

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21

NO. W.S. 1,584

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COSANTA.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21

STATEMENT BY WITNESS.

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 1584.

Witness

Patrick A. Murray,
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56, Terenure Road East,
Dublin.

Identity.

O/C, 'C' Coy., 1st Battn., Cork 1 Bgde., I.R.A.

" " " "

" A.S.U., Cork City.

Subject.

I.Vol. & I.R.B. activities, Cork City, 1915-16.
Activities of 'C' Coy., 1st Battn., Cork 1 Bgde.,
I.R.A., & Active Service Unit 1917-21.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil.

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ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1010-21
BURO STAIRÉ MILEATA 1013-21
No. W.S. 1584

STATEMENT BY MR. P. A. MURRAY,
Brookline, 56 Terenure Road, East, Dublin.

I joined the Irish Volunteers in Cork City about 1915. At that time Seán O'Sullivan was in charge of the Cork City Battalion of the Volunteers. There were about four companies in the battalion. Chris. Gorman, Jack Scanlan and Seán Murphy were, I think, Company O/Cs.

Prominent officers associated with the Volunteer movement in Cork at the time were Tomás MacCurtain, O/C, Cork City & County, Terence MacSwiney, Seán O'Sullivan, Seán Nolan and my uncle, Fred Murray. Terry MacSwiney was engaged wholetime on organising duties. He was assisted on this work by Seán Nolan, My uncle Fred and, on occasions, by men like Pat Higgins, Seán Murphy and Dónal Óg O'Callaghan.

Nothing of importance happened during the year 1915 or early 1916. For a short time preceding Easter Week, 1916, I had an impression that something important was about to take place, and that a rising could not be far off. This impression became more fixed in my mind when my uncle, Fred Murray, gave up his employment about a week before Easter so that he could devote his full time and attention to the work of the Volunteers.

I remember that on the Saturday before Holy Week my uncle, Fred Murray, and Terence MacSwiney left Cork City to deliver orders to the different units of Volunteers throughout the county. What these orders were I could not say. My uncle returned to Cork City

on Good Friday and immediately got in touch with Tomás MacCurtain. He told him that Councillor Partridge of Dublin, whom he had met that day, had told him that the arms ship had been captured and that Sir Roger Casement had been arrested. My uncle then got instructions from Tomás MacCurtain to leave immediately for some destination which I cannot recall. Simultaneously, I got instructions from my uncle regarding a dump of ammunition which was stored in another uncle's house, Joe Murray of Blarney Street, Cork City. I was told to report to Tomás MacCurtain on Saturday evening and await instructions as to what should be done with the dump. On Saturday evening, as instructed, I brought the contents of the dump to the Volunteer Hall in Sheares Street. With me on this job were Christy McSwiney, Stephen McSwiney, Danny Hurley and one or two others.

All through Holy Week, I had been engaged with Joe Murphy and some others in the making of pellets for shotguns. We did that work in the Volunteer Hall in Sheares Street.

On Saturday night, my uncle Fred told me, when he returned, that he had brought a man from the train to Tomás MacCurtain and that this man had come from Dublin. I subsequently formed the opinion that this man was a courier from the I.R.B. in Dublin.

On Easter Sunday morning we mobilised, as instructed, at the Volunteer Hall in Sheares Street. About from two hundred to three hundred men paraded at the hall. At this time the general impression amongst the Volunteers was that the Rising was off, as manoeuvres for that day had been cancelled, according to a notice published in the "Sunday Independent". Notwithstanding this, however, the Volunteers entrained for Crookstown,

a village about ten miles outside Cork City. We detrained at Crookstown and marched out of the village, when we were halted and the word went around that Dr. Jim Ryan had brought a notice from Dublin cancelling the mobilisation. I actually saw Dr. Jim Ryan there myself. We continued our march as far as Macroom and there took a train back to Cork City.

I cannot say precisely why we marched west from Cork City on Easter Sunday, but I had the impression that it had something to do with a link-up with the Kerry Volunteers around Macroom. I want to emphasize that this was just an impression, and that I had no knowledge of any definite plans on the part of the Cork Volunteers should a rising take place. I can state positively that my uncle, Fred Murray, and other local leaders of the Cork Volunteers were aware of the plans for the rising, but knowledge of the plans was not passed on to the ordinary rank and file of the Volunteers.

On Easter Sunday night, each Volunteer got instructions to stand-to at his home, but on Easter Monday some of us disobeyed these orders and went into the Volunteer Hall, where we were instructed to return home again and stand-to as ordered. Some time on Monday night, the word came through that the Rising was on, but the information was indefinite.

All through that week I had been on duty in the Volunteer Hall, and I was freely used to carry messages from headquarters to individuals.

I remember attending a meeting which was held in the Volunteer Hall towards the end of the week, as far as I can recollect, and Tomás MacCurtain addressed all the Volunteers present. The gist of his address

was that he would not mind, even at that stage, taking part in the Rising, but he had received so many orders and counter-orders, and the issue was so confused, that he thought it would be better not to take any action, particularly as the element of surprise had gone.

The decision taken that night by a vote of the Volunteers was that they would not hand up their arms, as advised by the Bishop of Cork who had been in touch with the British military commander. The arrangement was come to that all arms would be handed in to the Lord Mayor of Cork, Alderman Butterfield, and left with him. He had guaranteed to hand them up to the military authorities. He was acting as liaison officer between the military authorities and the Volunteer command. It was understood that he would accept the surrender of all arms held by the Volunteers, but word was passed round to some of us that, in reality, a token surrender would be acceptable. Accordingly, some members of our company (Blackpool and Blarney area - C. Company) made arrangements to keep our rifles and to put into the sack, which was to be surrendered to the Lord Mayor, dummy rifles. It should be noted that each man surrendered his gun in a sack. In addition to failing to surrender our own rifles, we took rifles from the members of other companies, replaced them with dummies and placed the serviceable weapons in our own dumps. As far as I can recollect, the same procedure was followed by the members of the other companies, so that, in reality, there were very few serviceable weapons handed up. Amongst the men from C. company who helped save all available serviceable guns were: Christy McSwiney, Stephen McSwiney, Mick McSwiney, Danny Healy, Mick Barrett

and P.A. Murray (witness).

I.R.B. Associations:

During the week preceding Easter Week, 1916, I was sworn into the I.R.B. by Sean O'Sullivan. Amongst the prominent members of my Circle in Cor'k at the time were Seán MacCurtain, Liam Murphy, Harry Lupton, Christy McSwiney, Tadhg Barry and Martin O'Donoghue.

I did not attend any meetings and was not actively associated with the I.R.B. until about the year 1917 when there was a general reorganisation. The principal reason for bringing me into the I.R.B. at the time was to safeguard against any leakage of information prior to Easter Week 1916, as I was a link between my uncle, Fred Murray, and Tomás MacCurtain.

To the best of my knowledge, the I.R.B. section of the Volunteers became very active again in 1917. We received instructions to attend parades regularly, gather in recruits, and particularly to concentrate on arms. In all companies, it was arranged that the quartermaster would be a member of the I.R.B. Similarly, as far as I am aware, quartermasters in battalions, and even the brigade quartermaster, were members of the I.R.B. In that way, it was felt that the active members of the I.R.B. would have control of all the arms in the area.

During that period a number of the older members of the I.R.B. organisation - men who had been actively associated with the I.R.B. from 1900 - were dropped and their places taken by younger men. At that time, the members of my Circle were all members of about two companies of the Volunteers. Christy McSwiney was the Centre. Amongst the younger men I remember Danny Healy,

my uncle, Fred Murray, two brothers of Christy McSwiney, Donnchadh MacNeillis and some others. Our meeting place would be the Volunteer Hall or some local hall. We had no particular Circle headquarters.

At that time we were informed quietly that Tom's MacCurtain had ceased to be a member of the I.R.B. It was advanced that he had refused to continue, as had all the Volunteers in the I.R.B., for fear there would be a clash of orders, as had happened in 1916.

Some time in 1920, I think about the summer time, Fleming came down from Dublin, and himself and Sean O'Hegarty visited every Centre of the I.R.B. in the district. That would place Sean O'Hegarty as being in charge of the I.R.B. in the city at the time.

The I.R.B. control of quartermasters continued until about 1920. At that time the Volunteers had increased in numbers and their activities were more manifold than hitherto. Officers who were not members of the I.R.B. were as active in collecting and raiding for arms as members of the I.R.B. The Centre of my Circle was a private in my Volunteer company, and this was the case in other Circles also.

The abortive raid on Killeagh, which took place about the end of 1919 or the beginning of 1920, was organised by the quartermasters. This was discussed at a battalion council meeting, and the Volunteer officers present refused to allow their quartermasters to take control of the operation. As a result, Terence MacSwiney and every officer of the 1st battalion went on this raid. This incident might be said to have been the end of the control by the I.R.B. of the raids for arms.

The Volunteer re-organisation following 1916:

I remember there were some meetings of the I.R.B. held in the summer of 1916. It was announced that there were men in Dublin who had started to organise the Volunteers and, to the best of my knowledge, Fred Murray was sent to Dublin to contact these men. They were mostly members of the I.R.B. who had escaped arrest. There was very little Volunteer work done, however, until the release of the prisoners about the end of 1916. We kept in touch through the Gaelic League, through meetings in the Volunteer Hall, through excursions on Sundays, but very little Volunteer work was done.

After the release of the prisoners in 1916, new Volunteers began to pour in, and from that period onwards every officer was engaged in some way or other in organising or training the new Volunteers. The cycle corps, which was established by the city Volunteers, went to a different part of the country every Sunday and helped to drill the Volunteers in the different areas. City Volunteers went to districts adjoining the city and did similar work there.

At that time there was only one brigade of the Volunteers in the entire Cork city and county, commanded by Tomás MacCurtain. Other prominent officers in Cork city were Terence MacSwiney, Seán O'Sullivan and Sean Nolan.

All during 1917 Volunteer activities were concentrated on the procurement of arms, either by purchase or by raids. At that time British soldiers coming home on leave were an easy mark for the purchase of arms. This purchase of arms from

soldiers home on leave continued until the British authorities imposed restrictions which prevented them bringing home any more arms.

Things continued in this manner until the conscription crisis in 1918 when there was a big influx into the Volunteers. Companies were split up and new companies were formed. The city was divided into two battalions - 1st Battalion, north of River Lee, and 2nd Battalion, south of same. As far as I am aware, the same thing happened all through the county.

There was a good deal of activity at that time, making shotgun pellets and tin canister bombs. Each company was responsible for making its own bombs and ammunition, but the battalion supplied the materials for the work, and, on occasions, some of the manufactured stuff was given to the battalion.

As a result of the big expansion in the Volunteer organisation, I was elected company captain of C. Company of the 1st Battalion of Cork City. There were six companies in the battalion. At that time, with the reorganisation of the Cork City Volunteers, Terence MacSwiney, I think, was O/C of my battalion. He certainly was commanding it in 1919. Other battalion officers were: Sonny Healy, quartermaster; Liam Murphy, battalion adjutant, Donnchadh McNeillis, lieutenant of signals and cycle corps.

The company officers were. "Sandow" Donovan, Tom Crofts, Daithí Cotter, Chris. Gorman and Con Twomey, and myself.

Abortive Raid on Military Train:

Sometime in October 1913, Sandow Donovan and Tom Crofts approached me to see if it would be possible to make and arrange dumps for arms. It was hoped to take these arms from a military train that used to run between Cork and Cobh. The military train went about once a week. Sandow Donovan and Tom Crofts had been making a survey of the route for some weeks prior to this, and they were of the opinion that the train could be captured easily because there were few guards on it. The main trouble, as far as Donovan and Crofts were concerned, was the getting away of the stuff and its subsequent dumping. The brothers Grey had guaranteed that they could supply all the cars that would be necessary. I was put in touch with these men, and we arranged the routes that were to be taken to the dumps. We also started making the dumps. The raid on the train was fixed for 11th November (Armistice Day). On the Saturday previous to the day agreed on, I was informed that the raid on the train had been called off, as it was understood that there was a brigade job arranged for the release of MacNeillis who had been previously arrested. MacNeillis was rescued on 11th November, and, as the armistice was proclaimed on that day, the train never ran afterwards.

Feeling of the public in 1918:

I had nothing to do with the rescue of MacNeillis, but, about a week or so subsequently, I was sent to Master Murphy of Donaghmore, in whose district MacNeillis was hiding during this period. The Master believed that MacNeillis was perfectly safe, but at that time the people had not the same confidence in one another that they had later, and consequently he, Master Murphy, was

nervous that some neighbour might talk. He recommended that MacNeillis should be allowed to stay where he was for some longer period, but said he was of the opinion that the Volunteers should be thinking of getting another place for him to go to.

Some time afterwards, I went again to Master Murphy, and, as far as I am aware, MacNeillis left that place to go to Kilnamartyra, near Ballyvourney. I remember he went to stay with an old man named Harrington who lived alone. A local girl was sent to the house to prepare food for him and look after him generally.

The general election took place in December 1918, and the results were astonishing. Volunteers began to realise that there were more people in sympathy with them than they had believed were sympathetic up to that time. This knowledge gave a greater ease to the movement of Volunteers throughout the country, but, owing to the scattered R.I.C. barracks here and there in the country, there was always a feeling of uneasiness. It was at that time that plans began to be discussed for getting rid of the barracks from the different areas.

In January 1919 the Volunteers in Cork City and County had been organised into some twenty battalions. Tomás MacCurtain was Brigade O/C. It was now decided to divide the area into three brigades, as follows: No. 1 Brigade (Cork City & Mid Cork); No. 2 Brigade (North Cork); No. 3 Brigade (West Cork) There were now nine battalions in Cork I Brigade: Cork City (two), Whitechurch, Ovens, Passage, Donoughmore, Macroom, Ballyvourney, Middleton. As far as I can recollect, the officers of Cork I Brigade were:-

O/C - Tomás MacCurtain.
Vice O/C - I think this post was carried
only by Terry MacSwiney,
also O/C, 1st Battalion.
Adjutant - Florrie O'Donoghue.
Quartermaster - Seán Murphy.

During the year 1919, the Volunteers were mainly engaged on parades, training and procuring arms.

I accompanied Terence MacSwiney into many of the surrounding districts, organising local Volunteers and giving lectures. We also got in touch with battalions bordering on the city, and helped to train them. There was not very much doing in 1919.

Some time early in 1920, there was a raid by the police on a dump in Clogheen which was in my company district. The police who raided the dump came from Blarney. The raid was reported, and four (Mick Bowles, Danny Healy, Stephen McSwiney and witness) of us got our revolvers and set out for Clogheen. We tried to intercept the police at the foot of Faggot Hill, but they crossed the road before us. We opened fire on them, and they returned the fire. The exchange of shots lasted some fifteen or twenty minutes. The police, believing we were surrounding them, withdrew and left the captured arms behind them. We re-captured our own arms which consisted mainly of revolvers.

On 19th March 1920, Detective Murtagh was shot at Pope's Quay, Cork, by two members of my company (Christy MacSwiney and O'Connell) on instructions from the brigade. It was reported that Detective Murtagh was endeavouring to get information from Martin Condon who had been captured by the British in an attack on a barrack in Liam Lynch's brigade area. Condon was

being held prisoner in the military barracks in Cork at the time, and it was known that this detective was using extreme methods on him in order to procure information regarding Volunteer activities.

Tomás MacCurtain (Brigade O/C and Lord Mayor of Cork) was murdered the same night - 19th March. Early on the morning of 20th March, information reached me that four or five members of the British murder gang had visited the house of Tomás MacCurtain and assassinated him.

At a meeting of the Battalion council held within a week of the murder of Tomás MacCurtain, it was announced that Terence MacSwiney had been appointed O/C, Cork I. Brigade. On instructions, I reported to Terence MacSwiney, and, from that date until some time in May when Christy MacSwiney was appointed to act as a full-time guard, Terence MacSwiney stayed with me each night. On occasions, other members of the company also acted as guards. At that particular time, Terence MacSwiney was living in Sunday's Well, but spent most of his nights with the R.M.S. in Cork asylum. He also stayed in digs with me on Bachelor's Quay.

Early in April 1920, the brigade decided to attack all member of the R.I.C. who would be on duty in the streets of Cork on one particular night. On several nights, we took up positions and noted the dispositions of the R.I.C. and their movements. The operation, however, had to have sanction from headquarters, and they refused to approve of it.

The Brigade Intelligence Officer, Florrie O'Donoghue, became aware about this time of the identity of two members of the murder gang who assassinated

Tomás MacCurtain. These police were stationed in the Lower Road Barracks, and it was decided to attack them. In the beginning, the operation was supposed to be a brigade operation. There were suggestions that men from outside the city should be brought in to do it. This was later cancelled, and it was decided to leave the matter in the hands of the battalion. Further discussions took place, and eventually Terence MacSwiney gave me instructions to carry out the operation with my own company.

After a week of preliminary observation work on the movements of the men concerned, we decided to bring off the attack on a Saturday evening, but it was cancelled late on the Saturday evening as members of the brigade from country districts were holding a meeting in the City Hall. It was cancelled again on the following Monday because Terence MacSwiney was going to Dublin.

On the return of Terence MacSwiney from Dublin on May 12th 1920, the selected party took up their positions outside the R.I.C. barracks on Lower Road. Two men (Dr. Leo Ahearne -"Stetto"- and - Murphy) were placed directly opposite the door of the barracks on the opposite side of the road, and one man on either side of the barrack door, on the barrack side of the road. The latter pair were placed in position in case the R.I.C. men, as anticipated, did not go towards the tram stop. Myself and Martin Donovan were at the tram stop and, when we saw the R.I.C. party leave the barracks and move towards the stop, we entered the tram. They entered the tram at the stop and, as they stepped on to the platform, we shot the two wanted men (Sergeant Garvey and Constable Harrington). There

was a third R.I.C. man in the party, but, as he was not on the wanted list, we allowed him to return to the barracks, having first disarmed him. We got two revolvers.

There was an attack by the city Volunteers on Blarney barracks. At least thirty men took part in this attack, and Florrie O'Donoghue was in charge. We arrived at Blarney in motor cars. Some of the men took up positions opposite the barracks which is in the square of Blarney village. Some five or six of us entered the hotel next door to the barracks. The plan was that the wall would be breached by a charge of guncotton and that three of us, including myself, would go through the breach first, to be followed by the other men. Breaching the wall would have brought us directly into the dayroom of the barracks.

When the guncotton exploded, the force of the discharge came in our direction and blew us through the door of the hotel into the bar. When we tried to return, the debris in the room, which we had just been blown from, was piled high and prevented our entrance. This also gave the police time to man the breach, and they opened fire with bombs and rifles. An attempt was made to set the roof alight, but, as we had not sufficient petrol to do this, we had to retire. It was felt that, by surprise only, could we capture this barracks.

In May 1920, an order was received from G.H.Q. to destroy the contents of all income tax offices in Cork, and we destroyed all of them.

It was decided to attack King Street R.I.C.

barracks in Cork, in order to lessen the number of barracks in the city area and to see if it would be evacuated afterwards, as had the different barracks in the country. The R.I.C. barracks was situated near the military barracks, and it was felt that the attack would have to be quick. Guncotton was again used, and entrance gained into the house of Professor O'Donovan who lived alongside the barracks. The explosive failed to go off. It had been arranged that, when the explosion took place, we were to rush the barracks, but, when the explosion did not take place, some of the police came out and a few shots were fired. We withdrew. This operation took place on July 1st, 1920.

Despite our failure for the time being, we achieved our objective, because the R.I.C. vacated the barracks a short time later. This meant that the R.I.C. were then concentrated in only three barracks in the whole city.

It was reported that Divisional Commissioner Smith of the R.I.C., who had spoken a few days previously in Tralee inciting his men to shoot Volunteers at sight, had arrived in Cork. This information was conveyed to the Brigade Intelligence Officer by a waiter in the County Club. The waiter arranged that, if Volunteers came into the Club and held him up, he would back into the room where Smith would be sitting. Some four Volunteers entered the Club, and there were seven or eight of us outside. The waiter led the Volunteers to Smith who was shot before he could draw his revolver - on July 19th, 1920.

This operation was not assigned to any unit in particular, but was carried out by any men who were available or who were mobilised in time. 'Sandow'

Donovan was in it. I remember arriving at one of our unofficial headquarters - Wallace's of Brunswick Street - where I was informed that Sandow Donovan and some others had just left with their instructions. I followed and took up position outside the County Club.

That night, Cork city was subjected to indiscriminate firing by soldiers from lorries and armoured cars. I had to mobilise twenty men, ten of them armed with rifles, and we escorted Terence MacSwiney to the house of the R.M.S. in the Mental Hospital where we took up position and stayed all night. I accompanied him to the City Hall the following morning.

White's Cross ambush:

Towards the end of July 1920, permission was given for the first time to attack military lorries. It was known to the members of F. Company (Blackpool) that at least one lorry went every Saturday morning to Fermoy. There were usually three or four soldiers in each lorry. The members of F. Company investigated it for some two or three Saturdays, and eventually got permission from the Battalion Council to attack the lorry. As they had very few arms, they called in help from Tom Crofts' company (B.) and from my own (C.) It was agreed that each of our companies would supply three or four rifles and men, and that we would get our share of whatever might be captured.

The scene of the ambush was White's Cross. There was a right-angled bend in the road, where

we took up position behind the roadside fence. Between eight and nine a.m. on the morning selected for the ambush, one lorry came along, preceded by a motor cyclist. When the lorry came to an arranged spot, fire was opened on it, and the driver was killed. We expected that the car would run straight on to a ditch, where some of our party were placed, and that it would come under fire from men on the opposite side of the road. There were two drivers, however, and the second driver brought the lorry completely round the right-angled bend, contrary to our expectations. I threw one bomb and, immediately it exploded, the soldiers opened fire with a machine gun. We were unable to lift our heads, and we retreated. The reported British casualties were one killed and eleven wounded.

While we did succeed in demoralising the enemy by creating casualties, we did not, however, achieve our main objective, which was the capture of arms. We attributed our failure to the fact that, at the time, we had only some seven or eight rifles and shotguns, the latter being absolutely useless at the range at which we were firing, and also to the fact that we did not expect to be fired on by machine gun. There were three or four bombs fired, all told, but only one of them exploded.

London activities:

Terence MacSwiney was arrested in the City Hall, Cork, on 12th August, 1920. The battalion staff was re-arranged, and Sandow Donovan became O/C of the 1st battalion. About the end of August, he sent for me, and asked me would I be prepared to go to London on special work which Michael Collins wished to have carried out. I was to be supplied with a driver

(Jack Cody) and accompanied by Con O'Sullivan (Castletownbere). I agreed. That evening of the following evening, Frank Thornton came from Dublin, and myself and Cody set off for Dublin with him. I met Michael Collins in a house in Parnell Square, one or two houses below Vaughan's Hotel and on the same side. He explained that, if Terence MacSwiney died on hunger strike, it had been decided to shoot some members of the British Cabinet. He gave me a number of names, which I had to memorise at the time, and left full discretion to me as to what should be done. He told me to get in touch with Sam Maguire, who would have more detailed instructions, and said that the London Volunteers were to be placed at my disposal. If possible, I should inform him beforehand as to what plan of action I intended to take up, but, under no circumstances, was anything to be attempted before Terence MacSwiney died. If I did succeed in doing anything, Collins could hold out no hope that myself or any man taking part in the action would be rescued.

I went to London that night, accompanied by Jack Cody, Con Sullivan following later. The following day, I got in touch with Sam Maguire, I.R.B. representative in London. Sam arranged digs for us, and made arrangements with Art O'Brien to provide us with any money that would be required as expenses for ourselves, or for what we might use for intelligence purposes. He also introduced me to Reggie Dunne who was in charge of the London Volunteers.

Dunne and myself discussed the position in some detail, and he later arranged that I should inspect the different companies of the London Volunteers, under the guise of a G.H.Q. officer. I did this, and selected

from the companies men whom I thought might be of use. I later met these men on different occasions, and outlined a number of observers for different districts where the Cabinet Ministers, mentioned by Michael Collins, were living, whether in houses or flats. I also contacted a number of Irish newspaper men and, through them, I judiciously got particulars of ministerial functions, etc. Every day, Reggie Dunne collected these reports, and we carefully examined them, hoping that some measure of regularity might be discovered in the movements of the Ministers.

Things proceeded slowly for about six weeks. Meanwhile, I acquainted myself with the streets where these Ministers were living, and the routes they might possibly take to and from the House of Commons. Cody, who was to drive a car, was also familiarising himself with London conditions. We discovered, after a time, that the movements of the Ministers were most irregular and uncertain and, for that reason, I was not able to devise any definite plan to carry out my objective, should the occasion arise.

About the first or second week in October 1920, all hope for Terence MacSwiney was given up, and it was expected that he would die at any time. The strain of the last six or eight weeks was very severe upon the three of us, and we were coming to the stage where anything might happen to ourselves or in the work we had undertaken.

Michael Collins sent word, through Joe Dolan, I think, that we should endeavour to do something at any rate if MacSwiney died. I was informed that Balfour would be going to Oxford on a Tuesday, about mid-

October, and I immediately sent word to Collins that, whether Terence MacSwiney was dead or alive then, we would attempt to shoot Balfour. I sent word on a Sunday night, and the courier returned on Monday recalling myself and the others as, for some reason or other, Collins did not wish this operation to be carried out.

I went to Oxford on the appointed day, and met and spoke to Mr. Balfour on the street. I simply walked up to him and asked him the way to some of the Oxford colleges. He directed me and said, "You are an Irishman?" I said, "Yes", and he walked a bit of the way with me. He did not appear to have an armed guard with him.

I returned to Dublin on the following Thursday. Michael Collins told me he was sorry, but that he could not risk anything happening until Terence died. He also felt that the strain on us would be too much, if MacSwiney were to die while we were in England.

Cathal Brugha sent for me, and discussed the whole position in London with me. He, personally, was of the opinion that the operation should never have been even thought of, but he agreed that the only way in which anything could be done would be by accident more than by design, as might have happened in Oxford.

I would like to pay a tribute to the London Volunteers. I found them a very good type, very anxious to co-operate and help us in every way they possibly could. The majority of them appeared to be Civil Servants.

The Active Service Column:

About the end of December 1920, it was decided that a column would be formed in the 7th or 8th battalions, which consisted of the districts of Ballingeary, Inchigeela and Ballyvourney. Some fourteen or fifteen men were to leave the city and join up with members of the local battalions.

Early in January, we left the city under the command of "Sandow" Donovan, and linked up with the Ballyvourney men. We underwent a fortnight's training in Ballydesmond, Gougane Barra., Our instructor at that time was Seán Murray, a member of my company, who had been an Irish Guardsman. Some members of this party were: Sandow Donovan, Jack Culhane, Stan. Barry, Seán Murray, Seán Ó Luasa (O/C, D. Company), - O'Connor, Jim Grey, ^{MAJOR} ~~Major~~ Grey and myself.

After the fortnight's training, we took up positions on the Ballyvourney line, and lay in ambush there for some ten days. I was ill at the time, and was sent to a house. Some two days later, Ballyvourney ambush took place. The ambush was not successful.

The Active Service Unit:

At this time, word came that Tom Crofts and other officers in the city had been arrested, and it was decided that "Sandow" Donovan and I should return to the city, where it was proposed to start an active service unit in the city itself.

The active service unit was started, which comprised six members from each of the two battalions in the city. The men on this unit were: Danny Healy, Stephen McSwiney, Jim Barrett, Liam O'Callaghan, Seán Twomey and myself - all from 1st Battalion; and

Florrie O'Donoghue, Jim Counihan, Ned Fitzgibbon, George Burke, Jim Fitzgerald, Peter Donovan and one other - from 2nd Battalion. Seán Twomey was put in charge, and I assumed control of the 1st battalion, while "Sandow" Donovan was acting as O/C in the city. It should be remembered that the city at this period was the chief centre for intelligence, and that the brigade had settled their headquarters in Ballyvourney battalion area where daily communications had to be sent to them. There was a special office in the city then dealing with intelligence and communications. This office was under the control of George Buckley. "Sandow" Donovan was mainly in touch with him at that time, as only two or three selected couriers were allowed to know where the office was, for fear of anyone being followed into it.

For the first few weeks that the active service unit was in existence, we were actively engaged watching the movements of military and police. The members of the active service unit took turns in taking up positions along routes which were supposed to be taken by the police and military, but as they did not take any particular route with any regularity, it was often found that we would leave a street just when the military or police came into it.

The first attack that was brought off was on 12th April 1921, when bombs were thrown into a lorry in Washington Street. The bombs failed to explode, and the military returning the fire wounded some civilians.

The failure of bombs to explode became a very serious problem in the city, as it was realised that, if a bomb did not go off, civilians and the Volunteers themselves would suffer heavy casualties. Special men

were allocated to the work of inspecting all bombs which were to be used in the city and, as far as I remember, a contact man between the city and Martin Corry, on whose land the bombs were being made, was also arranged.

Most of the work of the active service unit during this period consisted of patrols, shifting stuff from place to place and taking arms, etc., to columns, while the intelligence officers attached were daily seeking information which might lead to some particular attack.

A number of spies were executed at this time, and a captured report from the British, some time around May, stated that the last of their intelligence officers in the city had been executed and that they were now without civilian intelligence in the city. This particular type of work was very severe on Twomey, who was in charge of the A.S.U., and it was beginning to affect his nerves.

About the beginning of May, a special order was received from the divisional headquarters that every effort was to be made by each unit in the division, to carry out an attack on Saturday, May 14th. The A.S.U. decided to concentrate upon Captain Kelly, who was the principal British intelligence officer and who had been responsible for the torture of Hales and others. He went frequently in a motor car to Cork jail, and it had been noticed by our intelligence officers that Saturday morning was one of his regular mornings to visit the jail. It was decided that the A.S.U. would take up duty from eight o'clock in the morning along the route usually taken by Kelly. Twomey and myself took up position in Patrick Street at about nine o'clock.

Twomey became mentally affected, and he asked me to take him out and shoot him. I pretended to do this, and got in touch with some members of the unit. In the meantime, I continued to walk outside the city with Twomey, and eventually we got him home. During this time, Kelly had gone up to the jail in an open car, and returned from it in an armoured car. This meant that practically half the day had been wasted without anything being done, and immediately all members of the A.S.U. and helpers were concentrated in one or two parts of the city to see if something could not be done. Late in the evening, the men on duty at the north side of the city were informed that an R.I.C. patrol had gone down O'Connell Street, Blackpool. They immediately ran to the attack and threw some bombs, killing one and wounding three policemen.

Captain Kelly, the British intelligence officer, was attacked in Washington Street by members of the A.S.U. on the morning of May 23rd, 1921. Two groups from the A.S.U. had taken up positions along Washington Street. An intelligence officer was placed some fifty yards or so beyond myself and another man. Three other members of the A.S.U. were placed about seventy-five yards below my group.

Captain Kelly came from the jail in an open car on this particular morning, and had practically passed the intelligence officer before he was recognised. When we got the signal, the car had passed us, and we signalled to the men further down. The car was going so fast that it was practically past them before they threw the bombs. One bomb was thrown into the car, but failed to explode. The second bomb hit the hood of the car and rolled on to the roadway. Some shots

were also exchanged, but Kelly escaped.

I think that Peter Donovan was placed in charge of the A.S.U. after Twomey's arrest. (Twomey was arrested, walked out of the police barracks, and fired on by soldiers, receiving some six or eight wounds.) I am of the opinion that he (Peter Donovan) was arrested practically immediately after his appointment. About a week later, "Sandow" Donovan informed me that he was leaving the city and going to brigade headquarters. He appointed me in charge of the A.S.U. and of the city in general.

A week or two was spent in trying to reorganise the battalions and replacing arrested officers. At that time, everyone in Cork City who was known to have had any connection with the Volunteers was being arrested, and casualties among our officers were considerable.

After the attack on the patrol at Blackpool, police patrols became less frequent; in fact, they often did not appear on the streets for five or six days. We were patrolling the streets regularly at this time, and our intelligence officers were constantly engaged in trying to find out the movements of the police. We noticed that they congregated outside the different barracks for a short time in the evenings, and decided to attack them in Tuckey Street and Shandon Street barracks. To do this, we got two motor cars. Members of the A.S.U. drove the cars and were accompanied by three men in each car. We decided to concentrate on Tuckey Street. The operation was timed so that the barracks would be attacked simultaneously. A number of Volunteers were organised to try and rush Tuckey Street after the bombs had been thrown by the men from

the motor cars. Unfortunately, however, the driver of the car attacking Tuckey Street had some trouble with the motor, and drove the car to the attack about two minutes before the agreed time. As a result of this, some thirty or forty Volunteers, who were leaving their own points to converge on Tuckey Street, heard the bombs before they were in a position to attack. I was in charge of these particular bodies and withdrew them. The men in the car threw some three or four bombs, and wounded several of the Tans.

Similarly, bombs were thrown at Shandon Street barracks, and Douglas barracks was attacked with gunfire.

Up to this time, the A.S.U. was equipped only with revolvers and bombs, and operated in the city area only. As a result of the attacks on patrols and barracks, the movements of the British were restricted to travelling through the city area in lorries, protected by armoured cars. With this change of tactics on the part of the British authorities, it was decided, with the approval of Sandow Donovan, that the A.S.U. would extend its operations to the suburbs and country areas, if necessary. With this object in view, the A.S.U. went to Ballygarvan, and were trained for a week in the use of machine guns and rifles, under my control. When the training was over, some time early in July 1921 and before we could arrange any attacks on lorries leaving Cork City for Ballincollig or Fermoy, the Truce intervened.

SIGNED: Patrick Murray

DATE: 26 February 1957

WITNESS P. J. Donnell

