Ballyvourney in the month of January, 1900. I attended the local National School in Ballyvourney until I was 15 years of age, and when I left school I went to work on my father's farm.

A Company of the Irish National Volunteers was formed in Ballyvourney in the year 1913, but ceased to exist after a short time. I was not a member. Early in 1916 Terence MacSwiney, Thomas McCurtain and Seán Hegarty who were organising the Irish Volunteers in different areas in County Cork, organised a Company in Ballyvourney, which I joined. We numbered fifteen at first, and started off 'forming fours' and other exercises. No officers were appointed then. We knew nothing whatever about the Rebellion until it had started in Dublin.

After the Rebellion we ceased to function as a Company until early 1917, when we reorganised again. This time our strength was thirty meen, and officers were appointed. Jack Collins of Ballyvourney was appointed Captain and Jeremiah Lucey, Lieutenant. We met once a week for general training, drilling and night marches. We had no arms, but the two local blacksmiths - Cornelius Creedon and Paddy Sullivan - supplied us with a quantity of pike-heads for which we obtained some very long handles.

Following the general release of prisoners in the summer of 1917, all Companies in the area were reorganised or new ones formed, and a Battalion staff was appointed. At the time we were a unit of the Macroom or 7th Battalion. Tim Twohig now became Company Captain

of Ballyvourney Company, Jeremiah Lucey remained 1st Lieutenant and Dan McSweeney became 2nd Lieutenant. Dan Corkery became Battalion O/C, Dan Lynch became Vice O/C, and Charlie Browne Adjutant. Included in the Companies attached to the Macroom Battalion then were Kilnamartra, Ballingeary, Inchigeela, Carriganima and Clondrohid.

In February of 1918, we attempted to seize the R.I.C. barracks in Ballyvourney. The great war was in progress and bacon was becoming scarce, so the authorities had issued instructions that sows were not to be sold without a permit from the local R.I.C. barracks. On the pretext of obtaining a permit for the sale of a sow, one of the local Volunteers approached the barracks while we waited in the shadows to rush the door as soon as it was opened. The R.I.C., however, became suspicious and did not open the door, so our plan didn't work.

The conscription scare was on at this time and we started an intensive course of drilling and route marching by night. Bombs were made from two-pound paint tins filled with cement into which a detonator with fuse attached was inserted. Slugs were made from molten lead and filled into cartridge cases during our spare time at night. Shot-guns in the area were collected and in most cases were surrendered voluntarily. The loyalist element in the area were reluctant to hand over their guns, so we raided their houses by night and seized them. In a number of cases, we discovered that they had handed them in for safe keeping to the R.I.C. barracks. Our Company strength during the period increased to 100 men, all of whom remained loyal to the Company when the scare had subsided and in a very short time after our strength increased to 135 men.

On 7th July, 1918, Dan McSweeney of Ballyvourney Company, with Volunteers of Coolea and Ballingeary Companies, held up and disarmed two R.I.C. men at the mouth of the Glen in the Ballingeary Company area. They seized two rifles and a side-car by which they (R.I.C.) were travelling to Ballyvourney to suppress an Aeriocht being held in Ballyvourney that day. The Volunteers threw the side-car over a precipice. In the encounter the two R.I.C. were wounded. After the incident the R.I.C. became very active raiding houses in the area looking for known Volunteers, many of whom had to go 'on the run'. Martial Law was proclaimed for West Cork for a considerable period following the wounding of the R.I.C.

In the same months Jack Collins, Jeremiah Lucey and Frank Creedon of Ballyvourney, held up a horse-drawn Post Office mail van as it was coming into the village. They seized the local mail and were taking the mail bags away with them when a military convoy arrived on the scene and opened fire on them. They made good their escape under the cover of a fence, taking the mail bags with them. The mail bags included those for the local R.I.C. barracks. Great activity by the R.I.C. followed. They raided many houses in the neighbourhood. No arrests, however, were made. At this time we had posters printed and stuck up all over the village calling on the people to boycott the R.I.C.

On the 6th October, 1918, two R.I.C. men, on their way from Ballymakeera to the local barracks, were set upon by a section of unarmed Volunteers in charge of Dan McSweeney, to disarm them of their rifles and revolvers. One of the R.I.C. opened fire with his revolver and both succeeded in reaching the barracks with their arms. This incident occurred at a place named Flatts.

Following the attack all of the active Volunteers had to go 'on the run'. The R.I.C. in the barracks subsequently became very active and succeeded in capturing four of the attacking Volunteers. They were Jeremiah and John Riordan, Patrick Hegarty and Con Sullivan. After being tried they served several months in jail. Con Sullivan died soon after his release. At the end of the year the local Company took part in canvassing for the Sinn Féin candidates during the general election.

As well as I can remember, it was at the latter end of 1918 or early 1919, that the Brigade Staff reorganised the Brigade area. We were separated from the Macroom or 7th Battalion and a new Battalion was formed for our area which became known as the Ballyvourney or 8th Battalion. Patrick O'Sullivan of Kilnamartra, now Dr. O'Sullivan, became Battalion O/C., Paddy O'Sullivan of Ballyvourney, Captain of the local Company became Vice O/C., Cornelius Sheehan became Adjutant, and Daniel Harrington became Quartermaster. I then succeeded Paddy O'Sullivan as Company Captain of Ballyvourney. Routine drilling continued during the year 1919. In July, Patrick O'Sullivan, Battalion O/C., Dan Harrington and myself and members of Ballyvourney Company, attempted to carry away one or two old cannon mounted outside Macroom Castle which was occupied by the military. We collected a number of ropes which we attached to the cannon and tried to pull it away, but it refused to budge. We had two horses and carts on the job and were armed with shot guns.

In October of 1919, with other members of Ballyvourney Company, I prepared an attack on Ballyvourney R.I.C. barracks. We were all armed with shot guns for the attack, but at the last moment the Brigade Staff would not approve of it. Martial Law was in force

at the time and the R.I.C. and Military were very active. By then we drilled and carried out field exercises in isolated places. Battalion meetings at the time were held at Sheehan's of Reenaree.

After Christmas of 1919, the Battalion staff decided to attack Inchigeela R.I.C. barracks. The attack which took place on the 3rd January, 1920, was in charge of Patrick O'Sullivan, the Battalion O/C. On the instructions of the O/C, the Ballyvourney Company delivered all arms in the Company at Dan Harrington's of Kilnamatra the night before. Selected men from each Company in the area, including ten from Ballyvourney Company, took part in the actual attack. The Ballyvourney men left early and arrived at Dan Harrington's at 8 p.m. After collecting our guns, we proceeded across country for a distance of sixteen miles until we reached Inchigeela where we were joined by the Inchigeela and Ballingearry men. The attacking party numbered sixty. The barracks which was a two-storey building, stood on its own on the south side of Inchigeela village. We took up positions around the barracks. We were all armed with shot guns except two who had the two rifles captured at the mouth of the Glen. In addition a couple of the men carried revolvers. Two sections, which had been placed in the front of the barracks, opened fire in the first instance. Others using crowbars were, in the meantime, trying to make a breach in the back wall of the building through which it was intended to throw bottles of paraffin followed by lighted waste. With others I had attacked the gable end with crowbars. While we were thus engaged at the back and gable end, through a misunderstanding we received an order to retreat. The two sections in front, however, continued to engage the enemy within, who were replying to their fire with machine guns and rifles, at the same time sending up Verey lights. Previous to the attack, road blocks had been set

up for some distance around the vicinity of Inchigeela village, and were manned by members of the local Companies, all armed with shot guns. The attack lasted from 10 p.m. to 4 a.m. when the two sections in front decided to withdraw. One R.I.C. man was wounded. We had no casualties.

On the 7th March, members of the Brigade Staff, including Sean Hegarty and Dan Donovan (Sando) with members of Cork City Battalion, arrived in the area to carry out another attack on Inchigeela barracks. They were met by at least sixty members of the 8th Battalion who were again armed as before. When Sean Hegarty and Sando saw the way the barracks was fortified with barbed wire, steel shutters on the windows and loop holes in the gable, they called off the proposed attack. They had taken some gun cotton with them with which they intended to blow down the gable end but discovered that barbed wire surrounded the building for a distance of ten yards.

On the 9th March, James Moynihan, Captain of Coolea, assisted by Dan Sullivan and Dan T. Twomey held up Sergeant Flynn of the R.I.C. at Rath and disarmed him of a rifle. Sergeant Flynn was wounded on the occasion. About five days later Dan McSweeney, Andy Casey, Jim Lehane and Dan Twomey, all of Ballyvourney Company, waited in ambush at Rath to attack four members of the R.I.C. who had gone on patrol. The R.I.C., becoming suspicious, did not return by their customary route and succeeded in reaching their barracks by taking a cross-country route.

Soon after, a Brigade order was received to burn down the local Courthouse and an old disused military barracks in the village. The order was carried out on the 4th April. During this operation all of the local Company were on duty, most of them armed with

shot guns. They surrounded the local R.I.C. barracks which stood only ten yards away and thus prevented the garrison from interfering. Four of our men were seriously burned, due to their inexperience in handling petrol. On the 9th June, the "Great House", which stood in its own grounds and was owned by a W. G. Williams, was also burned down, while the local Company again covered the R.I.C. barracks, armed with shot guns.

On Whit Sunday, 23rd May, 1920, about twelve I.R.A. men from the Ballyvourney, Ballingeary and Kilnamartra Companies, assembled in Ballingeary village to attack the R.I.C. barracks there. We met at 11 a.m. and took up positions in front of the barracks. Two or three of the garrison usually sat on a low wall alongside the barracks during the day while the door of the barracks stood open. Our intention was to rush the barracks while they sat there. We were armed with revolvers. While we were waiting for a suitable opportunity to rush the door, the R.I.C. suddenly jumped up, rushed into the barracks and barricaded the door. We had to call it off.

Early in June, William Murphy, an I.R.A. man who owned a threshing machine, went to the home of a military officer - Bowen Coldhurst - who had shot dead Owen Sheehy-Skeffington while a prisoner in a military barracks in Dublin, and carried out a threshing there. He was subsequently boycotted in the Battalion area which he left and started operations in a different part of the county, but very soon the I.R.A. there heard of the boycott in his own area, so he had to give up threshing altogether. After threshing for Bowen Coldhurst, Murphy became friendly with the R.I.C. in Inchigeela and supplied them occasionally with poteen which he manufactured himself. On his suggestion the Battalion O/C. Patrick O'Sullivan agreed that on a particular night the



R.I.C. would be drugged. The idea suggested by Murphy was that a drug be mixed with the poteen which he was to take into the barracks. A local Doctor, who was a member of the I.R.A., supplied the drug. When the drug became effective the Battalion O/C., with about ten I.R.A. men armed with revolvers, were to rush the barracks. Murphy took in the drugged poteen on the 13th June, 1920, but the garrison refused to touch it. Murphy came out and informed the waiting I.R.A. who gave up the attempt to rush the barracks.

At the request of Kerry No. 3, Brigade, I.R.A., Dan Harrington, myself, John M. Lucey, Denis Cronin, John Sullivan and James Riordan, crossed the County Kerry border and met members of Kerry No. 3, Brigade, on the 7th July and took up ambush positions on the Loobridge Road to attack a military supply lorry that usually passed that way. We remained in position for five hours, but the lorry never turned up, so we returned to our own area.

By the latter end of June the Military had occupied a fairly large house in the village of Ballyvourney which was known as the Doctor's house, and a supply lorry of troops travelled at least once a week to this house from either Cork or Macroom with provisions and probably the garrison's pay packets. The Battalion Staff decided to attack this lorry early in July. Selected men from Kilnamartra, Ballyvourney and Coolea Companies in charge of Patrick O'Sullivan took up positions on each side of the road between Macroom and Ballyvourney village. The ground on either side was higher than the road. The place chosen was Gattabaun, Coolvokig. The attacking party numbered thirty, two of whom had rifles; the rest had shotguns. We waited three days for the lorry before it came along. Each night we went to our homes or

neighbours' houses and returned each morning to wait. I think that it was on the second morning that two military petrol lorries passed through which we let pass. On the third morning, on the 17th July, our expected lorry came along. It was full of soldiers armed with rifles. As it came into the ambush position a private car taking a patient to hospital also drove into the ambush position. The private car had been signalled to stop but the driver ignored the signal. The private car was going towards Macroom. We waited until the private car got past the lorry before we opened fire. In the first volley the driver of the lorry was wounded in the cheek. The lorry for the moment went out of control and mounted the fence on the side of the road. After travelling a couple of hundred yards with its two left wheels on the fence, the driver managed to get it back on the road after which it disappeared from our view around a bend. We came out on to the road and saw a trail of petrol along the route the lorry had travelled. It was obvious that the petrol tank had been pierced by a shot. Taking a bye road we proceeded towards Ballyvourney village and saw that the lorry had been abandoned about a mile from the village. In this encounter a Captain Eyrie was shot dead and most of the soldiers were wounded by the buckshot used in our shotguns.

Following this ambush, which we claim to be the first attack on a military lorry in the period 1913 to 1921, we took up positions for several nights around Ballyvourney village fearing reprisals but, to our surprise, no reprisals were carried out in the village. Instead, reprisals were carried out in Fermoy a night or two after the attack. We learned later that Captain Eyrie, who was stationed in Fermoy, had only come to Macroom the morning

he was killed and had only come for the drive to Ballyvourney. A short time previous he had criminally assaulted a young girl in Fermoy as she was returning from school and apparently the authorities were of the opinion that he had been killed by members of the Fermoy I.R.A. for the offence.

On the 15th August, twenty bicycles were delivered to the military in Ballyvourney for the purpose of enabling the garrison to protect military lorries delivering supplies to the barracks. The Company met that night and decided to wait in ambush and capture the bikes at the first opportunity. On the morning of the 17th August the whole Company met. James Moynihan, Captain of Collea, and two Volunteers of Kilnamartra Company, were present on the occasion. Two lorries from Macroon had delivered provisions to the barracks that morning. Having delivered the stuff they were escorted by a cycle patrol for some distance along the road towards Clondrohid. In the meantime, we took up positions at a place called Knockanure about one mile from Ballyvourney village and awaited their return. Paddy O'Sullivan the Battalion Vice O/C. and myself were in charge. We were armed with shotguns and rifles. As they approached the ambush position we called on them to halt. They refused and put up speed to get away. We opened fire, killing the officer in charge - a Lieutenant Sharman - immediately and wounding four others. The others returned our fire. Shooting continued for about a half hour when eventually the remaining members of the patrol surrendered. We came out on to the road and collected ten rifles, one revolver, 600 rounds of .303 ammunition and 20 rounds of revolver ammunition.

That night we again took up positions around the village, fearing reprisals, as we were sure that the village would be burned down. Nothing happened that night, but on the morning of

the 19th military, in great strength from Cork City and surrounding areas, moved into our area, and camped at Coolavokig, Danganasillagh, Reenaree and on the Clondrohid border. The enemy strength was about 3,000 in all including R.I.C. and Tans. In conjunction with the military and R.I.C. stationed in Ballyvourney they combed the whole area for about a week but, owing to our scouting arrangements and discipline, not one of our men was arrested or one round of ammunition captured. Our guns had been carefully dumped and were looked after by Jeremiah Carey, Dan Healy, John J. O'Leary and Patrick Hallisey, who maintained them throughout the period.

On the 6th September, three lorries of military from Cork City arrived in the village where they remained for a short while. Returning to Cork they apparently abandoned one lorry on an open stretch of road outside the village. Some of the occupants of this lorry got out and got into the other two. After a while members of the local Company approached the lorry to take it away and destroy it, when soldiers hidden inside opened fire with machine-guns, killing the section leader, William Hegarty, and a civilian named Lynch. The rest of the section ran in all directions and succeeded in escaping. They included Francis Creedon, Mick Dineen, Jeremiah Casey, Jeremiah Lynch and Paddy Taylor. After killing Hegarty and Lynch the lorry proceeded on its way to Cork. After a while the local curate, Father Shinnick and two Cumann na mBan girls, Miss Minnie Twomey and Miss Peg Lynch, arrived on the scene and removed the body of Hegarty, who was later buried with military honours in Kilgarvin graveyard.

In the month of September the Battalion Staff prepared for another ambush, this time on the Macroon Inchigeela road.

About forty members of the Battalion in charge of the O/C., Patrick O'Sullivan, all armed with shot-guns, took up ambush positions for six successive days, but the expected military patrol never turned up.

On the morning of the 16th October, Ballyvourney R.I.C. and Military barracks were evacuated. Four mornings later on the 20th, members of the local Company had just set fire to the R.I.C. barracks when two lorry-loads of Tans arrived on the scene. The burning of the barracks was in charge of Paddy Riordan, Section Leader, assisted by James Moynihan, Captain of Coolea. The lorries pulled up, the Tans dismounted and were about to surround the building when two sentries - John C. Creedon and Peter Dineen - placed outside by Riordan, opened fire on the Tans with shot guns and ran for cover. The Tans opened fire on the two men while the Volunteers, who had set fire to the building, made good their escape through a wood at the back under the concentrated fire of the Tans. With the help of the owner of the building the Tans extinguished the flames which had not got a firm hold. As the Tans were leaving the village a Constable Ryan from Bilbow, Co.Limerick, fired several shots into the houses of local I.R.A. men. The house used as a barracks by the military was not interfered with as it was the home of a local Doctor. Next night the Tans raided Ballymakeera village which was only separated from Ballyvourney village by a stretch of main road one mile long. After raiding and searching several houses in the village and shooting indiscriminately for two or three hours they went to the house of a blacksmith and dragged out a civilian named James Lyhane and riddled his body with bullets in their fury at not being able to capture any member of the local I.R.A. Earlier in the month, however, they had captured Frank Kelly who was Company O/C. of Engineering. He was imprisoned until May, 1921.

At the latter end of October and early November, the Battalion O/C., Patrick O'Sullivan, the Vice O/C. Paddy O'Sullivan and myself, in charge of the local Company spent several successive days in ambush positions on the Macroom Ballyvourney road to attack two lorry loads of Tans who were particularly notorious for their brutality in raids and searches. They never came our way during the period, but all of the occupants of those two lorries were subsequently killed in an ambush at Kilmichael on the 20th November, the attacking party being in charge of Tom Barry of the West Cork Brigade.

By this time there was a perfect scouting, sentry and dispatch system in the Company area, while the whole Company were on active service. Day and night outposts were maintained at Danganisillagh Rock, the Curragh Wood, Gloundane and at the Mountain Road. Each member of the Company took his turn doing guard duty at these points. On the 20th December, 1920, we again approached the evacuated R.I.C. Barracks and this time succeeded in burning down the building without interference. Those taking part included some members of Coolea Company as well as Ballyvourney Company. Officers present included Paddy O'Sullivan, Vice O/C. Eugene Crowley, Battalion I.O., myself the Company Captain and Paddy Kellegher.

In early January, 1921, a Brigade Flying Column was formed in Ballyvourney Company area. Sean Hegarty, Brigade O/C., Dan Donovan, (Sando), Jim Grey, Sean Lucey and other members of the two city Battalions including Sean Murray who became the Column drill instructor, arrived in the area from Cork City having walked across country from Cork for a distance of forty miles. They set up headquarters in an old disused house on the farm lands of Lucey's in Ullanes West. Here they were joined by all officers of the five Companies in the Battalion as well as by a number of Volunteers

of each Company. We had between us at least fifty-five rifles and straight away started an intensive course of training which lasted for fourteen days. We were up each morning at 6 a.m. for physical exercises which lasted until 8 a.m. while, during the day, we had field exercises, training in the use of the rifle, hand-grenade practice and bayonet exercises.

The building used as camp headquarters was at one time a herd's house, but it had been used for housing cattle in winter time. It was in very bad repair. The Ballymakeera and Ullanes sections of Ballyvourney Company had a very busy time then. It was they who were responsible for providing mattresses and blankets lent by the local farmers which were placed on straw laid on the ground. The local Cumann na mBan, with the help of two members of the local Company, cooked for the Column, the food, such as home-made bread, buckets of milk, bacon and eggs, being supplied by local farmers with a generosity that is now hard to believe. Bags of turf were supplied in great quantity. Each morning one of our men went up the mountains and seized a sheep which was killed to provide dinner. Looking back on all this, especially the kindness and generosity of the people in providing food and shelter for the I.R.A. in those days, it is sad to think of the treatment they received after hostilities had ceased in the way of compensation compared to the shopkeepers from whom food often had to be seized.

After the fourteen days training, we left our camp and marched in extended formation via Reenaree and Ballingearry to the farmhouse of Jack Holland of Coomrue, which was one mile beyond the Gougane Barra Hotel owned by Mr. Cronin, and was located in the Ballingearry Company area. In Coomrue we spent a further ten days training while the local Company Captain, John Con Cronin and his Company

saw to it that we were supplied with mattresses, blankets and food which again were supplied by neighbouring farmers as well as by Mr. Cronin of Gougane Barra Hotel in a most generous manner. During this period of training the Brigade officers were on the look-out for a suitable position for an ambush.

After the ten days in Coomrue, we left and marched to the farmhouse of Dan Harrington of Clountycarthy, Reenaree, where we stayed for four days. From here we marched five miles on each of the four mornings to the Mouth of the Glen where we took up ambush positions for each of the four days during the period. Neither Tans or military came our way. We left each night at nightfall and returned to Dan Harrington. In Harrington's it was the responsibility of the Reenaree Company under their Captain to supply bedding and food collected from local farmers.

After the four days at Dan Harrington's we left on the fifth morning and marched to Coolnacaheragh where we lay in ambush for a further four days. Here we were joined on the first morning at 7 a.m. by a Battalion Flying Column from Macroom or the 7th Battalion.

We took up ambush positions in extended formations each side of the road. The positions on the north side of the road were very high and steep with many large boulders overhanging. The positions on the south side were low lying and below the level of the road. The Macroom men had been allocated positions on the south side behind large rocks which were more or less at right angles to the road. They faced east and had a clear view of the ambuskade for a distance of 300 yards. In between the main Column and the Macroom Column, positions, were placed pockets of shotgun men from the three Companies of Ballyvourney, Coolea and Reenaree.



On the fourth morning eight lorries of Tans approached accompanied by a couple of small cars. They approached very slowly proceeded by three hostages, all civilians, walking in front. Led by one of the small cars the two leading lorries just got into the ambush position and halted. The lorries behind halted some distance outside. They had come from the Macroon direction. From one of the rear lorries or small car further back an officer jumped out on the road, crossed a fence and proceeded to go up through the rocks east of the ambush position. As he did so he was fired at by one of the rifle men. With that, all men in positions on the eastern ends of the ambush positions opened fire. The small car which led the first two lorries into the ambush position was reversed and turned back for reinforcements. This car could have been shot to pieces by one of our machine gunners, who had it covered all the time, but he failed to open fire, whether from fear of the eight lorries of 'Tans' in front of him or not we could never understand. By now I.R.A. and Tans were fighting it out. It was a terrible fight which lasted four hours. The officer, a Major Seafield Grant, was killed in the first instance as well as several 'Tans'. Before it ended all of the Tans retreated into two cottages on the lower side of the road from where they continued to fight, having made several loop holes in the walls. The main column then swung east to the north of the cottages and continued to engage the enemy. The Macroon Column in the meantime also moved north of the cottages and also engaged the enemy once more. They were, however, still on the southern side of the road.

By now several lorries of reinforcements arrived on the scene. We got no word of their approach. The O/C., Sean Hegarty, and

"Sando" Donovan gave the order to retreat up the hill behind us. By then the Macroom Column, who were still south of the road, were almost trapped as the reinforcements were now in force above them, but they succeeded in crossing the road at the western end of the ambush position under heavy fire and made good their escape. The main Column continued up hill, followed by the Macroom Column, through Ullanes, Coomaguire and into Coolnacloghy.

It was now evening and several members of the Column were having a meal away down in a glen in Coolnacloghy. With others I was having a meal in the house of a man named Horgan situated in a bye road some distance off the main road. Soon after starting our meal a scout ran in and informed us that a convoy of four military lorries had halted further back on the main road and that the occupants - all military - were advancing in open formation towards Horgan's. We numbered ten men and took cover behind some fences around the house. By then the military had opened fire on several members of the Column who were above Dineen's house in the glen, where they just had a meal. We opened fire on the advancing military, while the members of the Column in the glen did likewise. We retreated across the mountains fighting a rearguard action for a considerable time. One of our men, Patrick Casey of Reenaree, was wounded and captured. The entire Column continued across Clydagh mountain into County Kerry which we reached by nightfall. In the middle of the night we crossed the Clydagh River in extended formation over stepping stones down to Clonkeen and on to Loobridge. Beyond Loobridge we crossed a railway line and proceeded to Francannuch which we reached at 3 a.m. and billeted there for the night.

On the following evening we left Francannuch, crossed the Kerry mountains, through Muing where the people were very hospitable,

and then to Cronin's of Toureen. From there we proceeded through the valley of Gleace to Kellegher's of Knockdrohid where we remained for a couple of days. In the meantime the enemy had burned down all the houses in the vicinity of the ambush position after which they went to Ballymakeera village and opened fire indiscriminately for a couple of hours. Here they wounded a Volunteer named Lucey in the leg which had to be amputated, later.

On the third day we marched to Twomey's of Coomchivane and from there to Carrigbawn in the Ballingeary Company area where we remained for three days. One morning at dawn our scouts informed us that a very large force of Tans, Military, R.I.C. and Auxiliaries were carrying out a large scale round-up in the area. We crossed the Lackabawn Mountain and avoided the round-up.

Returning to our Battalion area after the round-up, we came to Inchamore in the Coolea Company area and stayed at Patrick Sheehan's and Daniel Murray's for over a week, after which we were joined by Sean McSweeney and a Mr. Twomey who had escaped from Spike Island in a boat. After a week we proceeded to Ullanes, Liscarragane and on to Carrigaphoka in the Macroom Company area where we took up ambush positions for two days to attack a Tan convoy, but the 'Tans' never came out.

About the month of April, Cork No. 1. Brigade transferred their Headquarters to Michael McSweeney's house in Gurtnafuchion in our Company area. A short while later the newly formed Divisional Headquarters was set up at Ned McSweeney's of Gortyrähily in the Collea Company area. Curfew was in force at the time. Every member of the Company was now on active service, scouting, dispatch riding, night sentry duties, trenching roads or

breaking bridges. Liam Lynch, who had been appointed O/C. of the Division, arrived at my father's house - Jerry Lynch's of Ullanes, at 3 o'clock one morning. As soon as our scouts had given 'the all clear', I drove him, with three members of his staff, to Gortyrähily where we arrived safely at 6 a.m. From then on the Ballyvourney Company had to maintain a continuous look-out from the mountain tops. From Ullanes mountain our sentries watched the road from Millstreet. From the top of Danganasillagh rock they watched the road from Clondrohid, while from Curragh Wood they watched the road from Macroon. Our men used flags by day and torches lit by paraffin oil by night. Day and night members of the Company were on sentry duty behind the ditches on the main roads and bye roads watching for the approach of enemy patrols or convoys. At the least sign of danger a signal was flashed to the men on the hills and thence to Brigade and Divisional Headquarters. Our lines of communication were from Cork City via Blarney to Murphy's of Dunoughmore and on to Kellegher's and Mack's of Ballinagree.

On Whit Saturday night in May, 1921, the Brigade Column joined the Macroon Column near the town of Macroon to attack the Macroon Black and Tans. The Tans did not show up so after a short while the proposed attack was called off by the Brigade staff.

In June Commandant Dan Donovan and Doctor Roger O'Connor arrived at Jerry Lynch's of Ullanes, carrying handbags full of dispatches for Brigade and Divisional Headquarters. Paddy O'Sullivan, the Battalion Vice O/C. and myself drove them in a jaunting car to the respective Headquarters. Passing through Ballymakeera we called at Mrs. Creedon's Hotel. While inside two whippet armoured cars from Ballincollig Military Barracks

stopped outside the door. Dan Donovan and Doctor O'Connor ran out the back of the hotel and took cover. The bags of dispatches were on top of the jaunting car. I rushed out and caught the horse by the head and tried to impress on the occupants of the whippet cars that the horse was afraid of lorries. They apparently took it that I was a jarvey carrying commercial travellers. I drove back to the other end of the village. In the meantime they reversed their cars. I backed the horse behind a stall or big shed and, while out of sight, dumped the bags on to a manure heap and covered them. They drove back about a mile along the road they had come and to my surprise I found that the village was surrounded by military and Tans. In the meantime, Paddy O'Sullivan had gone into a draper's shop and changed his clothes. Dan Donovan ran down and crossed the road towards me. We both took off our coats and leisurely walked off as though we were going to save hay. We crossed a river and thence across the main road and proceeded to Curragh Wood and escaped. When the danger had passed we returned, collected the bags of dispatches and delivered them to Headquarters. The Military and Tans surrounding Ballymakeera that day were only part of a large scale enemy force carrying out a big round-up in the area at the time. The enemy force numbered at least 3,000 men.

SIGNED:

*Patrick J. Lynch*

DATE:

*14 - 12 - '56.*

WITNESS:

*John J. Dely*

