

**ORIGINAL**

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21  
BURO STAIRÉ MILEATA 1913-21  
No. W.S. 1,638

ROINN



COSANTA.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS.

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 1638.

**Witness**

Michael Riordan,  
Finnis,  
Bandon,  
Co. Cork.

**Identity.**

1st Lieut., Kilpatrick Coy., Bandon Battn.,  
Cork 111 Brigade.  
Member, Flying Column, Cork 111 Bgde., I.R.A.

**Subject.**

Kilpatrick Coy., I. Vols., Co. Cork, 1913-21.

**Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.**

Nil.

File No S. 2963.

Form B.S.M. 2

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21  
BURO STAIRÉ MILEATA 1913-21  
No. W.S. 1.638

STATEMENT BY MICHAEL RIORDAN,

Finnis, Bandon, Co. Cork.

I was born at Ballinadee on March 17th 1878. I was educated at Ballinadee National School by Schoolmaster Dan Deasy, until I reached the age of 14 years, when I went to work as a labourer with farmers in the district. I came to Kilpatrick area, where I now reside, in 1901.

When Carson started the Ulster Volunteers to fight Home Rule in 1913, the Irish Volunteers were founded in Dublin. A company of the Irish Volunteers was established in Kilpatrick about the end of October, 1913. The strength of the company was about 40 in the early stages. The pioneers in the establishment of the unit were: Bob Walsh (Ballinacurra), Wm. K. McDonnell (Castlelack), Mike Riordan (Finnis, witness), Denis and Tim Riordan (my brothers), John Canniffe (Finnis), Jerh. Healy, Denis Healy, Tadhg Healy, Wm. Coveney, John Coveney, John Doyle, Michael Doyle, Dan Lordan, John Lordan, Michael Lordan - all from Kilpatrick. The first officers of the company were: -

O/C - Bob Walsh  
1st Lt. - Mike Riordan (witness)  
2nd Lt. - Jerh. Healy.

The company was at this time an independent unit of Cork Brigade, of which Tomás MacCurtain was O/C.

The only type of training carried out by us was close order foot drill and physical drill. It was carried out in the fields and by-roads. Training was carried out under an ex-member of the British Army - Wm. Riordan, Castle Road, Bandon.

Early in 1914, the company (Kilpatrick) was mobilised for a special parade, when it was inspected by Col. Maurice Moore from H.Q. and James J. Walsh, later to become first Postmaster General, Irish Free State. Normal training continued following this parade and there was no change until the split occurred in or about September, 1914, when John Redmond, the leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party, which had strong representation of the executive in control of the Volunteers, made a speech in Co. Wicklow inviting the Volunteers to join the British Army to fight for the alleged freedom of small nations. The vast majority of our members (Kilpatrick Company) disagreed with Redmond's policy and continued to serve as members of the Irish Volunteers. The men in the company who agreed with Redmond, left us, but they did not form a unit of the National Volunteers as was done in many places by the Redmondite supporters.

The strength of our company (Kilpatrick) was now about 24. We were sworn into the Volunteers by John McSweeney, New Road, Bandon. It was not the I.R.B. This was a special Fenian oath.

Beyond normal training, there was no further activity until September, 1915, when our company (Kilpatrick) marched to Innishannon and joined Ballinadee Company under Seán Hales in an attack on a recruiting <sup>meeting</sup> for the British Army. We marched through this meeting and broke it up. The crowd were later addressed by Wm. K. McDonnell, Castlelack, who made an anti-recruiting speech. Later in the year the same combination (Kilpatrick and Ballinadee Companies) broke up similar meetings at Farnivane (British speakers - Lord Bandon and Gardner Wallis) and Knockavilla (D.D. Sheehan, M.P. - a member of Irish Parliamentary Party). The crowd at Knockavilla were later addressed by Wm. K. McDonnell,

who expressed the views of the Irish Volunteers on the subject of recruits for the British Army.

It was in November, 1915, I think, that our company (Kilpatrick), in co-operation with units from Bandon, Ballinadee, Lyre, Ballinhassig, Crookstown, and from all over Cork country, took part in a big parade in Cork City. All were armed with weapons of one kind or another - croppy pikes, shotguns and rifles of various descriptions.

Training continued throughout the remainder of 1915, and on St. Patrick's Day, 1916, our company (Kilpatrick) again took part in a big parade in Cork in which units from all over the country were represented. This parade passed off quietly except for a few shouts from 'separation women' - wives of soldiers serving with the British army in France and elsewhere. Tomás MacCurtain was in charge of the parade.

On our return from the parade in Cork we continued to train as usual until Easter Saturday, 1916. A parade of the company (Kilpatrick) was held that night at Castlelack Mills and those who attended were instructed to parade next morning at 9 a.m. with two days' rations. Next morning we marched into Bandon, where we met the Ballinadee Company. We fell in behind this unit and marched to Tinker's Cross, where we were joined by the local unit. We continued on through Farnivane to Kilmurray, where we went to Máss. We then marched to Macroom, joining up on our way with some units from Cork City and district at Harding's Bridge on the Crookstown-Macroom road about one mile from Macroom. The strength of our party (Kilpatrick) on this occasion was about a dozen. Those who went to Macroom were: - Michael Doyle, John Doyle, Michael Riordan (witness), Tim Riordan, John Lordan, Dan Lordan, Michael

Lordan, John Canniffe, Jerome Donovan, Denis Murphy, Bob Walsh (O/C), Jerh. Healy. When we got to Macroom the parade was dismissed to enable us to partake of our rations. We were mobilised again about 5 p.m. and our party, with all units moving towards Bandon or Cork City, marched to Macroom railway station where we entrained. The men from Kilpatrick and Ballinadee left the train at Crookstown, where the men from Ballinadee went into billets, while we (Kilpatrick) marched to our home areas. As far as I can recollect, Tom Hales was in charge of the combined units from Bandon and district. They were, I think, known as the Ballinadee Battalion.

On Easter Monday, as far as I can recollect, instructions to 'stand to' pending further orders were received from Tom Hales. The company (Kilpatrick) was now assembled at Kilpatrick, and throughout Easter Week all members were available for service at a moment's notice. After the surrender in Dublin, a notice granting a week's grace to enable all Volunteers to surrender their arms was published in the papers. We did not surrender any arms from our company (Kilpatrick).

Early in May, 1916, wholesale raids were carried out in the area by combined forces of military and R.I.C. The Company O/C (Bob Walsh) and Wm. K. McDonnell, Castlelack Mills, were arrested. They were removed to Cork and later to Frongoch. They were held for, I think, a couple of months before being released. While the O/C (Bob Walsh) was interned, the Volunteer organisation in the district was kept going and we met at regular intervals. At this time we formed what was known as a "Liberty Club". It was a cover for Volunteer activities. Towards the end of 1916 there was increased interest in the Volunteer movement and new recruits were being taken in. The strength of the

company (Kilpatrick) was now about thirty. The officers at this stage were: -

O/C - Denis Lordan  
 1st Lt. - Michael Riordan (witness)  
 2nd Lt. - Michael Doyle.

It was now the spring of 1917 and all Volunteers were active in organising Sinn Féin clubs in their areas. These clubs were mainly composed of Volunteers, members of their families and sympathisers. In very many cases the Sinn Féin clubs were officered by members of the Volunteers. At this stage the officers of Kilpatrick Sinn Féin Club were all members of the Irish Volunteers. The Company O/C (Denis Lordan) was chairman, and I was vice chairman.

Normal training - drill and parades - continued as 1917 advanced. The Volunteer organisation was growing in strength and there were Volunteer units in nearly every parish. All units in Bandon area were represented in force at a big parade which was addressed by Eamon de Valera in Bandon in the early part of December, 1917. At this parade orders were issued by members of the various units from the ranks. There was no officer leading the parade. This was done to confuse the enemy police force and to prevent them identifying officers, who, of course, were liable to arrest for illegal drilling.

About February, 1918, I travelled with Denis Desmond and representatives from Ballinadee, Kilbrittain, to Snugmore in the Kinsale area to help to reinstate a tenant who had been evicted during the Land War, from his farm. Tom Hales was in charge of the combined force. When we got to the farm we found men from Kinsale, Ballinhassig and other companies in the area already assembled. We were

informed that the house on the farm was occupied by a force of R.I.C. Plans were made to surround the building and capture the garrison, but before any action was taken on this operation a number of ploughmen were put to work with teams of horses to plough up some of the land so that the spring crops could be put in. When the ploughmen had set about their job, the remainder of the assembled Volunteers, to the number of about twenty, were placed in position to close in on the farmhouse. While moving into position, one member of the R.I.C. garrison endeavoured to get through our cordon in order to go to Kinsale for reinforcements. He was captured and disarmed. However, when our forces were reassembled and we approached the farmhouse, we found that the garrison had withdrawn - apparently while we were concentrating on the capture of the member of the garrison who had endeavoured to get through in the first instance. I should say that the only arms we had on this occasion were sticks and hurleys. However, we had captured one carbine. We remained on the farm for some hours until the ploughing was finished. The ploughmen and their helpers then loaded up their equipment and all sections set out for their home areas. We had only left the farm when the R.I.C. garrison re-appeared and arrested two of the ploughmen (Mick Hyde, Ballinhassig, and - Dempsey, Old Head). When it was observed that our men had been arrested, arrangements were being made to rush the escort and rescue them, when the sudden appearance of a strong force of military from Kinsale prevented any further action.

It was about this time that the area was organised on a battalion basis. There were companies in Bandon, Innishannon, Ballinadee, Ballinspittal, Kilbrittain, Clogagh, Newcestown, Kilpatrick, Crosspound, Tinker's Cross and

Quarries Cross. These companies now formed the Bandon Battalion, Cork Brigade, Irish Volunteers. I think that the first officers of the battalion were: -

O/C - Tom Hales  
 Vice O/C - Patk. Dwyer  
 Adjt. - Hugh Thornton  
 Q/M - Jim O'Mahoney.

When the British threatened to enforce conscription in the early part of 1918, the strength of the company (Kilpatrick) increased to about 35. There was no change in the officers of the company. All members of the company took part in raids for arms in the area about this period. All available arms - shotguns - not already held by Volunteers were taken up. We now had about 25 shotguns. We also had 1 Lee Enfield rifle which we got from Ballinhassig Company, and two .22 rifles - one obtained in a raid and the other purchased from H.Q. The total armament of the company (Kilpatrick) was about 25 shotguns, 1 Lee Enfield and two .22 miniature rifles.

When volunteers to go to Waterford City on protection duty for the Sinn Féin candidate and his workers in the by-election in March, 1918, were asked for, the company was represented in the party which travelled from Bandon Battalion by five or six men. Amongst those who travelled from Bandon Battalion were: Denis Lordan, O/C, Mike Riordan (witness), Michael Lordan, John Doyle. The Sinn Féin candidate was Dr. Vincent White, and his opponent from the Irish Parliamentary Party was Major Wm. Redmond. The Sinn Féin candidate was defeated. The Redmondite supporters were violently opposed to Sinn Féin, and had not the strong force of Volunteers - both local and from outside areas - been present to protect the Sinn Féin workers and voters, I don't think a great proportion of the Sinn Féin supporters would have been able to go to the poll. We were in Waterford for, I think, 3 days.



Training continued as usual throughout 1918. At this period it was customary for three or four neighbouring companies to meet on a Sunday evening and engage in manoeuvres. These operations were usually carried out under the supervision of a battalion officer. During these operations we learned to utilise available cover as well as obtaining training in scouting and signalling.

There was no activity in the area in connection with the general election in December, 1918. The Sinn Féin candidates for our area - Seán Hales and John Prior - were returned unopposed.

Cork Brigade was divided into three brigades early in January, 1919. Our battalion (Bandon) became the 1st Battalion in a new brigade - Cork 111-embracing the area of West Cork. The battalions in this brigade at its formation were: - Bandon (1st), Clonakilty (2nd), Dunmanway (3rd), Skibbereen (4th), Bantry (5th), Castletownbere (6th). As far as I can recollect, the first officers of the West Cork Brigade were: -

O/C - Tom Hales  
 Vice O/C - Seán Hayes  
 Adjt. - Liam Deasy, I think.  
 Q/M - Pat Harte, I think.

Training continued as usual throughout 1919. During August a training camp was established at Glandore. This camp was attended by selected officers from the various battalions. As far as I can recollect, there were a number of officers from G.H.Q. at this camp. I was not in attendance.

As the year 1919 advanced, the officers from our battalion who had attended the camp at Glandore took turns at visiting the companies in the battalion and instructing the men on the lines indicated during training at Glandore. The training now became more advanced and selected men were

trained as engineers, while signalling and scouting training received more detailed attention. As a result of the intensified training, the men became more military minded and each parade was looked forward to as one at which something new might be learned.

When arrangements were made to attack Farnivane R.I.C. barracks towards the end of February, 1920, practically all members of Kilpatrick Company were mobilised for the job. They were engaged in blocking roads and scouting, as well as in the actual attack. The other companies represented at this operation were Tinker's Cross, Newcestown, and Crosspound. The members of my company (Kilpatrick) who took part in the actual attack were: Jack Corkery, Jim Doyle, John Doyle, Michael Doyle, John Coveney, Denis Coveney, Michael Riordan (witness). On the night of the attack we met the men from Crosspound Company at the boundary of our company area and marched across country to the fixed assembly point within a couple of fields of the enemy post. We reached this spot about 11 p.m. Owing to failure to make contact with the men from Tinker's Cross and Newcestown Companies, our party decided to withdraw after a wait of a couple of hours.

As we moved back towards our own areas we met the men from Tinker's Cross Company. After a short discussion, it was decided to attack the barrack. The whole party were now divided into sections and allocated to positions around the building. I should have mentioned that when moving towards the barrack before the various sections were sent to their positions, a shotgun was accidentally discharged. This put the garrison on the alert and there was a further discussion as to whether the attack should take place or not. It was decided to go ahead.

I was allocated to outpost duty at a point about 150 yards north of the barrack on the road to Crookstown.

I was on my own. The main attacking party, to the number of about twenty, took up positions at the front and rear of the barrack. They opened fire on the building and threw some bombs on to the roof, but after an exchange of fire lasting about half an hour the order to retire was given as there was no hope of taking the post. All sections now withdrew to their home areas. Tom Hales (Brigade O/C) was in charge.

On the night of April 28th 1920, accompanied by Mick Lordan - a member of my company (Kilpatrick) - I travelled to Joan's Cross, about  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile south of Crosspound on the Crossbarry road. Here we met Dick Barrett, who provided us with revolvers. Others present were: Tom Kelleher (O/C Crosspound), and two Volunteers named Seán Sullivan. We proceeded towards Kinsale Junction railway station. On our way we were joined by Jack Hartnett, who accompanied us. We proceeded to the station house, where we took up positions to await the arrival of the mail train about 6 a.m. We were in position about 5 a.m. The train was not due to halt at the junction but we got the signalman to halt it. When the train stopped, we raided the mail van and removed the mailbags for West Cork. We took the mail away to Falvey's brake in Ballinphellic, about 2 miles. On examination it was found to contain correspondence between the R.I.C. in Bandon and the British military authorities. The messages were in code and had to be sent away to Brigade H.Q. to be deciphered. The mailbag also contained money in course of transmission to various people. All of this money was dispatched to the addressees in the following post.

When a party lay in ambush near Farnivane R.I.C. barracks one Sunday early in May, 1920, for a patrol of police, I was on outpost duty with Wm. Coveney on the Bandon-Macroon road at Mishells - about 2½ miles from Farnivane. We were both armed with shotguns. On this occasion only one R.I.C. man put in an appearance at the ambush position. He was fired on and was wounded but managed to escape.

About this time five members of the company (Kilpatrick) lay in ambush on the Kilpatrick-Innishannon road at Brother's Fort - about 2 miles from Innishannon. We were behind the roadside fence - armed with shotguns - and were awaiting a patrol of R.I.C. which failed to turn up. The members of the party were: Jim Doyle, Wm. Coveney, John Coveney, John Doyle and Michael Riordan (witness). We took up our positions about 3 p.m. and waited until approaching dusk.

When Sergt. Mulherin, R.I.C. Intelligence Officer, was shot in Bandon on July 25th 1920, it was anticipated that enemy forces would take reprisal action. The home of the Brigade Intelligence Officer (Seán Buckley) was one of those likely to be attacked and arrangements were made to provide a guard in the vicinity of the house. With Jim Doyle of our company (Kilpatrick) I went to Frank Hurley's, Lauragh - Tinker's Cross Company area. Accompanied by two or three men from the latter company, we moved on to the vicinity of Seán Buckley's where we remained for some time. There was no sign of any enemy activity, so we withdrew to our home areas. We were all armed with shotguns. This was on the night of July 25th. Similar procedure was followed by other members of the same companies (Tinker's Cross and Kilpatrick) on the following night, with like results. On the night of July 27th the representatives from Kilpatrick were: Michael Doyle and John Coveney. They had only just taken up their positions

when two soldiers made their appearance. The leading man was about 30 yards in front of the second. When the leader was within about 10 yards of our guard, fire was opened on him and he was killed. The second soldier then dashed away and escaped. Our men withdrew without delay as they were within 100 yards of Bandon military post. The soldier who had been shot was later reported to be Lance Corporal Maddox, Essex Regiment.

During the last days of July, 1920, four members of Kilpatrick Company - Jim Doyle, John Doyle, John Coveney (I think), and Michael Riordan (witness) - again took up positions on the old Cork-Bandon road at Brothersfort. We were behind the roadside fence and were armed - three with shotguns and one with a rifle. On this occasion there were also representatives present from Innishannon and Crosspound Companies. The strength of the party was about twenty. We were extended over a distance of about 150 yards. Although we remained in position from early morning until late evening, the expected enemy patrol did not turn up. All sections then returned to their own areas. Charlie Hurley - at the time Vice O/C Bandon Battalion and soon to become Brigade O/C - was in charge.

The Brigade O/C (Tom Hales) and the Brigade Q/M (Pat Harte) were captured by the enemy about this time. They were replaced by Charlie Hurley and Dick Barrett respectively.

Early in August, 1920, a party drawn from Ballinadee, Kilbrittain, Crosspound, Kilpatrick and Innishannon Companies, to the number of about 30, took up ambush positions at the Black Quarry -  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile west of Kilpatrick on the old Cork - Bandon road. They were armed with rifles and shotguns. They entered the position about 6 a.m. and remained all day, but there was no appearance by the enemy. The men from

Kilpatrick were: Jim Doyle, Michael Riordan (witness), John Doyle, and John Coveney. Charlie Hurley (Brigade O/C) was in charge.

During the last week in August, 1920, about thirty men drawn from Kilpatrick, Crosspound, Kilbrittain, Timoleague, and Tinker's Cross Companies took up positions at daybreak at both sides of Brinny Bridge and on both sides - east and west - of the road. There were a few rifles amongst the party. We were armed mainly with shotguns. We were awaiting a military cycle patrol which normally travelled from Bandon via Innishannon and Brinny back to Bandon.

We were still in our positions when about 4 p.m. we were surprised by a party of military which came on us across country from the south on the western flank of our position. The leader of the military party (Lieut. Heartblack) crept to within about 40 yards of one of our men before opening fire. His fire struck the stock of our man's shotgun (John Crowley's). Crowley returned the fire, and while Lieut. Heartblack was trying to find fresh cover Crowley crossed the road and escaped. All the men on the southern side of Brinny Bridge - both east and west of the road - now left their positions and retired towards Bandon. During this withdrawal Lieut. Tim Fitzgerald (Tinker's Cross Company) was killed. As it was obvious that the enemy were aware of our positions and were trying to surround us, the men on the north side of the bridge decided to withdraw northward in the direction of Crosspound. I was one of a party of five or six which was in position at the north side of the bridge and west of the road. Seán Hales was, I think, in charge on this occasion. Other officers present were: Tadhg Sullivan (Battn. Q/M), Jim O'Mahoney (Battn. Adj.),

and Paddy Sullivan. Some of the men who took part in this operation were, as far as I can recollect; Tinker's Cross Company (John Brien, Con Brien, Tim Fitzgerald, John Shea), Kilbritten (Jackie Neill, Con Crowley, Paddy Sullivan, Jack Roche), Timoleague (Con Lehane, Jim Hartnett), Crosspound (Frank Neville, Paddy Leary, Paddy Coakley, Paddy Desmond, Paddy Sullivan), Kilpatrick (John Doyle, Jim Doyle, Michael Riordan - witness, Michael Doyle, Wm. Coveney).

It was about mid October when a training camp was set up at Ballymurphy for the officers of the companies of the Bandon Battalion situated north of the Bandon river. A similar camp for the companies south of the river had been held at Clonbuig in Kilbritten Company area during September, 1920. My company (Kilpatrick) was represented at Ballymurphy Camp by Jim Doyle, John Coveney, John Crowley and myself. The officers from Crosspound, Tinker's Cross, Newcestown and Quarries Cross, with a few men from Dunmanway Battalion, also attended. Tom Barry - newly appointed Brigade Training Officer - was in charge of training. The course of training, which continued for about a week, covered the use and care of arms, bomb throwing, foot drill. There were also lectures and discussions each night on a variety of subjects, such as the use of cover, the selection of ambush positions.

On completion of our course of training we were taken to an ambush position on the Innishannon-Cork road where we waited all day, but the enemy did not turn up. The strength of the column on this occasion was about 35. Tom Barry was in charge. We withdrew from the position as darkness set in and moved to billets in Crosspound area. Next day we were instructed to return to our home areas and to await further instructions.

Within a few days we were all mobilised again, and on, I think; the evening of October 24th 1920 I travelled to Ballymurphy, in Crosspound area, with Jim Doyle, John Crowley, and Dan Lordan. With the exception of the last named we were armed with rifles. At Ballymurphy we found men from Ballinadee, Innishannon, Kilbrittain, Tinker's Cross and Quarries Cross. We remained in this area until the following night, when we moved to Toureen, about 8 miles from Bandon, where we took up positions on the main Cork-Bandon road about 6 a.m.

The position extended over a distance of about 250 yards and the column was divided into four sections as follows:

- (a) a main attacking party of about a dozen men under the O/C (Tom Barry) took up a position at the gate of a farmyard (Roberts) about the centre of the position.
- (b) a section of two or three to explode a mine which was laid in the road about 80 yards east of the party at (a).
- (c) a flanking party of eight men extended under cover of the roadside fence about 150 yards east of the main position. Liam Deasy i/c.
- (d) a flanking party of about 8 men about 100 yards west of the main position on the same side of the road. Seán Hales i/c.

The convoy which we were expecting was to be composed at most of three lorries. The leading car was to be allowed to pass through from Bandon to be dealt with by the men with the mine (Charlie Hurley, Bde. O/C, and Peter Monahan, I think). The next lorry was to be attacked by the main body, and if there was a third it would be a job for the men at the western end of the position.

It was about 8 a.m. when the first car entered the position. It passed on to the mine section. The mine failed to explode, and it reached our party on the eastern flank.



I was a member of this flanking party and was the last man on the eastern end. From my position I was able to fire on and cover the leading car in the convoy which came through our position when the mine failed to explode. When this car reached my position it had already been fired on by the men in my section to the west of my position. The car continued on its way towards Cork. Liam Deasy (Brigade Adjnt.) was in charge of this section.

The second lorry was fired on by the main body at the gate of Roberts' farmyard. It crashed into the fence, as the driver was killed by the opening volley. After a sharp exchange of fire, the men in this lorry surrendered. Their officer (Lieut. Dixon, I think) had been killed. The fight was over in a matter of minutes. The main attacking party collected the booty - 12/14 rifles and a supply of ammunition, from the enemy prisoners. All sections were now called in. The lorry was set on fire and the column withdrew towards the Bandon river. We crossed the river at Ballydaly Quay to Walshe's of Payfield. We remained here next day. We then moved to Ballinadee and on to Ballyvodane, where we rested. Our section then moved to billets in Coolanelig. I should have mentioned that the men from Crosspound area who took part in the fight at Toureen, left the main body at Skough, taking the captured rifles, ammunition and equipment with them for dumping in their own area.

Within a night or two we went into the vicinity of Bandon about 9 p.m. to attack the enemy curfew patrol there which normally paraded the town at night. The column assembled at Ballyvodane graveyard and scouts were sent in to Bandon to ascertain the position. As the scouts were unable to furnish any definite information, the column was withdrawn and retired to billets in Ballinadee area. We

remained in billets until next day, when arms were dumped in John Brien's farm in Clonbuig in Kilbritten area and we all returned to our home districts.

At this stage the brigade had decided to put a column of men "in the field" on a more or less permanent basis. In order to keep this unit clothed and armed it was decided to impose a levy on all landholders and business people. The amount of the levy varied from £1 to £50. In the case of the farmers it was based on the number of cattle carried on the holding, and in other cases on the Poor Law Valuation of the premises. The responsibility for the collection of the levy fell on the officers of the various companies. As there were a number of hostile landowners in our company (Kilpatrick) area, it was difficult to collect the levy in the area. The collection of this fund was carried on during the months of October and November, 1920. When all voluntary contributions had been dealt with, a night was fixed for the seizure of stock - to the value of the amount of the levy - from each of the defaulting landowners in the district. The company was mobilised and we collected about 50 cattle from the various farmers. We drove them to the farm of Tom Driscoll, Ballinamuck, Newcestown. With three or four others, I remained with the seized stock until they were taken to Crookstown fair and sold next day. They were taken to the fair by John Lordan, Coolna, later Vice O/C Cork 111 Brigade. When the cattle had been taken to the fair we returned to our home area.

During the first week in December, 1920, a column composed of men drawn from Ballinadee, Kilbritten, Tinker's Cross, Kilpatrick, Newcestown, Innishannon and Quarries Cross, to the number of about 35, took up positions on the old Cork-Bandon road at Clashanimud - about  $3\frac{1}{2}$  miles from Bandon. We had assembled on the previous night at Kelleher's, Crowhill,

in Crosspound area. Liam Deasy and Charlie Hurley were in charge. The main body took up positions behind the roadside fence and in Quinn's farmyard. They were extended over a distance of about 100 yards. I was in charge of a party of six which took up a position on Coshel Hill. We were acting as a covering party in case any enemy party should approach from the rear. Some members of my section were: Dave Keane, Con Brien, Michael Doyle and Jack Donovan. All positions were occupied at daybreak. We remained until about twelve noon, when owing to a downpour of rain which had carried on since 9 a.m. we were forced to withdraw.

My party returned to billets in Coshel Hill (Walshe's) and the main body returned to Crosspound area, where they billeted until next day. On receipt of some fresh information, the main body was hurriedly assembled next morning, but through some oversight the news did not reach me. As a result, my section were only on their way to meet the others when the attack on two lorries which passed through the ambush position took place. The engagement was over when I reached the position. The men who took part were disbanded and returned to their home areas.

A column from Bandon Battalion under Seán Hales was mobilised in Quarries Cross area about the third week in January, 1921. It was only a short time in the district when a strong force of military arrived and threw out raiding parties. The column took up positions a couple of fields from the road and prepared to attack the enemy. However, before the nearest of the enemy got within 300 yards of our position they were overtaken by their lorries, which they entered and drove off. When the enemy had withdrawn, our column moved to billets in Farranthomas. Next day we joined up with the Brigade Column under Tom Barry (Col. O/C) and moved into positions at Mawbeg on the Bandon-Ballineen road about six miles from Bandon. We were in position behind

the roadside fence north of the road and were extended over a distance of about 450 yards. We remained in position from daybreak until dusk, but the expected enemy convoy did not turn up. We now moved to billets in Tinker's Cross area.

While we were in billets that night, Tom Barry (Column O/C), Liam Deasy (Brigade Adjt.), and, I think, Denis Lordan (Column Adjt.) went away on horseback, apparently to select some ambush positions. On their way they captured a spy - a British ex-soldier named Dwyer - and brought him back to H.Q. He was tried and executed next morning. His body, labelled "Spies Beware", was left on the roadside in the hope that the military would come out from Bandon to investigate. We had already taken up positions on the Bandon-Newcestown road to await their arrival. We remained in position until approaching dark, when we withdrew to billets after a fruitless wait.

As the column was going back to billets, one section under Denis Lordan met the owner of their selected billet as he was returning from Bandon. As it was quite dark he apparently took the trench-coated men for Auxiliaries or military and he abused them for their failure to deal with the ruffians who were walking round the area. He then gave information regarding the hiding places of some of the local I.R.A. He was immediately arrested and was tried and executed that night. The column now crossed the Bandon river at Baxter's Bridge and moved into billets in Clogagh area.

Next night we moved into Bandon, where we took up positions in different parts of the town about 9.30 p.m. We remained in position until about 2 a.m., when we opened fire on the enemy military posts. Intermittent firing continued for about half an hour, when the signal to withdraw was given. The column now retired to billets - one half to Kildarragh in Ballinadee area and the other section to

Crosspound. I was a member of the party which billeted in Kildarragh. I should have mentioned that Dan O'Reilly, Kilbriittain Company, was killed during the exchange of fire in Bandon.

On the night following the attack on the Bandon posts, our section of the column crossed the Bandon river at Collier's Quay and marched through Skough to Crosspound, where we joined up with the men already billeted there.

This was a very busy week for the column as on the night of January 26th the column O/C (Tom Barry) took a strong section into Innishannon to attack the R.I.C. barracks there. The mine again failed to explode on this occasion. The covering parties fired a few shots at the building and withdrew. While this operation was in progress, the remaining section of the column, of which I was a member, took up an ambush position at Brinny Bridge to await the arrival of any enemy reinforcements that might attempt to travel to the relief of the garrison at Innishannon. There was no appearance by enemy reinforcements, although it must have been obvious to the enemy garrisons in Bandon that their colleagues in Innishannon were being attacked. When the men who had gone in to attack the barrack returned to Brinny, we all withdrew to billets in Crosspound where we remained that night and next day.

We arrived next night in Newcestown area, where we remained for two or three days. Two sections of the column - about 12 men in each - were now ordered to proceed into Bandon to attack any enemy forces to be seen. The sections were in charge of John Lordan and Tom Kelleher. I was a member of John Lordan's section. We took up a position between the convent and the main Bandon-Dunmanway road overlooking the military barracks about 10 p.m. We remained

here for a couple of hours, and, as no enemy appeared, we returned to our billets. The members of John Lordan's section on this occasion were: Dan Canty, John Lordan, Mce. Donovan, Ml. Doyle, John Shea, Con Brien, Dan Mahony, Jack Hartnett, Dan Galvin, Patk. Callaghan, Stephen Staunton, and Michael Riordan (witness). They were drawn from Newcestown, Quarries Cross, Crosspound, and Kilpatrick Companies.

At this stage an intensive campaign of road-blocking was undertaken throughout the whole brigade area. All roads were blocked by trenching, felling trees and demolishing any bridges still remaining intact. All roads in Kilpatrick Company area were trenched, and three bridges - at Finnis, Ballinacurra and Castlelack - were demolished. The work of keeping the roads in the area closed to enemy transport involved the wholetime attention each night, and very often during the day, of all members of the company.

When the Brigade O/C (Charlie Hurley) was wounded in the train ambush at Upton on February 15th 1921, he was taken into Kilpatrick Company area where he was left at Dan Halloran's, Briar Hill. He was removed that night to Tim Sullivan's, Cloughduv, by Tom Kelleher and myself in a horse and trap. We were accompanied by two scouts - Jerh. Donovan (Quarries Cross) and Charley Kenny (Kilpatrick). When the wounded man had been put to bed in Tim Sullivan's, I went into Cloughduv in company with Jerh. Donovan to contact Dr. O'Sullivan. I found that the doctor was away from home on duty. On his return we learned that he had been attending to the other men who had been wounded at Upton. The doctor arrived at Tim Sullivan's to treat Charlie Hurley about 1 a.m. next day, and we then returned to our home areas.

The Brigade Column was again mobilised about the second week in March in Castletown-Kinneigh area. My company (Kilpatrick) was represented on the column by Jim Doyle, John Doyle, John Crowley, Bob Hales. On March 16th I got instructions to report to the column, but that evening I got another dispatch instructing me to attend a Battalion Council meeting at Michael Callaghan's, Farnivane, on the evening of March 17th 1921 (I think). At this meeting I was deputed to pay special attention to the blocking of all roads in my area and to ensure that they were kept closed to enemy traffic. This was now a full time job as roads were being opened daily by forced labour gangs collected by enemy forces and had to be re-trenched night after night. I was engaged wholetime in seeing that this aspect of the work was performed satisfactorily up to the Truce on July 11th 1921.

The officers of Kilpatrick Company in the period between May, 1916, and the Truce on July 11th 1921 were: -

1916

O/C - Denis Lordan (left the area 1917)  
 1st Lt. - Michael Riordan (witness)  
 2nd Lt. - Michael Doyle.

End of 1917.

O/C - John Lordan  
 1st Lt. - Michael Riordan (witness)  
 2nd Lt. - Michael Doyle.

1918

O/C - Wm. Coveney (arrested Oct. 1920)  
 1st Lt. - Michael Riordan  
 2nd Lt. - Michael Doyle.

November, 1920.

O/C - John Crowley  
 1st Lt. - Michael Riordan  
 2nd Lt. - Michael Doyle.

March, 1921.

O/C - Jim Doyle  
 1st Lt. - Michael Riordan  
 2nd Lt. - John Crowley.

My rank at the Truce, 1st Lieut., Kilpatrick Company,  
 Bandon Battalion, Cork 111 Brigade.

The strength of the company at this time was about  
 80.

Signed: Michael Riordan

Date: 19<sup>th</sup> June 1954

Witness: P. Donnell  
 (Investigator).

